



Stacer Ocean Runner 605 Sports

Introducing a big, roomy, comfortable overnight fishing rig you can take 'outside' safely, around the bays with ease - and be 'king of the kids' up the river when the time comes to take the mob on a Sunday arvo barby. Heck, you could even tow a tube to keep 'em all a bit excited. It's that sort of a boat. F&B's Darren Shiel went along to check it out . . .

When asked to test this latest boat from Stacer, I saw the chance as an opportunity to compare this rig to the Quintrex 610 Offshore I recently tested in F&B issue #94.

Being impressed by the 610, I was intrigued to see if the Stacer 605 followed along the same lines. Built under the same roof, with the same management structure, I assumed both boats would be very similar.

Well, you know what they say, don't you? "Assumption is the mother of all (errors!)"

From the beginning, the 605 was designed as a cheaper option in a very crowded market, a boat that any budget conscious purchaser looking for a boat remotely like this, simply couldn't say 'No' to. For this reason, the Stacer is an unashamedly 'plain Jane' boat.

Set to tackle the offshore waters with a trio of blokes wanting to undertake a

day's sport and bottom fishing on a reasonable day, the 605 is a good platform to work from.

Stacer has set this boat apart from its competition, possibly controversially opting to build these boats not to comply with the proposed NMSC Small Craft Safety Standards, let alone the tougher European and American standards being mooted in various quarters.

Stacer boats are not built with inbuilt foam flotation, and unlike its Quintrex counterpart, will not float right way up in the event of a swamping. However, it is a lot cheaper . . . a tough call, isn't it ?

This fact simply means the Stacer is right in line with just about every other trailer boat manufacturer in Australia, as very few meet the *proposed* (we must stress) NMSC 'standard' as yet.

Design

The 605 is a reasonably big boat. Design wise, it has a moderate v-hull, big flared shoulders up front, deep sides and freeboard, and a fairly high cabin structure. These features are all designed to enhance the boats offshore ability, making it a safer alternative to a smaller runabout style boat.

Stacer claims the 605 also incorporates EVO Hull technology, a variable deadrise hull, with a deep-vee to the centre, and the outside creating a flatter chine like appearance, which is standard to the range of larger Stacer Boats.

When viewing the boat from the stern, quite frankly, it is very hard to see any change in the dead rise angle at all on this vessel. The difference is so small, one has to wonder about its effectiveness. On all other variable dead rise hulls this writer has tested,

the difference is very easy to see.

The boat also incorporates a MOD-POD transom design, designed to float today's larger four-stroke engines with ease, and assist the hull to a faster/flatter plane. This works very well, and also provides the boat with a large swim/boarding platform to the transom.

Technically, the boat measures 6.25m overall, has a wide beam of 2.40m, a hull depth of 1.37m, and an empty hull only weight of 750kg.

Engineering/Construction

Built in the same complex as Quintrex boats, in Telwater's very large manufacturing plant in the Gold Coast Marine Precinct at Coomera, the Stacer 605 certainly has plenty of history to back up its quality.

Using 5mm plate bottom sheets, and 3mm topsides, together with beam width cross members for strength, the boat is sticking to the industry standard measurements.

There is nothing special about the build of these boats, except for the fact that Stacer use world leading technology in their manufacture, such as first class aluminium presses, paint booths and many of this country's most highly skilled tradesmen in pressed aluminium boat construction.

With a little care

and maintenance, these boats will last a very long time. The building practices used make these boats reasonably strong, and coupled with Stacer's long history of quality products, these boats are sure to be around for a long time.

Telwater provide a full three-year warranty on the whole package, backing up their claims of a quality product.

Finish

The quality of finish on Stacer boats meets the industry standard once again. The boats are in no way top drawer, but the finish is certainly acceptable. The paint is well done and attractive, the welds are clean, but the boat itself is a little bare.

The boat does have things like boarding ladders, transom doors and handrails as standard, but in some other areas the boat is very bare. Again, like several of the Quintrex and Seajay's I have tested recently, the padding on some of the upholstery is poor, too. However, when compared to the likes of a Seajay, Quintrex or Savage, the Stacer is not left behind in any way, and is highly competitive, price wise.

