



Having owned several boats and spent thousands of hours at the helm, Dan Govier's Senator RH770 Aquadeziac comes as close to his 'perfect boat' as he is likely to get.

DAN GOVIER AND AQUADEZIAC

ONE HOT FISHING MACHINE

■ Words by Grant Dixon ■ Images by Grant Dixon & Dan Govier

The bloke – growing up a fisherman

Dan Govier physically and mentally has never been far from the sea.

Growing up in New Plymouth the son of a commercial longline fisherman, Dan, for as far back as he can recall, was either on, around or thinking about all things marine. He went on to forge a career out of this passion.

"Every spare moment after school, weekends, and holidays I could be found wetting a line along the wharves, beaches and breakwaters surrounding home. When I was old enough to join Dad on the boat – a 40ft Westcoaster, an ex-Freemantle cray vessel – I would have a rod over the side as the baits soaked," says Dan.

Dan's thoughts were never far from the sea. He spent six years at Otago University, coming out with three degrees – a Bachelor of Science, a Post Graduate Diploma in Marine Science, followed by a Masters Degree.

From there he applied for jobs in his academic field worldwide, ironically winning his first posting with the Taranaki Regional Council where he monitored the marine environment, undertaking marine ecological surveys, kaimoana surveys and compliance work around industry and agricultural discharges.

During his studies he worked on the family longliner, obtaining his Inshore Masters ticket at the same time. It was this qualification, not his university qualifications, that saw him get into the charter boat industry.

His first personal boat was a 5.8m AMF, followed by a 7.5m Westcoaster which he put into survey, operating weekend charter trips in the prolific waters around D'Urville Island under the operational name of DG's Marine Fishing Charters.

This proved a tough gig which lasted for 18 months.

"I was holding down a real job so could only fish at the weekends. The area was very weather dependent and influenced by what was happening in the Cook Strait, which made it hard to plan – there were lots of cancellations."

His next move saw him spend four years with the Cawthron Institute, monitoring the effects of aquaculture – the salmon and mussel farms in particular – and it was while working in Nelson he met and eventually married his wife Angela, with whom he had a daughter, Brianna (now 11).

His next move was with SLR Consulting, a global company whose motto is 'Making Sustainability Happen'. It employs 3,000 staff globally, including 180 in New Zealand.

"My work and recreational fishing is focused on the marine environment and looking after it."

Dan says every trip, whether it is a success or a failure, is an opportunity to learn something and to work out how to do things better. *Aquadeziac* is a testament to this.

He has a couple of personal goals – the first is to catch a 30lb 'Mainland' snapper. He has a 30lber to his credit, caught off the Taranaki coast; the second is a 40kg kingfish. Dan has come close to obtaining this with a 38kg capture on a Three Kings trip with Rick Pollock, but he is hopeful he will break the 40kg mark in local waters – they are there, he says.

Over the intervening years, his passion for fishing has never waned; if anything, it has grown stronger. Dan will often go for a fish before work, making the most of any opportunities that favourable wind direction and tides offer. It is not unusual for him to get up at 2.30am, head out for a fish and be back on shore by 8.00am to put in a day's work. *Aquadeziac* is set up for solo operation if he can't find anyone keen enough to join him!

Aquadeziac is not Dan's first Senator. He started with a 6.5-metre option which he customized before taking a huge jump up to an eight-metre hull – describing it as a "caravan on wheels." The

vessel was perfect for overnighting with the family, but it did present some issues around towing with its weight and width. It required a heavy-duty tow wagon and CoF, and while Dan loved the boat, it all got too hard so he sold it as a package, stepping down slightly to his current boat, a Senator RH770. As you might expect, it is highly customised, with Dan working closely with Senator to fit it out to his needs and ideas.

The boat – a place for everything, and everything in its place

It was 4.30am on an early autumn morning when I first stepped aboard *Aquadeziac*. Immediately I knew I was in for something special.

As Dan backed the boat down with his Ford Ranger Sport, it was as though he had set up a special light show just for me. It was a subtle but spectacular introduction to a vessel I can say hand on heart is the most highly spec'd vessel of its size I have had the pleasure to fish off.

