

FORMOSA TOMAHAWK CUTS THE ROUGH



Capalaba-based Formosa Marine is what you might call a quiet achiever. This established manufacturer doesn't advertise in banner headlines but quietly continues to produce excellent fishing crafts for serious anglers.

The new Tomahawk 550 and 580 series are entry-level craft with terrific potential and ample features. They are prime examples of what Formosa are currently doing and, after spending some time aboard the 550 centre console, I'm pleased to give the craft a lot of ticks on the report card.

SENSIBLE CENTRE

A centre console configuration, such as the Tomahawk's, makes a lot of sense given that it's virtually an all-fishing area. This is its

main draw card for anglers.

Up front, there's a very large carpet-lined anchor well with a split bow rail each side of the bowsprit. The Tomahawk is a very high sided craft and I noted that the stylish lift in the sheer line up front would protect the anchor person well against wave action, given that the sides are up around the waist area.

Anglers working up front would also appreciate the under floor storage space with its own multi level storage capability in the bow work area just ahead of the console. All floor areas were carpeted.

The good sized centre console was equipped with a large one piece windscreen and overhead targa top. These are both capable of being folded down to facilitate storage. A grab rail on the sides of the console plus those on the targa frame were sensible inclusions, along with the six rod holders at the rear of the targa.

Seating behind the console consisted of a cushioned storage box with a bolster style fore/aft backrest to seat



The Formosa Tomahawk has an excellent hull design; note the way displaced water is kicked well aft.



Gauges and switches were well laid out on the craft's dash area.

to the Smart Craft gauges. The central wheel, which was linked to hydraulic steering, had a bank of switches for various functions to starboard along with the main ignition switch and forward controls for the engine.

A rear lounge seat is an option for the craft and,

for safe offshore work and this degree of useful freeboard continued aft to the transom.

The main cockpit features consisted of: side pockets; a large under floor floodable fish box; three rod-holders on each of the wide decks; plus, grab handles in each quarter. Centrally, a rod

located to port. A ladder and wide platforms were also part of the stern treatment; the generous aft pod being set up with plenty of non-skid surface.

TEST RUNS

Water testing of the Formosa Tomahawk 550 Centre Console was carried out

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Technical information

Length: 5.5m
Beam: 2.45m
Weight: 650kg

Hull construction
Bottom: 4mm plate
Sides: 4mm plate
Deck: 3mm plate
Deadrise: 15 degrees
Fuel: 150L
Persons: 7
Towing: Family six sedan or wagon.



Smart design means the Tomahawk's console and screen can be folded for easier garage or under house storage.

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two people in comfort. There was ample room on the front of the console for instruments and gauges; probably, in fact, more than most anglers would ever require. On the top level was a Navman Fish 4350 sounder, with paired Mercury Smart Craft gauges to port a little lower down.

A Northstar marine radio was set into the console next

considering it has a seven person rating, I'd see quite a few buyers go for this addition.

The main cockpit area has sufficient room for at least four anglers to work in comfort and the targa's height allowed busy anglers to lift their rods without fouling on it. Cockpit depth, between the thigh and waist, was ample

holder equipped bait station with live well (which can be pumped) and generous cutting boards was at just the right height for easy rigging, if you braced your knees against the transom.

Twin off-floor lockers for cranking batteries and other items were set into the transom, while an inward opening boarding gate was

within the Gold Coast Seaway, where a decent easterly swell was rolling through, and within the Broadwater.

From the outset I formed the opinion that this was a well balanced rig with plenty of get up and go courtesy of the 115hp Optimax DI. The Tomahawk 550 can also be set up with a 90hp outboard and I doubt that its performance would suffer much given the ease that the rig planed and then cruised with such minimal engine input.

Planing occurred at 18.8km/h at 2,800rpm, 3,000rpm saw 26.4km/h on the hand held GPS unit, and 4,000rpm gave the rig 40.2km/h. A brief burst to 5,000rpm on the near new Optimax 115 saw 58.5km/h recorded. There's no question in my mind that the rig would easily exceed 64km/h if the 115hp was run in. However, what impressed me most about its run was the easy, very quiet, cruising at 4,000rpm that gave us over 40km/h.

Running over wash and chop was a pleasure in this craft. At no stage did it bang or crash off a chop or swell and



Off-floor shelving for batteries and other items makes sense in a craft that is certainly going to see its share of offshore work.

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Rigid fully welded decks are a part of the Tomahawk package.



A floodable fish box is handy in a dedicated fishing craft.

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there's no doubt that the plate hull's weight of around 650kg plus its foam-fill contribute greatly to this pleasing aspect of ride quality.

Thanks to its excellent spray deflecting water line reversed chine hull design, there'd be little chance of

occupants copping spray from cross winds while enjoying time in the Tomahawk

STABILITY A BONUS

At 2.45m wide the Tomahawk 550 provides a high degree of stability at rest and under way. The craft's hull features a keel, reversed outer water line chines,

longitudinal strakes on its 4mm thick bottom and, with only a moderate amount of Vee aft (15°), was not at all tender. I walked all round it with the camera and didn't note any inclination for it to lean or tilt.

Ride quality in the Seaway was impressive. The craft tracked true, kept spray and displaced water well away from the interior and, in general, was very easy to drive. The hull was quite responsive to trim and a small amount of up trim kept the bow high while pushing into swells, as one would do in a normal offshore travel situation.

Riding downhill in the Seaway entrance, waves pushed from astern failed to induce any broaching or other handling difficulties. This is due to the craft's hydraulic steering, which made the wheel feel light and responsive at all times.

OVERALL

Formosa have promoted the Tomahawk 550 as an entry level craft, however, as I saw it, the finish, capability and general seaworthiness plus ample onboard features of this strongly built plate alloy craft don't reflect that categorisation at all. The paint job, quality of upholstery and general neatness of fittings and other items was also of a much higher standard than what I would regard as entry level. The marlin decal on the side,

What's new

The Tomahawk brand is a new range of boats released by Formosa to complement its existing range of plate boats.

While still maintaining the ride and build quality that Formosa are famous for, the Tomahawk, with high tensile sides and bottoms and an aluminium self draining deck, now offer another option for anyone looking for a versatile performing open water workhorse.

The Tomahawk range also features a reverse chine hull, fastback style transom and raised sheer line.

alone, was quite outstanding.

The Tomahawk is an ideal offshore or bay rig with strong family boating potential. The price of the rig as tested (including a good trailer) was \$42,790, which is certainly very sharp given the quality of the package and what an experienced angler could expect to do with such a serious fishing rig.

For your local dealer visit www.formosamarineboats.com.au.



The wide bolster seat with reversible backrest is a standard feature of the craft. Other seating is left to the owner to specify in this seven person rig.

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