



| SENATOR RH 650.



| MAHIA PENINSULA.



| THE SENATOR TEAM.



| SENATOR RH 650.

GRANT SIMMONDS SENATOR MANAGING DIRECTOR

Can you share some company background?

Senator was first established in 1996 by Wayne McKinley in Napier. An avid fisherman with expertise in aluminium fabrication, Wayne set about designing and building Senator boats to handle the rough and dangerous seas off Hawke's Bay. Over the next decade, Senator grew into a solid business with an extensive dealer sales network throughout New Zealand, and in 2017 I purchased the business from Wayne.

Senator has now almost tripled in size, with a team of 38, and has undergone transformation across all aspects of the business. Senator has become a household name among NZ boating and fishing enthusiasts, however we only recently started exporting boats to Australia in 2020.

In 2023, we achieved a remarkable milestone by winning the prestigious award for the best specialist fishing boat under six

metres at the Hutchwilco NZ Boat Show. We have a great culture at Senator that encompasses innovation, performance, and pride in every boat we make.

What do boaties love most about your vessels?

Senator boats are well proven in the most rugged sea environments, have unparalleled safety (due to unique buoyancy chamber/hull design) and deliver an outstanding build and ride quality. Many Senator boat owners fish a long way out to sea, and they need to know that they are going to get home safe, and their boat won't let them down. Senators are also big trailer boats – bigger than most other brands size-for-size. We call this 'True Measure', and we encourage potential customers to compare the true size of boats when comparing brands. We don't include overhangs to make our boats seem bigger than they are.

New Zealand has a strong reputation when it comes to boat building, particularly offshore vessels. How is Senator contributing to that legacy?

There are many coastal areas across New Zealand that are so wild and rugged where the fishing can be excellent, so it's no surprise that New Zealand has a strong reputation for building offshore vessels. We need sturdy boats that can handle the rough in order to get to those amazing fishing grounds! Senator has upheld this reputation and continued this proud tradition of craftsmanship – we do this by building strong boats, welded properly by skilled, experienced people who care about quality.

Tell us about the fishing and boating community in Napier and the wider Hawke's Bay region.

There is a very strong fishing and boating culture in Hawke's Bay, led by the Hawke's

Bay Sports Fishing Club in Napier. The club holds five club competitions and four open tournaments between September and April each year. Senators have featured heavily in these fishing competitions over the years, with the local recreational fishermen knowing the capabilities of our boats very well.

Another unique thing about Senator is that we have a company staff boat, a RH 620 called *Road Kill*. The boat was affectionately named after being fully rebuilt by our team following a car accident. We have a training system where staff can become an approved skipper and book *Road Kill* for trips with colleagues, friends, and family.

Give us an overview of the Senator range.

Currently our trailer boat model range spans between 4m up to 9m long, mostly used for recreational fishing, spearfishing and family boating. Our biggest selling models are the RH 620 and RH 650, and our RH 770 is also

very popular for offshore game fishing and overnighing.

Let's take a closer look at the RH 650. How would you describe this model?

The RH650 is a seriously capable trailer boat, with a huge amount of deck space that can be powered from 150hp up to 200hp outboard. It can be spec'd up to an overnigher with all the bells and whistles or spec'd down to a base model for unbeatable value. You'll love the RH 650 if you love going on big sea fishing missions, want the feeling of safety when you are out wide, but don't want to tow a huge trailer boat around.

Share some of your team's favourite fishing locations around Napier and the Hawke's Bay region.

We have many fishing and boating enthusiasts across our Senator team, but none more so than boatbuilder Deano, our longest serving

staff member, who has been building boats with us since Senator began. A couple of years ago, Deano built himself a Senator 580 in his spare time and is an absolute fishing fanatic, any chance he gets, he's out there. In the game fishing season, Deano recommends targeting yellowfin tuna and marlin by going out wide off Mahia Peninsula. Deano also suggests targeting snapper and gurnard near Waipataki and fishing for terakihi offshore around the Lachlan Banks area. [NM](#)

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