



BY MATHEW HEWETSON

# SENATOR RH690

Trilogy looks great with its paint work/decals as we leave the OBC.

Editor Matt Hewetson caught up with co-owner of Epic Adventures, Bruce O'Brien to head out on the Hauraki Gulf in the new Senator RH690 paired with a Yamaha F250hp.

**B**ruce lives in Auckland and is part owner of successful charter business Epic Adventures based in Whitianga, on the Eastern Coromandel and the Bay of Islands. Bruce has been involved with helping to run the business for several years and the skippers they employ are fond of the big

RH770 Senators they use in their fleet. I have been out a few times on these boats and I'm always impressed by their sea going abilities and as a great platform for anglers to get to work no matter the conditions.

Senators are a no-nonsense type of boat, they aren't too flashy, and some people aren't keen on pontoon boats, but they certainly appeal as a

serious fishing vessel in my book. I have been on many different sizes/models and on both coasts fishing from them, and they are my kind of boat.

Bruce too has come to cherish them, he used to own a smaller hard top alloy boat and decided to look at upgrading to an RH690 for his fishing in the Hauraki Gulf, going over the Manukau and further afield. From being

involved with Epic's Senators, he realised a Senator would meet his needs and more.

Bruce liaised with Grant Simmonds at Senator HQ in Napier to discuss his requirements and added a few changes to the standard RH690 design. This is the good thing about Senator, they are willing to work with each buyer along the build process and customise to their needs.

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The Yamaha 250hp outboard is ideally matched to the Senator RH690 with excellent fuel economy and power.



On the right-hand side above the live bait tank, you can see the hardy seat on the transom door.



We loved the rails on the transom's platform around the big Yamaha, great to fish from.



The boat was built to survey as it may possibly be put into charter in the future for the business, and here are some of the key features built/allowed for:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. Plain plate floor throughout for SeaDek to be applied</li> <li>02. Dash and seats moved forward 200mm (longer deck)</li> <li>03. Move dash pod forward on bulkhead</li> <li>04. Forward cabin bulkhead with sliding door</li> <li>05. Electric toilet setup in forward cabin</li> <li>06. Auto capstan, bow setup with hoop over fairlead</li> <li>07. Full bump rail plus half-length upper for bow rails</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>08. 4 x additional rod holders in pontoons, fronts out @ 90 deg, mid fronts @ 70 deg, mid rears @ 30 deg, rears @ 10-15 deg (to miss the transom cage)</li> <li>09. Drink holders in pontoons, two per side</li> <li>10. Full width trimtab mounts</li> <li>11. Wiper mount starboard and centre screen</li> </ul> <p><b>Walkthrough transom with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Livebait tank under walkthrough</li> <li>13. Window in livebait tank</li> <li>14. Pump and plumbing for livebait</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Seat on walk through gate</li> <li>16. Livebait tank exhaust</li> <li>17. Sliding window upgrade both sides</li> <li>18. "Typhoon style" bait board on slides and 2 x lock pins</li> <li>19. Upgrade to large king/queen seats (with rolled upholstery)</li> <li>20. Starboard seat fully welded to floor with hatch in the side</li> <li>21. Port side seat to have rear open to accept chilly bin and flip up top to house camp cooker</li> <li>22. Upgrade to Hi Tech 3000 seats with deluxe upholstery</li> <li>23. Slider/swivels on both seats</li> <li>24. Rocket launcher with radar wing</li> <li>25. Radar mount, rear of roof (Simrad 50 deg type)</li> <li>26. Handrail on rear of roof</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>27. Twin handrails inside roof (front to rear)</li> <li>28. Deck wash pickup tube starboard side of pod with valve and washdown kit mounted</li> <li>29. Starboard upper pontoon shelf to suit 210mm dive tanks in lower shelves (both sides)</li> <li>30. Cloth in front cabin (all black cloth)</li> <li>31. Bunk infill squab</li> <li>32. 1020 style bow rail, welded to sides of bump rail</li> <li>33. Transom rail cage and upgrade dive ladder to CNC type</li> <li>34. Threaded GPS aerial on front of roof</li> <li>35. Outrigger stiffener plates in cabin sides</li> <li>36. 8mm Front screens/CLEAR glass all round (for survey)</li> </ul> |
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*That is quite some list!*



*Trilogy leaving the Senator factory in Napier, ready to be based in Auckland*



# Tested Senator RH690

*Epic Adventures has a few Senators in their fleet as they have proven to provide anglers a stable fishing platform with good big sea handling capabilities.*



Seeing the boat up in person and it really stands out with its smart grey/blue vinyl wrap and decals, impressive transom rail cage, 16' Simrad Evo3 electronics with big Yamaha 250hp on the back. 'Trilogy' is certainly a well specced boat and I was looking forward to heading out in the gulf for a fish on it.

## HAURAKI TRIP

I had organised to meet Bruce at Auckland's OBC in late January. I had also invited along Scott Cushman as photographer and Graeme Paterson from Burnsco who was keen to score some fish on their latest jigs. The plan was to go wide to give the boat a good run and fish deep with lures for snapper.

We headed out on a Thursday in calm conditions and raced out wide of Tiri in no time, the Yamaha 250hp

cruised along at close to 30 knots and we soon found gannets and dolphins on the hunt. A workup would be just the ticket to get some fish scales and blood on the new boat.

Bruce was commenting about all the extra things he changed in the boat including a newly designed exhaust system for the live bait tank. This utilises a channel by the engine mount to eliminate water washing over the duck board and the channel on the other side, takes the waste from the bait board to keep things nice and clean. Bruce also wanted to improve the extended duck board fishing platform, by adding a seat top on the transom door which also really gives a nice transom finish line.

Our crew all agreed the boat was an impressive and well set up vessel, able to fish 5

anglers comfortably as we discovered on this day. The fishing was a bit quiet in the morning and we moved around looking for sign on the bottom as the workups didn't last long or moved off at speed. This

can be typically frustrating in January I have found when fishing the gulf. We started to pick up a few nice pannies and Bruce even scored a good gurnard as the slow jigs did their job.



*The snapper were interested in jigs with skirts, such as this Edge Alien slow jig.*



The RH690 cockpit provides ample room for several anglers.



Bruce managed to score a tasty gurnard while fishing off the roomy transom platform.

Bruce was fishing out on the transom leaning into the rail cage while the other four anglers fished the sides (two per side), this really gave you plenty of space to work your lures as we drifted along. The cockpit is very roomy and the hull stable when at rest.

The wind had started to pick up after midday and a real nasty chop with wind against tide meant the Senator was going to be in for a tougher ride back in. With several fish in the bin, we called time and Bruce took us back towards Tiri as we bashed our way through the messy sea. I looked over at the sounder and was surprised to see we were going over 20 knots in such poor conditions. The Senator

really doesn't mind the rough stuff and I was glad to be onboard Trilogy in such a sea state.

Once past Gulf Harbour the land provided relief from the 20-knot sou' wester and we found calmer water and as we approached Takapuna, we could see the America's Cup boats out on the water practising in the high winds. Bruce slowed down to a stop and suddenly Team NZ made a beeline for us and went past in the blink of an eye less than 50m away. Wow, something to see in person and all on wind power!

I'm pretty sure the Kiwi boys on board their yacht were just wanting to get a closer look of Trilogy too, and why wouldn't they? **FIGZ**