The main positive this Stacer

package has over the competition, is that the entire boat is put together in the factory. This means the quality is consistent throughout the entire boat, and it hasn't been through two-dozen hands before the owner takes home his/her pride and joy.

Helm Set-Up

In keeping with the rest of this boat, the helm is very bare. The dash is just a flat aluminium sheet, and doesn't have any fibreglass dash inserts, as is the norm for many of today's pressed alloy boats. But it is functional.

Immediately ahead of the driver, in clear view either standing or seated, the helmsman are the standard Quicksilver gauges. Gauges monitor the engine hours, temperature, trip, rpm, speed and fuel load. There is a very basic 3x switch panel to the lower right just for the mandatory functions.

A Ritchie compass is centrally mounted on the dash, with the (*standard!*) Eagle Fish Easy sounder mounted to the left on the dash top. The dash top has ample room to mount other sounders or GPS units, or even large colour sounders if needed.

There is a useful grab handle for the passenger, too.

Both the driver and the passenger have storage shelves for smaller items like sunglasses, car keys, etc.

The throttle control falls nicely to hand for the skipper, whether seated or standing. The helm and passenger seats have swivel bases, but only the driver is treated with the ability to slide their seat fore and aft, to make the driving position more comfortable.

Both seats are set-up on seat bases,



Nice package isn't it? And it's "Ready2Go" right now at your nearest Stacer dealer. There's nothing to think about - just hand the man the money, and go fishin'! It's all done for you, with excellent warranties, too.



The Stacer 605 might have been built to a budget compared to some of the top platies (or even its sister, the Quintrex 610) but it gives very little away in terms of creature comforts or practical features. On a value for money basis, it's very hard to beat.

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with storage below. These boxes are great, offering useful storage and better utilisation of valuable space than the older style pedestals.

The Stacer has folding rear 'dickie' seats across the transom, with access to the storage below. Mind you, as we discovered on the recent Quintrex 610 test, this rear seat is disappointingly narrow in width, and together with the 'thin' padding, are not very comfortable for the kids, let alone adults.

Driving the boat is comfortable seated or standing.

The helm position has clear vision, comfortable seats, ample room to stand, and a nicely placed throttle. Standing, an average size person looks over the screen, so the standard front clear screen makes the boat very practical in all weather.

The bimini is an excellent set-up, offering ample protection from the sun and sea, without hindering the fishing potential of the boat.

The Hydrive Hydraulic steering aboard this boat impressed again. Maintaining control of this big V-6 is easy, as the steering is light and precise. Stacer should be commended for including such quality steering as a

standard feature in what they have openly targeted as a budget conscious package.

The 605 Ocean Runner has a fairly good cabin. I comfortably seats four people, has good (sitting) headroom at the cockpit end for two occupants, and is generally a good spot to hide from the elements.

However, the bunks only measure 1500 x 650, not nearly enough for sleeping. I imagine the kids could easily take a kip in there when the fishing is off, but in no way could the cabin be comfortably used for overnighting by a couple of normal sized adults on a regular basis.

Nevertheless, the cabin can be used to store the rods and tackle boxes, and it wouldn't take much work to build in secure, lockable hatches under the berths. They have quite a bit of space under them, and along with the the side pockets, there is no shortage of storage options in the cabin area.

Of note, the cabin also has a carpeted roof, making it a reasonably attractive area to sit, and breaking away from the bare painted sides.

The standard 27 Meg radio is installed on the roof.

Disappointingly, the wiring behind the dash is very average. In plain view of all, and in a very easy spot for inquisitive young children to pull out some electrical wires, or for the salt air

to speed up the corrosion process, this behind dash wiring is poorly executed. No attempt has been made to cover the wiring at all, something that could be done very cheaply. Even boats of the 1960's had this area covered, so why Telwater has gone backward on this very low cost issue is hard to understand.

The wiring, and the miserable 3x switch panel is a matter Stacer should re-examine as a matter of urgency. As the boat is sold, the 3x system might cope with the essentials - but if the owner ever wants to install or modify anything in the electrical area, this 3x panel will need to be replaced.

