

TRAILER BOAT TRIALS

By Sam Mossman

Senator Typhoon 760



NEW ZEALAND
fishing
news



Napier manufacturer Senator Boats was set up 13 years ago, with owner Wayne McKinley having a boat-building history going back nearly 20 years.

The marketing of Senator was handled by Firmans Marine for many years, but last year the two companies parted ways and Senator set up its own distribution network.

Senator's new Typhoon range comprises conventional mono-hulls that complement their popular pontoon boats and larger offshore cruisers. The Typhoons start at 5.5m and run through to 8.5m in hull length.

Recently I had the chance to trial the MH760 Typhoon with Senator agent, Gary Hatton, of Auckland Marine. We had planned to take the boat out over the Manukau Bar on Auckland's west coast, but bad weather and other obligations kept interfering, and in the end we launched the boat at Gulf Harbour on the east coast to the north of Auckland city.

Construction

With 6mm bottoms, 5mm sides and a 4mm chequerplate deck, this hull has substantial specifications. The chines are fully seam-welded, inside and out. The keel assembly sees the bottom plates also seam-welded inside and out, with a flat plate welded cross-ways above the keel line, forming a strong triangular section.

The deadrise at transom is a reasonable 18°. There are no strakes – making the hull a soft-rider – and the chines running almost to the bow are downturned.

Under the deck there are four longitudinal supports running the length of the hull, and five frames/bulkheads laterally, in addition to the transom. Senator says there's 1030kg of built-in hull buoyancy, but reserve buoyancy figures (buoyancy minus rig weight) were not available at the time of writing.

Power and performance

Test day was a magnificently calm mid-autumn morning with



Pictured left, top to bottom: A plough anchor is permanently mounted on the bowsprit.

The open back hard-top design allows plenty of space and light, while the lockable fore-cabin provides security.

The helm position is comfortable and well laid out.



only 5-10 knots of SE wind. The test boat was fitted with a Mercury Verado 300hp supercharged four-stroke engine, swinging a 17-inch pitch Mirage Plus propeller. The Verado was so quiet and smooth it was hard to tell when it was running at idle.

While underway I initially started to think the hull was fairly noisy, but then realized that, because the engine was so quiet, I was hearing sound that was normally covered by engine noise. Full-speed running produced 45mph (72kph or 39 knots) at 5800rpm – pretty nippy for a heavily-built hull.

This boat is a pleasure to helm. Teleflex power-assisted hydraulic steering is fitted, making it easy to move the big black beast attached on the back. All-around visibility is good. The Smartcraft throttle and shift are smooth and effortless to use, and the Lectratab trim tabs, with click adjustments and clear display lights showing tab positions, make it simple to trim the boat and make allowance for windage and crew movements.

The wind began to lift slightly in the afternoon, and a strong run-out tide over Challenger Reef produced a wind-against-tide situation, lifting a three-quarter-metre chop to give the boat a decent try-out. The hull cut through the chop easily and was a soft lander, with no tendency to broach or bow-steer.

Anchoring

Access to the bow around the cabin sides is easy enough, especially with non-skid panels and substantial bow rails for security. However, going up to the pointy end to tend the anchor is seldom required, as a Lewmar winch with helm controls is fitted and a plough anchor permanently mounted on a bowsprit.

An offset bollard is welded to the foredeck. The anchor-well can be accessed, if necessary, through a hatch in the forward bulkhead. A hatch in the cabin top is an additional way to access the foredeck.

Layout

Although a bit short for a tall adult, the fore cabin could sleep three at a pinch with the berth infill added. A flushing toilet has been fitted beneath the centre berth. Under-berth stowage is supplemented by side shelves with drop cupboards fitted back against the rear bulkhead. The forecabin is lined to deck level. Access to the wiring in the back of the console is through a hatch; a sliding lockable door is fitted.

