

to be appreciated by owners for storage of all sorts of gear from tackle to tucker.

The main cockpit work area with its 550mm interior side height came equipped with 1m long off floor pockets aft, two rod holders per side in the 280mm wide extruded side decks.

A compartment for the fuel tank to starboard plus a plumbed live well to port completed the aft, near transom features. Note that this area, also carpet covered, could be used as a small cast deck if necessary, although I believe most anglers (with maybe four working aboard the craft) would simply fish from up front or within the cockpit area. Aft of the transom a pair of boarding platforms (with rails) were set up each side of the Suzuki 50 4-stroke outboard, a transducer bracket to starboard. In all, I saw the 438 Stryker as having a very useful layout with sufficient features for the angler to make it a desirable fishing craft.

SUZUKI 50 TOP POWER

With engines rated from 30-50hp, the Suzuki 50 4-stroke was always going to impress with its easy performance on the Horizon's 350kg hull. Whisper quite at idle the Suzuki never seemed to make much noise at all, tucked down below the Horizon's transom as it was, but it certainly made its presence felt once the forward control unit was moved.

Easy, seamless power seemed to be the forte of the Suzuki 50, which planed the craft at 16km/h and at 2800rpm, while 3000rpm saw 25.2km/h on the Humminbird 788d. More throttle saw a rapid transition to 4000rpm and 32.8km/h, while 5000rpm recorded 41.6km/h, with WOT of 6000rpm seeing a brisk 53.5km/h. While

top speeds are always fun at the time a sensible cruising speed, to my way of thinking, was an easy 30km/h at just under 4000rpm with fuel usage being very frugal, engine intrusion being absolutely minimal.

A CONFIDENT AND DRY RIDE

The 438 Stryker impressed me with its ride. We did quite a few test runs down towards the Tweed River bar and the craft handled the incoming swells with ease. By backing off a little, accelerating when necessary the Horizon's Hydro Lift hull – with its variable deadrise and quite large wet area pressings as well as a reversed outer chine – rode very surely and with great confidence.

It was also dry too, as pushing hard onto wave action saw very little displaced water likely to affect occupants; most being pushed well away at the stern area of the hull. Moving away from the sudsy stuff and back up river we had the chance to do some fancy circle work to test out the efficiency of the hull's design, which I'll



This image gives an insight into the way displaced water is pushed away from the Stryker's bow at speed.

candidly admit impressed me with its very smart turning ability, plus quick recovery from same. No doubt the craft's large keel contributed greatly in this regard while the extremely light steering made driving

a very easy matter.

Stability at rest was also a strong point of the Stryker and two of us moving about made little difference to level attitude: a feature that family boaters will appreciate.

FISHABILITY AND SUMMING UP

Horizon are certainly on a winner with their Stryker series of craft. The reviewed 438 featured 1.1m high sides, which gave it plenty of sea keeping ability while a very large work area ensured that those aboard (up to five) should be able to enjoy their time aboard. I'd see a family with a couple of youngsters enjoying bay or estuary fishing with ease and safety thanks to generous interior freeboard of around 750mm while more dedicated types could see three people, perhaps up to four in suitable conditions, wetting a line. The excellent and dry ride, very easy handling and stability are important for the rig with its useful fishing features.

Overall presentation was very good with a neat standard of welding and a well-applied paint job with contrasting strips

completing the package. With a starting price of just \$16,990 and the reviewed rig coming home for just \$20,490 on a single axle trailer, this is truly a value for money craft quite suited to a complete beginner or old hand alike. For the location of your nearest Horizon Boats dealer, contact Horizon Aluminium Boats by telephone on (07) 5598 1033 or at www.horizonboats.com.au or email to admin@horizonboats.com.au

• *Quoted performance figures have been supplied by the writer in good faith. Performance of individual boat/motor/trailer packages may differ due to variations in engine installations, propellers, hull configurations, options, hull loading and trailer specifications. This boat test was performed in Queensland. By law in New South Wales you would be required to wear a life jacket while operating this boat alone.*



Top: The Stryker running at speed: family boaters will really enjoy this craft's smooth ride. **Left:** There's a lot of useful work area within the 438 Stryker, as this image shows. **Right:** The Horizon enjoying a little airtime, that Hydro Lift hull made easy work of swells within the Tweed River.