Anchoring

Anchoring this vessel is best done through the cabin hatch. Access is available to the bow around the sides of the cabin, however at sea this is not practical, due to the lack of handholds.

The cabin access hatch used for anchoring is large, and at a height that provides plenty of support when standing on the bunk bases. This hatch is within easy reach of the bow roller and anchor well.

The bow roller is of the Relax type, one that can hold the anchor on deck if required.

The anchor well itself is made of rota-moulded plastic. The size is average for offshore conditions, but for

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deep water anchoring, alternatives will need to be considered.

The hatch is not provided with any type of lid, which in my opinion is not good enough for offshore or bar operations.

There is no attempt to make sure the anchor stays in its hatch, and when crossing a coastal bar, the anchor could easily come out of the well when crossing a large wave, causing untold problems.

Performance

Fitted with the 25" 140hp V-6 Mariner (184kg) outboard, spinning a 17" stainless steel Vengeance propeller, this boat is well matched. The 140hp engine from Brunswick (Mercury/Mariner) is a highly under-rated engine. A carburetted engine, without EFI, the engine provides good horsepower, at an affordable price. These engines will do hundreds of hours without fail, and having owned one, I can definitely recommend them as a cost effective power plant.

The factory set-up here was quite good. In 'lightship' mode with around 60 litres of fuel aboard, the boat had plenty of acceleration, and had a great top speed of 38knots. This is quite fast for an aluminium boat.

As usual with pressed aluminium boats, trimming the engine didn't make a great deal of difference to the 605. They tend to ride very level, and trimming the engine out doesn't gain all that much speed, or lift the bow noticeably.

Disappointingly, the set-up wasn't perfect. When the boat was pushed into turns, (even normal turns) the engine ventilated quite badly.

This problem seems to be a bit beyond engine set-up, because the team from Stacer are professionals, and perfectionists, and I am sure they would have done all they could to make this boat perform at its peak.

The boat is perfectly powered by the 140hp Mariner, but is rated for as much as 175hp. Given the speed figures on the 140, I don't believe anything will be achieved by going up to a 175, and only a small increase in hole-shot and top speed will be gained, along with a much bigger fuel bill.

The boat could easily accommodate

Performance Figures

Revs	Knots
1000	4.7
1500	6.7
2000	8.8
2500	14.2
3000	20.5
3500	24.9
4000	28.7
4500	34.3
5000	35.5
5500	38.0

Test conducted with two adults onboard and 60 litres of fuel. Speed figures with tide as measured on GPS.

a 4-stroke engine in the 150hp range, and this set-up would be heaven. A maximum transom weight of 230kg has been put on the 605, enough to accommodate either a 150hp Yamaha or Honda 4-stroke.

Fitted with a 115 litre under floor fuel tank, this boat can be expected to use around 18 litres an hour at 4,000 rpm, covering about 28.7 knots. Based on this, the boat has an operational range of around 146 Nm with a small safety factor taken into account. This is not a huge range, and for long distance travellers, the need for extra fuel storage would require attention.

Handling and Ride

Test day on the Gold Coast provided average conditions. A 15 knot SE wind, causing 0.5 metre seas, on top of a 1.5 metre SE ground swell offshore, wasn't really enough to test out the capabilities of this 605 Ocean Runner, but was enough to make for some uncomfortable conditions on the outgoing tide.

The 605 reminded me of all other pressed aluminium boats I have operated in the rough. They are definitely nothing like a glass boat in their handling, and can be quite harsh riding when pushed too hard.

The 605 was big enough to handle the swell and chop quite comfortably, and was very predictable. The faster you went however, the harsher the ride became.

The ride on the 605 is definitely harder riding than (say) the Quintrex 610. The 605 doesn't feel as solid structurally, and doesn't land as softly, either.

This boat is however quite dry, and even in the short conditions we

experienced, it remained with a dry windscreen.

The 605 is however comparable to other rigs from pressed alloy boat manufacturers such as Seajay or Savage. This boat is a little more suitable to offshore operations than some competitive craft, mainly due to the excellent depth in the topsides.

