

GOING

BIGGER

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WHEN A BOAT BUILDER GETS REPEAT BUSINESS IT'S TRULY A HALLMARK OF SUCCESS. KNOWING THAT THE CLIENTS HAVE COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO BUILD THEIR NEXT BOAT AS THEY WANT IT. SO WHEN THE OWNER OF A FOUR YEAR OLD STRATA 750 DECIDED HE NEED SOMETHING BIGGER HE HAD NO HESITATION IN GOING BACK TO DAVE PRINGLE AT SMUGGLER BOATS FOR HIS NEXT BOAT.

BOAT REVIEW
SMUGGLER
STRATA 900



Our boat had a live bait tank, power sockets for electric reels and twin Fusion Signature Series speakers set in the transom.

When you bolt 600hp onto the transom of a RIB this size you know you are going to have a quick boat.

“WHILE he loved the Strata 750, after numerous trips to Great Barrier he felt he needed something not only a bit bigger but also with more power, so we decided that the Strata 900 would be perfect for what he required”, says David.

David added that the owner is a serious boatie who uses his boat a lot and in the previous Strata 750 powered by a single Evinrude ETEC 225, he clocked up close to 1000 hours. He chose to stay with the Evinrude ETEC for the new Strata 900, but this time with a pair of ETEC Gen 2 250s.

“He’s a hard core fisherman and with the new boat destined for trips to places like the Three Kings, around the Poor Knights and Great Barrier Islands, the rough water capability of the hull was paramount”, says David.

The Strata 900 hull is solid GRP, with a deep 23 deg deadrise and comes from a multi-purpose mould

that allows Smuggler to build boats from 8.5m to 11.2m and also with the ability to narrow the hull flange so the beam when deflated allows the boats into a container. The inflated beam varies from 3.0m to 3.4m.

When Dave arrived at the Te Atatu launching ramp the tubes on the Strata 900 were deflated for towing purposes and it only took about 10 mins to get both sides pumped up to the required 3 psi. The 600 mm Orca Hypalon tubes, designed and fitted by Southern Pacific comprise five separate chambers and are glued to the fibreglass flange. Different colour options are available.

POWER OPTIONS

Depending on your power option, 300-700hp - single or twin outboard or a single or twin diesel sterndrive or jet – the transom is configured accordingly. With the twin outboard set up you get a wide engine well, with small moulded decks either side and a drop down ladder to starboard. On the single outboard installation the side platforms and rear seats are much bigger, but the moulded transom stays the same. When it comes to the inboard, the entire aft section is different with the engine encroaching a little more into the cockpit, but the bonus is you do get a full width platform aft.

Our boat had a live bait tank to port, power sockets for electric reels, twin Fusion Signature Series speakers and a couple of rear jump seats. Underneath is a trio of lockers for the batteries, access to the fuel filter and ropes, with an extra-large custom made bait board, complete with tackle drawer above.

Without doubt one of the most striking features on the Strata 900 is the bright orange powder coated 316 stainless hardtop supports. This colour is carried through to the seat brackets, rocket launcher and bait board, plus picks up the accents on the engine cowls.



I loved it, well I love orange as a colour anyway and it was nice to see something different from polished stainless.

“The owners like bright colours and so by incorporating the vibrance of the orange we were able to offer a rich contrast from the dullness of the grey tubes and give the boat a very individual and a certain *in your face* look”, says David.

SEATING PLUS

There are a number of seating options available, with our Strata 900 providing enough for 10-12. The helm seat console has a double rear facing seat with an insulated box under and a pair of extremely comfortable Hi Tech helm bolster seats. A premium seat that can be used seated or standing to drive, it proved extremely comfortable and really holds you in place. There is a sink unit, with a fresh water tap and a small cooker and a couple of tackle drawers under the helm seat base.

The helm console features a split screen with a handy storage space between, Simrad 16” MFD and all the necessary controls, switches and dials around it. While the Perspex screen provides some protection from the wind and rain, by adding a set of clears, you can really transform this into a surprisingly cosy area for those late afternoon winter trips back from a day’s offshore fishing.

Inside the console there is a fully plumbed head with macerator and copious dry storage. With a couple of infill boards you can actually form a reasonable size berth for two people, so you can genuinely call the Strata 900 an overnighter.



The hardtop is a vacuum foam composite construction which maintains the strength but also keeps the weight to a minimum, so it doesn’t effect the balance and handling of the boat. The bright orange 50mm support keeps everything rigid, with the top sections removeable should you have a storage issue or want to get the boat into a container. The Strata 900 is also available with a full cabin or a cabin with open bow cockpit.