And as the morning wore on I was introduced, bit by bit, idea by idea, to a wide range of features that led to me making the 'most highly spec'd' claim above.

The thought that has gone into *Aquadeziac*, and the way this has been brought to fruition by the fabricator, is a credit to Dan and the Senator team.

One of the many examples is the way Dan has set the boat up for ease of use solo. On the starboard forward rail, a ladder has been added which, when dropped down, allows access to the triple-axled GFab trailer which incorporates a Boat Catch. This latter small bit of kit is key to the solo launch.

Dan climbed aboard via the forward ladder and made his way to the helm station. Firing up the big Yamaha, he kept the pressure on the Boat Catch, which he released via a cord to his helm window. One tug and the boat was free, sliding gracefully back to where it was tied off against the marina finger. Dan jumped ashore



Dan deals to another dinner guest, fishing from the gated swimstep.



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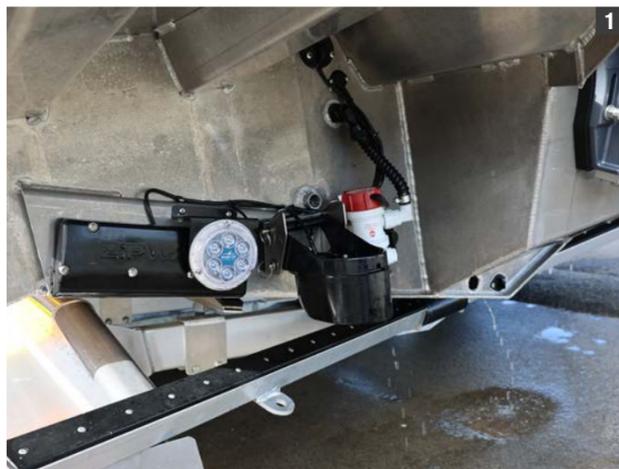
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1) The space under the swim step is 'busy' with ZipWake trim blades, transducers and underwater lights. 2) Dan has had the ladder and rail designed so the boat can be launched and retrieved single-handedly. 3) The latest Ford Ranger Sport has no trouble pulling the big Senator. 4) Aquadeziac lights up like a Christmas

and parked the trailer, launching complete without fuss or hassle.

Coming in, the process was reversed. The boat was driven on the trailer, the Boat Catch activated with Dan deploying the ladder to access the trailer where he secured the safety chain before the Ranger hauled the big rig effortlessly up the ramp. Job done – quick and effective. There was a small alloy pontoon boat being retrieved beside us. Dan was backed in, had the vessel trailered, up the ramp and onto the washdown station while the two people beside us were still winding their craft on. The ladder also serves as beach access when needed.

Dan's prerequisites for the new build were to have it stay away capable while also fulfilling a full-on fishing capability – everything from West Coast bluefin through to Far North marlin with serious snapper, 'puka and kingfish missions in between.

In the forward cuddy, an infill between the two bunks creates a double bed which, at 1.9m long, has enough room for three to sleep comfortably. The tabletop drops down to create a 2.1m long sleeping space. Memory foam has been used in the bunks and upholstery for added comfort. There is an additional hammock on the starboard side which is used as

storage space.

As well as cabin lights, there are reading lights and USB plugs as both Angela and Brianna like their books and devices. USB plugs can be found throughout the vessel to cater for the wide range of personal electronics that are sometimes aboard – iPads, phones, digital and GoPro cameras, and headlamps, to name just a few. Four electric reel plugs are located in the cockpit.

Hella lighting features prominently throughout the boat with a forward light bar, side and cockpit floods, not to mention blue, red and white under gunwale strip lighting, as well as red night vision lighting in the cabin and the cockpit – bait board included. Even the livebait tank is lit.

A typical example of Dan's practical thinking was to cover the inside of the forward rails in a matte black finish, reducing the glare created by the light bar on top of the cabin. Underwater lights are also part of the illumination programme. When we were over our fishing spot, it didn't take long for the piper and mackerel to show up.

