



Something for the boys

A thundering new RIB will take you most places at high speed, as Sam Stewart discovered.

BEING a slimly built man, I can only imagine what it would be like for a number eight to thunder down a rugby field, throwing opposition players out of the way.

But standing at the helm of Smuggler's new Strata 900 I got a glimpse of what that might be like. With the hammer down and the 350hp V8 Yamaha outboard showing off, we smashed through a moderately choppy sea at an unstoppable 50 knots. The boat never flinched.

At nine-metres long she is Smuggler's biggest RIB, built for an Auckland client who wants to make the most of the Hauraki Gulf.

Spawned from the same extendable 11-metre mould as the Strata 850 (Boating, March 2009), it's clear this is a boy's toy designed for fishing, diving, water sports and exploring.

From the helm's collapsible bench seat you get a sense of how much RIB this is.

A seriously meaty bow, triple-straked hull and 23-degree deadrise means there isn't much this boat won't cut through, making the 900 ideal for finding the best spots to indulge in a Kiwi summer on the water.

You can forget having to towel yourself off when arriving at said summer spot, as throwing the goliath boat into speedy turns produces almost no spray.

Accelerating out of a turn earns a throaty approval from the V8, with the electric throttle moving forward far too easily.

At full noise she's guzzling 100 litres of fuel an hour but with 600 litres of premium unleaded under the floor you'll still cover 300 nautical miles.

Low-maintenance Tek-Dek decks cover the boat and there's a watertight locker under the bow, big enough to house dive tanks, a gas BBQ and water skis. With so much deck space, carting gear forward isn't an issue either.

The bow comfortably seats eight, with more watertight stowage under the squabs. A forward locker houses 110m of rope and 16m of chain, which is fed through a cut-out in the hull rather than traipsing over the Hypalon tubes.



The tubes are uniquely secured to the fibreglass hull with a moulded flange at water level keeping them clear of the sea in most conditions.

A bench seat in front of the centre-console houses a chillybin, while inside the console you'll find a head, batteries and more stowage. Several fishing rods can be suspended from the hardtop ceiling.

Perhaps the best feature is the fore and aft canvas covers, which unfurl from the hardtop, transforming the traditionally-exposed RIB into a place of shelter.

Two seats flank each side of the transom, with lockers and access to the bilge between them.

A transom boarding ladder makes getting in and out of the big RIB that much easier, though my guess is you won't want to leave it in the first place.

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Hanse 375



Geared to impress

Hanse 375 and 400

VISITORS to the March 11-14 Auckland International Boat Show will be among the first New Zealanders to lay eyes on two new Hanse models - the 375 and 400.

Featuring optional twin-wheel steering,

the 375 follows Hanse's most successful model worldwide, the 370. With an overall length of 11.35-metres (37ft 3in), it allows for a larger cockpit which leads to a modern, open stern. The combination of a Judel/Vroljik-designed hull and optimised

T-keel and rudder ensures fast and safe sailing in all weather, while a self-tacking jib with fully battened main means easy handling with limited crew.

Interior finish is offered in mahogany or the choice of lighter wood. Two or three cabin layouts are available.

Best seller

The 400 is Hanse's best seller in Australasia and was restyled last year. Measuring 12.10m (39ft 7in) overall, the interior has been upgraded with extra handrails in the saloon, a cream Corian galley and contemporary upholstery. The master cabin features a huge bed and ample storage, with three layout options. The 400 is available in a two or three-cabin layout, with one head standard and a second optional.

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JAFFA BOATS CORRECTION

In our January issue we incorrectly stated that Jaffa Boats' new six-metre polyethylene longboats had a projected shelf life of 10 years. The material does not degrade over time. The boats are bullet-proof, although the .22 round fired at the boat in testing did, in fact, leave a mark. However, a sledge hammer test on the side of the boat proved the boat's strength. We apologise for the error.