FISHING FORWARD

Wide side decks lead forward to the bow section, which is available either open with just a bow cushion over the anchor locker and a squab in front of the console. The owner chose to add a couple of the optional moulded units with side squabs as well for extra seating. This does mean you loose some fishing work space. However, the owner loves his flyfishing and soft baiting so has added U Deck to the top of the forward locker and simply removes the clip on squab and converts the space into a generous size casting platform.

Clockwise:
The helm console features a split screen with a handy storage space between.

You can have the bow open or with side seats, your choice.

Wide side decks are covered with U-Deck.

Top speed with a pair of Evinrude ETEC G2 300hp engines on a calm Auckland Harbour was 54 knots.

BOAT REVIEW

SMUGGLER STRATA 900

With the extra squab seats you do get more dedicated storage space, plus there is already a massive area under the cockpit sole. A perfect area for sitting around and still great for fishing! Smuggler have fitted a large Savwinch drum winch and through hull anchoring, which leaves the bow area nice and clear. You can add a bow camera if you want to keep an eye on your anchor tackle and if you do need to sort out an issue on the drum, there is easy access from above.

TWIN PACK

When you bolt 600hp onto the transom of a RIB this size you know you are going to have a quick boat. Top speed with a pair of Evinrude ETEC G2 300hp engines on a calm Auckland Harbour was 54 knots, about 10 knots quicker than a single 350hp V8 Yamaha. However, while top end is nice for bragging rights, it's what the boat cruises at is more important. Flat out I saw 6000 rpm, a fuel burn of 160.5 lph for both engines and range of around 200nm. Drop that back to 4000rpm and the fuel changes dramatically to 68.5 lph, the speed is still an acceptable 33 knots and the range jumps to over 300 nm. At 3500 rpm @ 27 knots, you get the fuel flow to 53.4 lph or 2 litres per nautical mile.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model & Model:	Smuggler Strata 900
Price as tested:	\$NZ340,000
Priced from:	\$NZ300,000
Type:	Centre Console RIB
Construction:	GRP/Hypalon
LOA:	9.00 m
Beam:	2.80 m (Deflated) / 3.40 m (Inflated)
Deadrise:	23 deg
Height on trailer:	2.90 m
Trailerable weight:	3500 kgs
Test Power:	2 x Evinrude ETEC G2 250hp
Propellers:	21" Viper
Power options:	Outboard/Sterndrive/Jet – single or twin
HP Range:	300-700 hp
Fuel Capacity:	600 litres
Water Capacity:	100 litres
Trailer:	DMW
Manufacturer:	Smuggler Marine, Ph +64 98389024 info@smuggler.co.nz www.smuggler.co.nz

FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA

Fuel capacity: 600 litres

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range(NM)
1000	6.0	4.8	0.800	670
1500	8.0	10.7	1.400	380
2000	9.0	21.7	2.500	210
2500	13.0	33.5	2.600	200
3000	23.5	40.5	1.800	300
3500	27.0	53.4	2.000	270
4000	33.0	68.5	2.100	250
4500	39.5	82.5	2.100	250
5000	44.0	103.3	2.400	220
5500	49.5	127.2	2.600	200
6000	54.0	160.5	3.000	180

One of the most significant features on the Evinrude Gen 2 is the integrate hydraulic power steer is a total redesign of what the industry has had since the 1970s when they first built a V6 outboard, with traditional trim and tilt mounted on the transom bracket.

The G2 transom assembly has the trim/tilt mounted in the swivel bracket and pivots at the trailing edge of the transom, so the engines actually set back from the transom. This results in a very clean rig with no steering, battery cables or fuel lines run in the outboard well. In fact the conventional style engine well is really obsolete with a boat fitted with an Evinrude Gen 2 engine.

The hydraulic steering comes through the rigging with the rest of the ancillary parts, so there is no external hydraulic hoses and the power assist that activates it, is incorporated in the swivel bracket. Electrical assisted hydraulic hoses run through to the helm. Set the wheel to the way you want the boat to go and it's like an auto pilot. Hands off the wheel, the Strata 900 runs straight without any deviation.

On a dual application, such as the twins on the Strata 900, the hydraulic steering goes only to the starboard motor and his mechanically linked to the port motor. If you have a triple or quad set up you need two systems.

OBSERVATION

Compared to the Strata 750, the Strata 900 is wider, longer and deeper in the bow and generally a much bigger boat. If you are looking for a big RIB that will comfortably cruise long distances and be capable handling almost any sea state, then the Smuggler Strata 900 RIB is worth a look. It comes with an outstanding performance and handling pedigree and has the style and finish to match. Compared to some other similar sized and appointed RIBs it is also reasonably well priced. ☺



The Hi-Tech bolster seats were extremely comfortable and concealed the compact galley.

TBC caption to come

