

BOAT TEST

SENATOR 1700
PRO SPORT



▲ The new Senator 1700 Pro Sport by Senator Boats and Auckland Marine.

BECOMING A PRO

By Freddy Foote

The Senator 1700 Pro Sport is somewhat of a unique model from the Napier alloy builder, in fact, it isn't even on their website! We sent Freddy Foote along to investigate.

The Senator 1700 Pro Sport is a new model from Senator Boats, offered exclusively through its Auckland dealer, Auckland Marine. Essentially it's a spec'd up version of the company's popular RC520 and has the vast majority of the factory options list added as standard.

The main notable difference is that the 1700 Pro Sport has a full flat floor, meaning the floor height has been raised to give greater cockpit space, something some alloy pontoon boats have been shy on previously.

"We wanted to develop a model that reflected the feedback we were getting from our customers. For example we've raised the height of the coamings which allows us to put in a full flat floor, which maximizes cockpit space," says Matthew Keys, Sales Manager at Auckland Marine.

"It fits with what we market here at Auckland Marine. We're all very much into fishing, as are our customers, so we've put together a value for money pontoon boat under 5.5m that has key fishing functionality built into it as standard."

FUNCTIONAL FEEL

The layout is fairly basic but is still quite very practical. Forward in the small cuddy is ample room to stow away gear for the day. Small side shelves with foot rests positioned on the floor will stop any gear sliding back into the cockpit while underway.

Above, there is a sizeable alloy hatch that provides excellent access to the anchor locker; a small step below will help gain better access for anchoring duties as well.

At the helm, two pedestal seats are mounted on bases with shelved storage underneath. I love this seating style, where the seat bases providing storage, where it would otherwise be dead space.

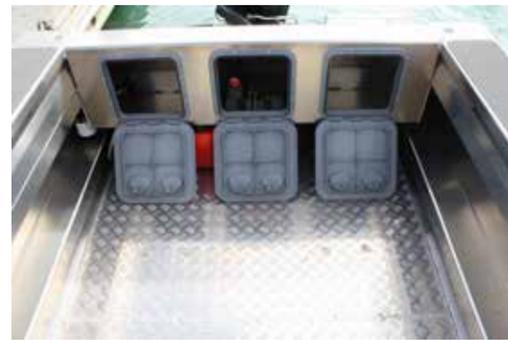
There is, however, a variety of other seating arrangements on offer should you want to customise to suit your needs. A king/queen style seat would work on the port side, and provide additional seating for a third passenger.

The helm and dash is relatively compact, with the plain dash having Mercury Marine Smart Craft instruments and switch panel, while above, there is adequate room to mount a multi-function

The 1700 Pro Sport is an exclusive Senator model offered by Auckland Marine.



A full-width flat floor is a prominent feature of the 1700 Pro Sport.



▲ Above floor storage under the seats is a great feature.

▲ The helm is clean and tidy, with provision above to mount electronics.

▲ Plenty of locker storage aft.

▲ A handy storage shelf is located right next to the throttle.

▲ Big, deep side shelves are a prominent feature of the cockpit.

display on a bracket.

To the right is the engine throttle which is in nice easy reach for the skipper, alongside is a small storage shelf to keep cellphones and keys, etc. A three piece curved windscreen does a good job of providing ample protection from the wind.

A bimini top with clear sides and front is integral with the fold down rocket which allows the Pro Sport to be stored in a standard-sized garage.

The cockpit is a prominent feature of the 1700 Pro Sport; the full flat floor will allow anglers to get right up against the sides when battling that big fish.

It features full-length side shelves, which are really deep and will be able to store a lot of gear. Across the transom, three large storage lockers house onboard systems such as filters and batteries up off the floor and also provide an additional area for storage. Wide coamings are finished with deck grip and feature three built-in alloy

rod holders on each side.

A full width-boarding platform is a great feature and is accentuated with a sizeable T-bar boarding ladder to aid re-entry back into the boat. Well-placed grab rails will certainly help divers and swimmers. There is an option for a 100L under floor fuel tank, which comes at an added retail cost of \$1200. Our test boat came with 25L tote tanks with adequate space underneath the aft deck area to accommodate them both.

