

Yellowfin school

The 6200 cabin model appeals as a practical all-round offshore fishing boat.



On a Gold Coast offshore fishing trip **Scott Thomas** gets to check out the revitalised plate range of Yellowfin Boats.

YELLOWFIN re-released its range of offshore plate boats during 2009. The brand has been around for some time – keen fishos would recall it from the 1980s and early '90s. Back in the day Yellowfin boats were held in high regard as no fuss offshore fishing boats, at a time when small boat gamefishing



was rapidly gaining attention. Sadly, the original boats were discontinued in the early 1990s.

Almost 20 years later, Queensland-based Telwater, maker of Quintrex, Stacer and Savage aluminium boats, and the original maker of Yellowfin, is responsible for re-introducing the range and adding a host of improvements. Don't for a second think the new Yellowfins bear any resemblance to the boats of yesteryear – other than offering a premium plate fishing craft. Fishing techniques and equipment has advanced significantly in 20 years, as has boat building design and manufacturing techniques. Telwater has done a fine job ensuring the design and build, along with the features that

LEFT: The full range comes fully kitted out with plenty of fishing friendly features including bait prep stations, berley buckets and more.

This size centre console would ideally suit Top End barra fishos.



make these boats fishing friendly, with keeping up with the latest trends.

Fishing World spent the best part of a day fishing and testing these hard-core plate boats and was impressed with their standard fishing features and sea going capabilities.

The redesigned range features three plate models – 5700, 6200 and 6700 – in both centre console and cabin configurations.

Bottom bashing

A wild Gold Coast storm whipped up heavy seas, effectively cancelling the planned day of fishing. Thankfully the following day was slightly calmer with just enough swell and wind chop to make things interesting. Gold Coast tackle

Making waves – after a spell of 20 years, the iconic Yellowfin boat range is back better than ever.



dealer Doug Burt was along to steer us in the right direction, and supplied enough gear for the four test boats. The south-east wind was still blowing as we left the Gold Coast Seaway for an hour-long run to an offshore reef. A group of 10 boating media was split between four boats. I was assigned to the 6700 Centre Console; I have to admit I was hoping to ride in the cabin boat after feeling the early morning wind prevail.

The 20 degree deadrise at transom and sharp bow entry is designed to carve a smooth ride in such conditions. An open boat will usually cop some spray from a beam-on wind, but despite churned up seas and a slow run to the fishing grounds, all aboard remained relatively dry. The sharp bow also ensured the jarring sometimes associated with plate boats was taken care of nicely. The sheer size of the boat, at 6.7m, virtually ensures a comfortable ride in most cases.

An hour after leaving the Gold Coast and with winds increasing we started fishing. A cold, strong current made the task difficult. Each boat had two lever drag Penn reels spooled with 50lb braid, and two Penn spin reels spooled with mono. The strong currents meant heavy sinkers and precise positioning over the reef was necessary. The two overheads were sent down deep, while the lighter spin outfits were fished mid-water with pillies for bait.

The boat featured ample room for fishing. With three onboard and rough seas making things uncomfortable, at no point did it feel cramped. This centre console is a boat ideally suited to fishing larger groups, and while we were bottom bashing, lure and fly fishos would appreciate this open style of boat. There's heaps of space for multiple fishos to swing lures or flies around and the open decks would assist in -prolonged fights

with tough gamefish. These open layouts also suit Top End barra fishing.

Territory fishos would also appreciate the sturdy construction of Yellowfins. The entire range is constructed from 4mm and 5mm plate aluminium. And it was too bad we weren't fishing in the Top End, because all we found in the cold

BELOW: Freejumper – a steep bow entry provided a soft landing on most occasions.



FISHING WORLD'S BOAT FISHING

REVIEWED: YELLOWFIN PLATE BOATS



ABOVE: The 6700 centre console's features a reasonable sized in-floor kill tank. The centre console (LEFT) is roomy enough to provide weather protection for a couple of fishos



currents off the Gold Coast was a small teraglin. The other test boats accounted for a few small snapper before we called it a day.

The wind abated around midday and allowed for a fast ride home in the following sea. Yellowfin's Cliff Antees steered us back to the Seaway. Although we didn't have a GPS on board, the ride home was too easy with a cruising speed of 25-28 miles per hour at about 2800 RPM. We stayed dry and made it back through the Seaway with little hassle. The reverse chine design on the hull offered good stability while fishing and allowed for comfortable planing speeds, equating to good fuel usage. In fact with the 200hp Mercury Optimax on the transom, this package should offer good fuel economy.

Features across the range

Yellowfin is promoting the new range as a serious offshore boat. Yellowfin's director of sales and marketing, Damien

Duncan, said the boats would boast a comprehensive range standard features.

"Yellowfin boats are standard with the fishing features that make a difference to deliver superior value for money."

Some of these include: a rocket launcher, hydraulic steering, transom door, rear ladder, 65 litre transom live bait tank, berley bucket, transom cutting board, 135 litre kill tank and under-floor flotation. The boats also have a fully welded self-draining tread plate floor supported by a longitudinal and transverse sub frame rib structure. Other features of the range include a 250 litre fuel tank on the 6700, 200 litres on the 6200 and 160 litre on the 5700. There's also a handy ice box below the helm seat for drinks or storing fish. The seat height is adjustable to allow various size boxes. The helm itself is designed to accommodate two people and appears to be set slightly back to give the passengers a softer ride. There's plenty of under-floor storage near the bow for

safety equipment, etc. The bow featured a step up casting platform and there was ample grab rails around the boat for the bumpy fishing days.

The Yellowfins also feature extra wide gunwales. I appreciate these wide gunwales on an offshore boat for safety and convenience. Below the gunwales was a useful parcel shelf extra for bits and pieces.

Both Cabin and Centre Console configurations have a beam of 2.4m and a depth of 1.2m, with each model in the range able to carry up to seven people.

The 5700 is rated to a 150hp engine while the largest model in the range, the 6700, rates to a 250hp donk. Yellowfin's cabin boats feature a 1.8m bunk, meaning there's plenty of room for longer fishing trips or a place for the kids to escape the sun.

For prices on Yellowfin boats see your nearest dealer.

For detailed info and specifications on all models go to www.yellowfinboats.com.au.





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