Fishability

A basic and bare boat, the 605 in standard form doesn't have many fittings to suit fishing. Two fishing rod holders are provided in the side decks, not nearly enough for any serious fisherman.

The 605 could be optioned up to suit serious fishing, with extras such as overhead rod holders (Stacer make a cheap alternative to aluminium rocket launchers), extra rod holders in the side pockets, raised work station/bait table, live bait tank built into the seat boxes, and outriggers if needed.

These extras would obviously bump up the base price, but are extras needed for serious fishermen

The 605 in standard form, does offer side pocket storage, and a three quarter rear lounge, which drops down or lifts out to offer uncluttered fishing in the transom region. With the transom door closed, it offers a full height transom for security.

The 730mm side deck freeboard is very generous, and certainly enough for the fisherman to brace against. There is also room for the feet to be tucked under the side decks for comfort.

The cockpit is lined with hand rails, which are completely out of the way, and will not disrupt any fishing room or future installations.

The cockpit measures 1800mm x 1700mm cockpit space, from the rear of the seat boxes to the transom wall. Easily enough room for a couple of blokes to fish offshore comfortably.

The transom region has been changed since the 2003 model Stacer boats. Again, Stacer has turned back the clock, and eliminated the above floor battery and oil shelves. The boat is supplied as standard with only one battery, but is also supplied with a battery switch below the deck door. The battery is supplied in a battery box, but is not raised off the floor, causing possible problems should the boat be flooded with water.

The engine's oil bottle is also

another disappointing point, as it is immediately in the way of the deck door. When stepping aboard the boat from the transom door, the oil bottle gets in the way. When questioned about this, the Stacer staff pleaded that the cables and lines provided with the Mariner were not long enough, and for this reason, the oil bottle could not be located further away.

Trailer

As tested, set-up on a Stacer (Dunbier) dual axle keel/skid trailer the 605 weighs a certificated 1.440kg. This is quite light for a 6.05 metre boat, and would be easily handled behind the family V6 Holden Commodore or Mitsubishi Magna, fitted with their respective towing packs.

The factory is happy towing the rig with an AU Falcon Ute, and say it is very simple, and easy to tow around town.

The boat is physically large, and sits well above the roofline of a Commodore, and even above a medium sized 4WD. The boat will have a fair bit of windage movement on the highway, as a result of its light weight and bulk. The trailer makes launching and retrieval simple. A drive on/off trailer, it makes the process simple, and still provides the required support for the boat.

Conclusion

Stacer have hit the mark with this boat. The 605 will prove popular with the boating public, not because it is an innovative boat, not because it is an exceptional craft, but because it is exceptionally competitive against the rest of the market.

Fully set-up as a Ready2Go package, out of the factory, including registrations and safety gear, this boat retails across Australia (that's right, even in Perth!), for \$41,850, plus dealer delivery charges. The boat can also be bought with personal finance from Stacer, with no deposit for \$223 per week. That is an exceptional price, and in 2004, almost unbelievable.

These days you will struggle to get a 6.0 metre boat for under \$55,000, let alone \$42,000. And to provide a full three-year warranty on the entire package is beyond the call of duty.

For \$41,850, the boat can easily be optioned up with the necessary fishing extras, and still fall in under \$44,000 – a truly exceptional outcome.

Specifications – Boat

Stacer 605 Ocean Runner Sports
Length **6.10 m**
Length on Trailer **7.4 m**
Beam **2.4 m**
Deadrise **N/A**
Weight (BMT) **1.44 Tonne Loaded**
Fuel Capacity **1 x 115 Litres (Sub Floor)**
Engine Rating **140-175hp**
Warranty **3 Years**

Specifications – Engine

Mariner 140hp
Type **2-Stroke Outboard V-6 Carburetted**
Weight **184kg**
Shaft Length **25"**
Propeller **17" Stainless Steel**
Warranty **3 Years (Package)**
Price – From \$41,850 plus dealer delivery charges. As tested on water including safety gear. Available From Northside Marine Brisbane Phone (07) 3265 8000 or your nearest Stacer Dealer

Visit www.stacer.com.au to see the entire Stacer range, including prices and Ready2Go Packages.

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