In the stay away department, a gas oven and three-burner hob cooktop are part of the layout. To access the latter, the helm seat hinges forward to create a serving space. We had hot biscuits to go

tree when everything is turned on. 5) The GFAB triple axle alloy trailer has been customised to Dan's requirements, making single-handed launching and retrieving a simple task. 6 & 7) The tow/boat rig specification includes personalised plates! 8) Aquadeziac has almost as many rod holders as a small tackle shop.

with our coffee. Pre-trip, Angela rolls the biscuit mix into balls and freezes them. They are defrosted, flattened, and put in the gas oven aboard to bake – magic, and just another example of practical boating demonstrated aboard Aquadeziac.

A diesel heater keeps the cuddy and cabin warm and can be directed onto the windscreens to demist them when required.

High-pressure hot water for showering and doing the dishes is provided by a gas calfont. There is a pull-out cockpit shower and a flush toilet for the creature comforts appreciated by the females aboard especially. One hundred and fifty litres of fresh water is carried.

A small table with seating for three is on the cabin's port side and a couple of movable cockpit seats attach themselves to the gunwale shelving. A small rubbish bin sits under the cockpit sink.

Storage has been maximized, with as much space as possible utilised both in the cabin and the cockpit. There is a great storage area underfloor in the cabin, the lid being gas-strut assisted.

Centre stage in the cockpit is Dan's customised bait station. The batteries – a 12-volt start battery and two 6-volt AGM house batteries – are kept out of the

weather. These are connected to a ProMariner charging system that ensures they are kept topped up.

Above the battery locker is a deep drawer used to keep all the essentials close at hand, while above is a kill tank which has running water and drains out under the swim step. We used it as a bleed tank as part of the Shinkei Jime best fish-handling practice used by Dan. The space could double as a supplementary livebait tank to the main one that is located in the transom's port side step-through. The kill tank's lid doubles as a bait cutting/prep station with a space for knives and hook-out devices at the back of it.

Aquadeziac has more rod holders aboard than some sports shops. The 'double' rocket launcher has space for 20 sets, the covering board a further 11, five around the bait board and a further four RailBlaza mounts on the gunwales and swimstep cage. Double shelving beneath the cockpit gunwales could hold more rods – the bottom one on the starboard side is wide enough to take standard dive bottles and is long enough.

Cockpit flooring is tube matting with U-DEK on the swim step and around the gunwales. The former is a good place to work topwater lures from, or jig, especially if you



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1) Three crew can sleep comfortably in the cuddy for those overnight adventures or when cruising. 2) One of the many creature comforts on board is hot water for showers. 3) The spare space under the sink has been turned into a handy sliding drawer. 4) The swimstep adds extra fishing room, just be prepared to get wet feet! 5) Bonze Fleet helped Dan get the gamefishing livery just right. 6) Hot biscuits were a tasty surprise to have with 'smoko'. 7) Yamaha's bespoke Helm Master control system can be operated from the main steering position or the cockpit control.



don't mind wet feet! When in cruise mode, marine carpet is laid over the tube matting for greater comfort.

Dan has a 'clip-on' removable crayfish pot hauler which he uses on overnight trips, and to keep the cockpit as clean as possible a high-pressure washdown hose has been fitted.

To get the gamefishing fitout sorted, Dan called in 'consultant' Graham 'Bonze' Fleet. Aquadeziac runs a set of Bonze 4.3m solid carbon fibre 'riggers from Kraken fold-out bases. These have been set up to run teasers port and starboard with a Bonze dredge system on the port side. The teasers are run via two Daiwa Tanacom 1000 electric reels located on either side of the hard top.

Power to burn

The very best Yamaha outboard technology is on display aboard Aquadeziac. Bolted onto the transom is a Yamaha F300 DES (Digital Electric Steering) outboard connected to the Helm Master joystick control. Dan rates the Yamaha. The DES is integrated

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within the motor, there is no lag and it talks to the helm station – no pumps or hoses required. The steering is fly by wire and the wheel lock can be adjusted.

Extra manoeuvrability is there when needed; the wheel takes seven full turns from lock to lock at above 3000RPM, while at lower just four turns – great in tight spaces such as boat ramps or marina berths.

