

F&B's
HOT NEW DESIGNS!

Bar Crusher 6.1 Cuddy

As the plate boat market gathers momentum, new models are being released for an eager market - and the standard of design, building and fit-out grows apace. Peter Webster report & pics.

Much as it pains the writer to concede that our Kiwi neighbours are good for anything beyond the odd America's Cup event, much less real football and genuine cricket, we've been forced to accept that the new Bar Crusher range of welded plate aluminium boats is likely to do to plate alloy boat building in Australia what the Kiwis have already done to the Americans on the 12 Metre yacht racing circuit. In other words, this boat is going to 'kick butt'.

These are powerful words, but the Bar Crusher promotion is gathering force, and making quite an impact along the eastern seaboard.

What is a Bar Crusher? What do they do? Who is behind them? We decided it was time to learn more about them when by coincidence, Bar Crusher's MD, Peter Cleland, arrived on our doorstep with a brand new Bar Crusher 6.1 cuddy.

Although the meeting was more fortuitous than planned, we nevertheless seized the opportunity to go for a really good run in the Bar Crusher 6.1 to learn more about this interesting craft.

Design The Bar Crusher 6.1 like its smaller 5.5m brother, is basically designed and built in NZ, although much of the fitting out process takes place in Melbourne.

Peter Cleland is adamant that they can do a better job of the fitting out process in Melbourne for Australians than the Kiwis, and it seems the Kiwis are happy with this arrangement.

As a result, Cleland actually paints and fits out the boats in Melbourne from shells built in NZ and shipped

across.

Because of the success of the Bar Crusher project, Cleland is now looking at building the actual shells in Australia on a Kiwi jig, to minimise the freight component between the two countries, and to provide even greater control over the manufacturing process.

In a design sense, the Bar Crusher 6.1 we tested is a very contemporary boat. From the swallow tail transom to the gas-lifted aluminium hard top, this boat is truly one of the most innovative and interesting boats of its kind we



have tested.

As you can see, it's essentially a hardtop over a cuddy cabin arrangement. There is not enough room for full length berths in this version, although a long cab version no doubt could be arranged if a customer wanted to give allocate more space to the cabin.

As it currently stands, the cuddy isn't big enough to sleep in properly although you could put your head down for an hour or two's nap before the fish come on, or the bundy wears off.

But it's not really designed for that

purpose. The cuddy cabin is an area where you could sit inside from bad weather, store rods, keep your clothes dry, stow the food baskets, etc. It's not designed as a sleeping area, although with bunks of 1600 mm length by an average 620 mm wide, there's enough space for a couple of youngsters to sleep if not the adults.

Back out in the cockpit, there's 1900 mm of cockpit space behind the fixed seat (measuring fore and aft) with a very healthy 1.4m of cockpit width between the coamings across the cockpit.

So it's got a very large cockpit that's for sure. Measured from the transom through to the bulkhead, there's no less than 2.69m of floor space so if you're looking for fishing room, this boat's got it and then some.

The Stats It has a bottom hull thickness of 5mm, topsides of 4mm and a plate aluminium floor as well.

The boat carries 150 litres of fuel under the floor and for the test was powered by a Yamaha 115hp, 4-stroke extra long shaft outboard motor.

As you can see from the attached list, the standard features are quite extensive, but first and foremost we should highlight the most unusual "quick flow" water ballast system built into the keel of this boat.

As a concept, the idea of a water-ballasted keel in planing powerboats is hardly unique or even unusual.

Water ballasted keels have often been used in planing powerboats by various designers over the years and they'll continue to be used. Why? Because the idea is essentially quite