The wheelhouse has king and queen bench seats fitted on units with two levels of stowage built in. Chequerplate foot rests are fitted. The dash is large with dark carpet lining (cutting internal glare on the toughened-glass windows), and has back lips to stop items sliding off. There is plenty of room to mount instruments, and in this case a Furuno FCV-585 sounder was set there. Secondary shelves are fitted below each side of the dash as well as a large glove box and smaller side shelves. Side windows are sliding openers and made from toughened glass.

The console has a nice face of woven-graphite cloth and Smartcraft gauges, with switching, a Sony marine sound system, Lowrance Globalmap 8200c GPS/plotter, and Sitex VHF radio fitted here.

Grab rails are well sited, with one for the passenger, two under the wheelhouse roof, and a further three on the rear of

the hardtop.

This is an open-back hardtop layout. The rear-facing bench seats are protected by the hardtop overhang. Two large holds are fitted centrally under the chequerplate deck and can be drained by bungs to the bilge. The sealed decks drain to a sump under the transom, from where water is removed by a 2000gph bilge pump fitted with float and manual switching.

This is a large cockpit with decent-sized, full-length side shelves. Transom lockers hold two batteries (house and start) with isolation switch and a washdown hose. The fuel port is set on the rear transom top, where any spillage will hopefully go overboard. The fuel line runs through a surge chamber (which stops blow-back when filling and heat-expansion spillage) and into a substantial 380-litre under-deck tank.

The transom wall has a step-through section on the port side with an aluminium plate drop-door. Over the back is a good-sized chequerplate boarding platform fitted with grab rails and fold-down boarding ladder. Four substantial alloy mooring cleats (plus the bow bollard) complete the deck furniture.

Fishability

Although the hull would take on a modest heel with three adults lined along one gunwale, it would go no further once the chine settled in. This is the payback for having a sea-kindly 18° deadrise.

The chequerplate deck provides firm footing, and the gunwales supply good top-of-thigh support, with plenty of toe room beneath. There is plenty of room in the cockpit. We fished three, and four anglers would have no problems either.

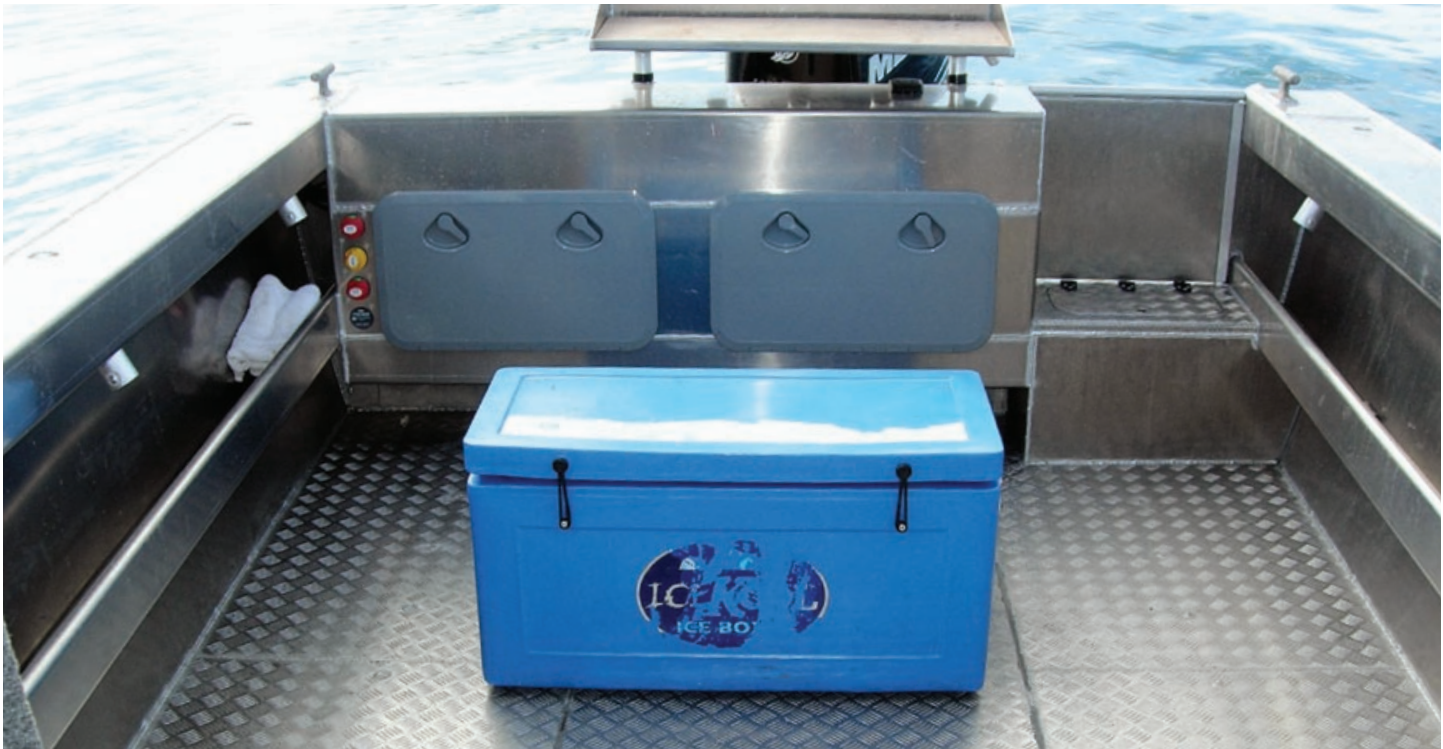
Fishing fittings include a nine-position rocket launcher on the hardtop and six alloy through-gunwale rod holders. A further two holders are set on the outside of the transom to mount the bait-station, which drains over the stern. Five additional rod holders are fitted to the back of the bait-station, which we found to be the ideal protected place to carry rods as we moved between