The joystick controls are duplicated in the cockpit. Dan fishes around D'Urville Island where there are big tides. It is important to stay over your lures, using the FishPoint function to hold station. Other controls on the helm include the Maxwell capstan, ZipWake trim tabs and Fusion stereo, as well as several banks of switches.

Holding station in more forgiving situations is a job for the 87" Minn Kota Terrova electric motor. This is powered by a single 36-volt lithium battery which provides the power of three conventional AGMs with a 62kg weight saving.

On the test day, we were held over a worm bed by the electric motor while we ground baited around us. There was a slight chop, an incoming tide and 10 knots plus of breeze producing a wind-against-tide situation – yet we hardly moved a metre and were able to fish our flasher rigs in the hit zone, producing snapper to over nine kilos.

In conclusion

Dan has no regrets about dropping down in size to the RH770.

"It does everything we want it to and has been set up to encompass a wide range of uses, from family cruising to hardcore fishing missions."

The rig now comes easily under 3.5 tonnes, requiring only a WoF as opposed to a CoF. His new Ford Ranger Sports, with its 3.0 litre V6 diesel motor and 10-speed gearbox, is more than capable of towing Aquadeziac to the latest fishing spot X.

Aquadeziac is one mean fishing machine, but with a heap of home comforts to keep everyone happy.



There is a full suite of sophisticated Furuno electronics to look after fish finding, navigation, bottom charting and safety duties.



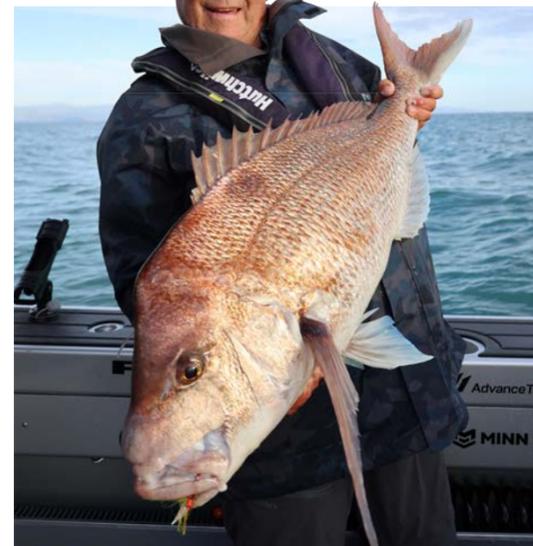
Furuno – Dan's number one choice

Furuno products dominate the electronics. Pride of place in what is a busy helm station is a 19" Furuno TZT3, backed up by a 12" bracket-mounted unit.

This allows the skipper to create easy-to-view multi-functions. Negotiating the Port of Nelson waters and heading out of the Cut at 4.30am saw the radar overlaid onto the chartplotter side by side with the sounder, while the smaller screen ran the FLIR.

The sounder functionality comes via a DFF3D triple-beam transducer. Dan runs PBG – Personal Bathymetric Generator – which enables him to create his own bathymetric records. It is essentially a recreational version of Furuno's signature product WAASP.

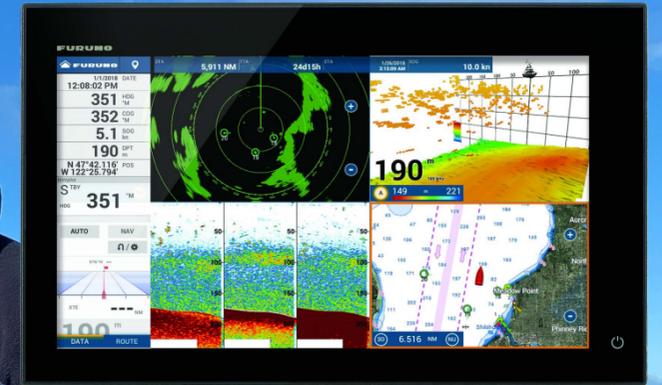
The PBG will view the bottom with a much wider swath than other products. At 100 metres of water, the system scans 200 metres of bottom, requiring fewer passes to create an underwater map. Dan says it is also great for targeting and following fast-moving school fish.



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