

Quintrex 500

Freedom Sport



A born boat tester, 9 months old Luke Webster checks out the ductility of the Quinnie bow rail with an impromptu chew - he's sure showing all the signs of following in his Dad's footsteps!

Recently awarded the **ABIA Aluminium Boat Of The Year**, the **Quintrex Millennium Freedom Sport Bow Rider** is unquestionably one of the best general purpose, fishing and family boats now available. After a day out in the Quinnie with his young family, Jeff Webster returned mightily impressed.

With few exceptions, aluminium bow riders have never been popular with Australian boaters. Bow rider buyers have traditionally preferred the glossy, luxuriously appointed, high performance models offered by fibreglass builders such as Cruise Craft, Signature, and Haines Hunter.

Recently however, a new kind of bow rider buyer has emerged. Thanks almost entirely to the sheer marketing power of Quintrex, boat buyers are now beginning to acknowledge that an aluminium bow rider has enormous potential for family and general fishing applications.

Quintrex's new Millennium Freedom Sport bow riders have captured the interest of family boat buyers across the country. At the recent Sanctuary Cove Boat Show for example, the Freedom Sports on display were constantly surrounded by interested onlookers.

The Freedom Sports' innovative interior design and Quintrex "Millennium" hull shape has also been acknowledged by the Australian Boating Industry Association - the boat being awarded the 1999 Aluminium Boat Of The Year.

Design: So what is it about the new 500 Quintrex Freedom Sport which makes it deserving of the boating industry's highest accolade? Well, it is likely to be a combination of factors, chief among them being the clever interior layout, but also the excellent ride and handling providing by Quintrex's new, flared bottom hull shape. The "Millennium" hull, as it is called, really does represent a significant step forward in aluminium monohull design.

Quintrex is not the first company to release an aluminium bow rider. At one time or another, most of the leading pressed alloy builders have marketed a bow rider, but until recently, none have

proven very successful. Why? Well, I suspect it is partly due to Quintrex's dominant position in the market place. With the backing of a major national advertising campaign, Quintrex has been able to promote the whole bow rider concept, and to influence boat buying trends - all of which is good news for the entire aluminium boating industry.

But there's more to the success of the new Freedom Sport than that. Simply put, Quintrex have got it right. The

onboard - especially if boating is a new experience for them. The simple act of starting the engine can frighten young kids - especially if they are a bit shy and timid like my daughter.

Fortunately, the Freedom Sport was powered by one of the new Evinrude 70 hp four strokes - which is arguably the smoothest, quietest engine in its class.

Even so, it took Courtney a few minutes to get used to the noise of the engine - and the whine of the power trim when the engine was raised and lowered. My son Luke, just nine months old, was still too young to know about fear, so he took it all in his stride.

Actually, Luke was revelling in the new experience. Still too young to walk, he was having a great time crawling around the cockpit, climbing up against the coamings to peer over the side.

For both Luke and Courtney, the Freedom Sport had more than enough freeboard to keep them from climbing out of the boat. The carpeted floor also meant that

Luke could crawl around the cockpit without grazing his knees.

The seating in the rear cockpit of the Freedom Sport comprises two folding pedestal seats at the helm, along with a rear bench seat. The latter was ideal for young Courtney. Even with her short, two year old legs, she could climb up on the bench and seat herself. Of course this also meant that she could climb out over the stern, so she still needed to be constantly watched. Then again, with very young children, keeping one eye on them at all times is necessary anyway.

For Helen and I, the swivelling pedestal chairs proved very comfortable. The helm chair also has a standard fore and aft slider, so I could adjust the position of the chair for maximum comfort. The chair can be moved far enough back to allow you to stand at the helm, but as with most



interior layout in the Freedom is ideal for boat buyers with young families. And I can say that with some authority as I now fit into this category!

The Interior: To test the new Quintrex Freedom Sport in the family boating role for which it was designed, I thought it would be a good idea to take my wife Helen, and two youngsters out for a run on the Gold Coast's Broadwater.

As it happened, the trip was a first time outing for my nine month old son Luke, and only the fourth trip for two year old Courtney.

After launching the boat singled handed (Helen was keeping the kids from running amok) at Runaway Bay Marina, we piled the kids onboard and idled out of the Marina. As anyone with young children will confirm, you don't do anything quickly with young kids