

Value for money: Formosa 520 with Suzuki 90



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The day for this review was a shocker. It was February, with a strong wind warning in place from forecasters and a massive cloudbank looming from the east threatening rain. But, as they say, the show must go on.

Kieran Harland of Coastal Powerboats had made the effort to be at the ramp on the Broadwater at 8am so we launched and

headed off into the chop to do our best, grey skies and all.

OUTSTANDING RIDE

The 520 Formosa centre console did offer some comfort in that it had a huge amount of freeboard for a craft of its size, a small windscreen for wind deflection on top of the console plus a bimini to deflect rain when it came. Within a few minutes, as we headed straight into wind driven chop pushing down the channel behind Sea World, I was to discover more.

This craft had an outstanding ride. Formosa have created a winning formulae here as the

520 features a bow entry designed to cut into waves, while a spray chine above the water line also serves to keep water well away from the bow area. The result: a ride that is both dry and easy on the backside.

Even after around an hour of running up and down the Broadwater the only moisture within the craft was drinking quality stuff that came from the clouds.

ANGLER-FRIENDLY LAYOUT

The Formosa 520 offers ample work area in a set-up that makes fishing a pleasure. Five anglers, from nearly anyplace on the boat can fit without much bother. Up front there is an open anchor well equipped with bow roller and a T-bollard with a split bow rail low enough to be unobtrusive. A pair of anglers could easily work up here, and an icebox with padded lid doubles as a seat. There is also an underfloor storage hatch below the icebox, which was quite handy. Could you



This shot of the Formosa underway gives an idea of the craft's ample freeboard.

a simple but effective dash area and also offered mid-shelf and floor storage space, a strong outer grab rail, and was hinged just below the screen for ease of storage in the garage. Forward controls for the 90 Suzuki on the transom were

meter, were on a lower section, with switches and marine radio lower again.

While seated on the well-padded two person fore/aft bolster seat behind the console I noted that the console was wide enough to offer shelter for two of us provided we tucked in close but for normal running around I was happy enough to stand braced against the console while searching for a fish to throw a lure at in the Seaway.

Wide and well-formed side pockets are easily

accessible for gear such as gaffs. A pair of rod holders adorned each 30cm fully welded side deck while a good-sized live well was set up in the bait station, which also came equipped with a cutting board and additional rod holders.

Despite the angler-orientated features the seating was not neglected. A three-person drop down bench seat was set up at the transom, the aft coaming forming a neat backrest. This style of seat makes

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The Formosa's deluxe fore/aft bolster seat is an effective way of providing flexible seating arrangements.



The padded icebox is an ideal seat for a front passenger and can take care of the catch as well.

ever have too much storage area in a centre console rig? I doubt it.

The remainder of the craft and the elevated front cast deck is carpeted for sure footing.

The 520's centre console was equipped with

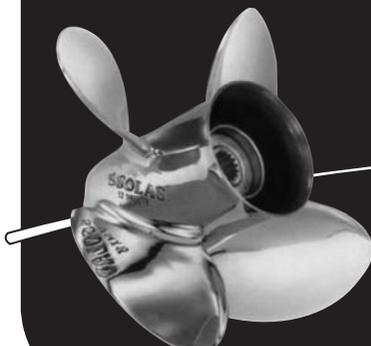
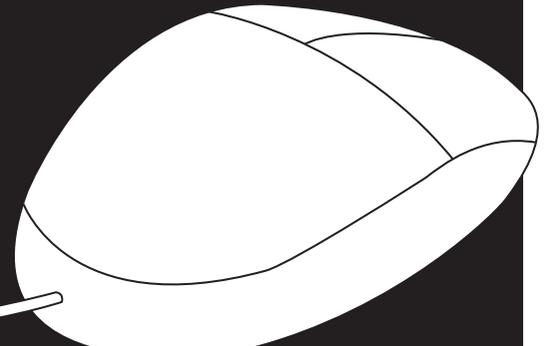
side mounted.

On top of the console, at the base of the windscreen, a Navman Fish 4507 sounder and Navman Tracker 5430 are easily monitored while gauges and instruments to monitor the four-stroke Suzuki, including an hour



The Formosa's deep anchor well is serviced by a large bowsprit and bow roller.

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a lot of sense in a fishing craft as you can drop it right down out of the way when working, yet pop it back up for travel. It's a very sensible arrangement.

DYNAMIC SUZUKI 90

The Formosa 520 was rated for engines from 75 to 90hp. This saw the 90 Suzuki reaching maximum power which is much in line with today's trend with four-strokes. Power on tap is very handy for offshore work and as the Formosa 520 had ample credentials for blue water fishing in suitable conditions I had

no problem with the engine being top power.

The Suzuki 90 four-stroke was certainly a lively little beast and it was very quiet as well being tucked down behind the full height transom of the Formosa.

With a speed of around 52.6km/h at 5,000rpm from the still new engine the craft settled onto a gentle plane at 18km/h at 2,800rpm. Mid range power is a strong Suzuki trait and 3,000rpm saw 24.8km/h, 4,000rpm a speed of 41.4km/h, a quick push of the throttle closing the gap between 3,000rpm and 4,000rpm quite rapidly.

The impact on waves was minimal without annoying banging or jarring and although a run

craft. The test rig was equipped with Formosa's deluxe package, which includes the striking marlin



Note the Formosa's strong floor to gunwale ribs. A rigid hull is a feature of the craft.

outside the Seaway was out of the question on the day, I did play around in some pressure waves inside the entrance and found the craft handled them very well.

OVERALL

The Formosa 520 is a value for money rig that rides and handles well, has plenty of fishing room in the centre console style and is well finished. Welds are continuous; there are no tacks anywhere, which makes it a vibration-free



The Formosa features a straightforward dash layout with instruments that can be easily monitored. It also features a mid-shelf for extra storage.

graphic, nav aid and fish finder, swing bolster seat, bimini top, and plenty of other goodies as well. The retail price for the test craft is \$33,350, with the 520hp

starting around the \$27,750 mark. Coastal Powerboats can be contacted on: ph. (07) 5526 0858, or online at info@coastalpowerboats.com.au.



A clean uncluttered layout makes the Formosa 520 an excellent fishing boat for the serious angler.

SPECIFICATIONS

- Length:** 5.2m
- Beam:** 2.3m
- Weight of hull:** 500kg
- Deadrise:** 12 degrees
- Engine ratings:** 75 to 90hp
- Engine:** 90hp Suzuki four-stroke
- Fuel capacity:** 115L
- Towing:** family six sedan or wagon

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