



REVIEWED

Offshore Weapon

Greg Finney checks out Formosa's 620 Tomahawk, a plate boat which packs some serious offshore fishing credentials.

FORMOSA boats started up in Brisbane back in 1998 building quality pressed aluminium hulls. The company's growth has been steady with a long list of upgrades and quality improvements. In 2006 it went over to plate hulls after searching for a stronger and overall superior quality boat. It was this upgrade that resulted in the distinctive high-flared bow that makes Formosas instantly recognisable on the water. In 2009 it introduced the Tomahawk range and in 2011 the MK3 Classic hull evolved. That steady progression of improvements and refinements has resulted in the 620 Tomahawk V2 centre cabin that I recently tested at Batemans Bay with dealer, Aussie Boat Sales.

Jason Graham and his wife Johanna run Aussie Boat Sales ACT NSW in Canberra. They recently opened up a sales office and operation in Batemans Bay at the marina to expand operations. Jason is very hands on and has had significant input in the design, features and options of the Tomahawk V2 range. He knows his boats and isn't just a boat retailer. He understands what works and what fishermen are looking for in modern boat design. That knowledge is a breath of fresh air in the industry and very handy to have when selling boats into the demanding fishing market.

The 620 Tomahawk is a substantial fishing machine. I've seen plenty of Formosas out on the water but I've never fished out of one so this test was quite an introduction to the range. To say I was impressed with the build quality and performance would be a big understatement. The review boat was set up with electronics and was actually sold, but the Melbourne based owner agreed to let Jason use it as a display boat for our review before taking delivery.

Features

The 620 Tomahawk is a centre cabin plate boat built in Brisbane. The sides are 4mm and the bottom is 5mm 5083 grade aluminium plate. Overall length is 6.35m with a 2.5m beam. Deadrise is 18 degrees which is a very handy compromise between stability at rest and ride performance in chop and into a bit of rough stuff. The MK3 V2 hull range incorporates self draining decks with a fully welded floor. A reverse chine design keeps things nice and dry which is what you expect from a boat this size that will see work in rough conditions if you are serious about your offshore fishing. Hull weight comes in at around 950kg. The build and weld quality is as good as it gets. The gunwales are



OPPOSITE PAGE:
High sides ensure safe fishing offshore.

FAR LEFT: The beamy boat features loads of fishing space in the cockpit.

LEFT: The set-up was rigged with clears and a rocket launcher, ready for fishing.

fully mig welded which give a very tidy finish that just exudes quality and attention to detail. The grey paint selection was very classy and faultlessly applied.

The underfloor design is a series of welded ribs and longitudinal stringers that set up a very strong base for the plate hull and welded floor above. Underneath the carpeted floor is a 220 litre fuel tank mounted in the middle of the cockpit with a gunwale filler. Behind the fuel tank is a substantial kill tank that's big enough to take a 10 kg yellowfin or mahi mahi or a decent catch of deep water bottom fish. There's also the option of an extra 88 litre tank in front of the fuel tank and right behind the seat pedestals. This tank can be used for additional fuel with a second gunwale filler or used for fresh water storage. That's a great idea in my books. Additional fuel to a total of 300 litres for extra long trips or just less trips to the service station when away or fresh water storage for a hose down at day's end or if you want to do an overnight

stay up river. The transom design is as you would expect in a high performance fishing machine. A heavy duty plastic transom door, livebait tank with clear window, bait board on top with two access hatches to the dual batteries. Behind the transom door is an access ladder to get in when the boat is on the trailer or if an arvo swim is on the agenda.

Up front is an undercover cabin with storage underneath and a shelf around three sides. Not a huge area but we are talking centre cabin here and not cuddy or half cabin. All around access was excellent with heaps of room to reach the large anchor well with anchor winch. Having that 360 degree access is great in my books. I ran two cuddy cabins for a total of eight years until recently and one of the major drawbacks was only being able to fight fish out of the back and sides. Being able to fight and follow a big fish all round the boat is a huge advantage as far as I'm concerned. The test boat was set up with clears and a rocket launcher on top of the centre cab.

The cabin with clears provided a very dry and workable steering position with a heap of grab rails and seats with foot rests if required. Under the seats were aluminium box pedestals with plenty of dry storage room.

Electronics

The test boat electronics were set up for the owner with a bracket mounted Raymarine sounder/GPS up top and a Garmin GMI 20 Nema2000 information screen that worked a treat. Also fitted were a Fusion stereo and GME radio. I could see a much more serious setup being used in this boat for guys at the serious end of offshore fishing. The test boat dash has been redesigned since it was made and can actually be customised to suit electronics selection. I could see most guys opting for one or two permanently flush mounted screens in a large flat area and this is no problem for the guys at Formosa or Aussie Boat Sales.



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Power

The test rig was powered by a 200HP Honda four stroke. It's been a few years since I've fished out of a boat powered by a Honda motor and to be honest I was under the impression that the four stroke market was more or less dominated by Yamaha and Suzuki. The Honda's come with a seven-year warranty these days which has rocketed them back in to the fishing market in a big way. I gave that motor a good work out over the full rev range and believe me, it was faultless. As smooth and quiet as any motor I've driven and even power right through the rev range. The 620 Tomahawk is rated to a maximum of 200HP and the Honda was a great fit. We maxed out at 5000RPM and 34 knots. I don't have any fuel usage numbers but I would think that if you ran the big Honda at sensible speeds, a days gamefishing and trolling out wide wouldn't break the bank by any means.

Out on the water the 620 didn't disappoint. The ride and handling were as you would expect from a top of the range plate boat. There was about a metre and half of long, slow roll coming in past the Tollgates and we belted our



Honda's 200hp four-stroke pushed along the Tomahawk with ample power.

way out though it without too much drama at 20 knots. With the motor trimmed up a little it was a bit bouncy but no plate boat with an 18.5 degree dead rise will keep up with a heavier 'glass boat and 21 degree deadrise. By trimming the motor down and getting that lovely shaped bow down a bit the ride improved significantly. The hull turned on a dollar coin with the aid of hydraulic steering and running back with the swell was an absolute blast. Out to 5000 revs and we just cut through that long roll like a hot knife through butter.

Overall I'd have to say I was very impressed with the Formosa 620 Tomahawk. I particularly liked the hull shape, finish, overall quality and attention

to detail. A 6.2 metre centre cabin makes a very practical offshore game fisher that can be customized for some very serious work along the shelf. It also doubles as a great family boat when it's too rough to get out fishing and some swimming or dough-nutting is on the agenda. At around 2000kg towing weight it is also a dream to travel with and a piece of cake for a diesel dual cab or SUV. Aussie Boat Sales sells the Tomahawk for about \$79,000 on a dual axle trailer.

Contact: Aussie Boat Sales ACT NSW:
www.aussieboatsalesactnsw.com.au

Formosa Boats: www.formosamarineboats.com.au
Honda Outboards: www.marine.honda.com.au

Tomahawk
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foam filled hull and great stability.

Performance
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