The holders on the back of the bait-station were the ideal spot to carry rigs between fishing spots.



Chequerplate platform, fold-down ladder and transom step-through make boarding easy for divers.



The large, high-sided cockpit provides plenty of work space, with storage of bait and catch in an after-market ice box.

fishing spots. A live-bait tank with ram feed and standpipe drain is built into the step-through, and an after-market ice bin is used to store bait or the catch. Kilwell outriggers had been fitted, and can be laid forward and strapped to the bow rails when not in use.

Overall, a pretty useful fish and dive boat with plenty of potential to be customised.

Trailer

The test boat was carried on a tandem-axle DMW Premier trailer. This is a cradle A-frame design with entry bay, built from galvanized-steel box section. The tow bar is gusset strengthened, and the trailer is braked with a Carlisle Hydrastar hydraulic system acting on both axles. A manual winch-controlled parking brake is also fitted. The boat is carried on 12 pairs of wobble rollers per side; two keel rollers aid loading.

Other trailer fittings include: galvanized rims; leaf-spring suspension; submersible lights; a dual-ratio manual loading winch; dual coupling; and wind-down jockey wheel. Tow weight, dry, is about 2900kg.

All in all

A solid, well-behaved boat suited to a wide range of fishing and diving tasks around the New Zealand coast, including blue-water game fishing. 🇳🇿



Below: Twin batteries are in a protected position in the transom wall; a live-bait tank is built into the step-through.

Specifications	
Model	Typhoon MH760
Material	Aluminium
Configuration	Monohull open-back hardtop
LOA	8.0m
Beam	2.50m
Bottom	6mm
Sides	5mm
Deck	4mm
Deadrise	18°
Engine	300hp Mercury Verado
Propellor	17" Mirage Plus
Fuel Capacity	380 litres
Basic key turn package (200 Yamaha 4 stroke)\$109,000	
Price as tested	\$145,000
Ex-Demo model available for \$135,000	
Test boat courtesy of Auckland Marine Centre	