COMMAND THRUST

The 1700 Pro Sport can be powered from 75hp through to 115hp outboards. Our test boat had a Mercury 90hp EFI 'Four-Stroke 'Command Thrust'. Command Thrust is the new model range that replaces the 'Big Foot' models, which are a more heavy-duty engine fitted with a V6 gearbox and propeller, and provide increased levels of thrust.

The 90hp pushed the Pro Sport along to 31.2 knots @ 5800 rpm, using 33.2 lph.

The best cruise we found was 18 knots @ 3500rpm using 11.9 lph, giving a range off the twin 25 L tote tanks of 67 nautical miles. Overall the 90hp delivered good power. Out of the hole, the response was immediate, thanks to the high capacity of the 2.1-liter, four-cylinder, eight-valve, single-overhead-cam design of the Mercury.

Should you choose, you can specify a 75hp engine or as high as an 115hp if you really need to.

This was my first time onboard a Senator and I was really quite pleased at the performance on the water. Our test day conditions out from Maraetai were blustery, the wind picking up the water and creating a steep harbour chop.

The 1700 Pro Sport took it all in it's stride, delivering a very pleasant and comfortable ride when heading straight into it. The chines

worked well to deflect the spray away; we did, however, cop one in the face when we turned into a quartering sea though it was to be expected given the windy conditions.

Packages for the 1700 Pro Sport start from \$39,990 with a 75hp two-stroke outboard. As tested, this Pro Sport was \$49,990 and comes with the 90Hp four-stroke, rocket launcher and canopy, vinyl side clears, a 5" colour GPS/fish finder and a VHF radio with aerial - (the sounder and VHF to be fitted upon purchase).

The cockpit was certainly very roomy. We had three of us onboard during our test, and at no stage did I feel any excessive leaning when at rest. You could comfortably fish three adults if you need to, or two adults and a couple of kids. Overall, it was a fantastic little boat. Auckland Marine offers another model, which is slightly bigger, the 1800 Pro Sport.

The 1700 performed very well on the water and has the adequate stability you would expect from a pontoon design. What's more, it's

a very easy boat to use and tow, with a trailerable weight of 1000kg and an overall length on the trailer of 6m.

I really liked what Auckland Marine has done to put together the model. The only negative comment I could make would be that it lacked seating for more than two persons, although a change in the seating configuration would fix this. But again, that's just my personal preference.

I came away after my first experience with a Senator feeling very pleased. If this is how good their smaller boats perform, I can't wait to get aboard a bigger one. ⚓

▼ **A large deck hatch provides access to the anchor locker.**



▼ **Test power comes from a 90hp Mercury Four-Stroke 'Command Thrust' and will push the 1700 to 32.1 knots.**



SPECIFICATIONS

Model & Model: Senator 1700 Pro Sport
Priced from: \$39,990
Price as tested: \$49,990
Type: Pontoon
Construction: 4mm/3mm
LOA: 5.2m
Beam: 2.0m
Deadrise: 17 deg
Height on trailer: 2.20m
Trailerable weight: 1000kg
Test Power: Mercury 90hp EFI Command Thrust
Propeller: 17 Vengeance
Power options: Outboard
HP Range: 75-115hp
Fuel capacity: 2 x 25L Tote Tanks
Trailer: DMW Single Axle

FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range (NM)
1000	4.5	2.1	0.470	95
1500	5.5	4.1	0.750	60
2000	6.5	5.7	0.880	51
2500	8.5	7.6	0.900	50
3000	13.5	9.6	0.720	62
3500	18.0	11.9	0.670	67
4000	21.5	15.8	0.740	60
4500	25.0	22.2	0.890	50
5000	27.5	27.8	1.100	40
5500	28.5	32.8	1.200	37
5800	31.2	33.2	1.100	40

Range is based on 50 litres of fuel.

This boat could be protected against the effects of corrosion, oxidation and discolouration.

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Notable Standard Items

Fold-Down rocket launcher, Canopy with front and side clears, Vinyl side stripe, 5-inch colour GPS/Fishfinder (to be fitted), VHF Radio & Aerial (to be fitted).

Notable Options on Test Boat

Mercury 90hp EFI 'Command Thrust' Four-Stroke outboard.

Boat Supplied by:

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