



Stessl 3.7 HD *Edge Tracker*

A big favourite with lake and river fishermen is Stessl's 3.7 m HD Edge Tracker. Jeff Webster explains why this sturdy alloy vee-nose punt is so popular.

Visit one of south east Queensland's freshwater impoundments during a fishing competition, and you may be surprised by the popularity of aluminium v-nose punts.

You will find v-nose boats in sizes ranging from 3.4 m through to 5.0 m deluxe barra boats. However, 3.7 metres is unquestionably the most popular hull size. And of these craft, chances are that a sizeable percentage of models will be Stessl Edge Trackers.

Since Stessl released the Edge Tracker boats nearly a decade ago,

Stessl heavy duty v-nose boats have easily been the company's most popular models. This can be attributed to the massive growth and interest in freshwater fishing, but also due to the size and quality of the Stessl Edge Tracker boat range.

The Edge Tracker boats now start at just 2.4 m, and extend through to 5.2 m - with a mix of light and heavy duty models. The boats can be ordered as basic two and three thwart boats, right through to semi custom boats in the form of the Edge Tracker Tournament series.

But of all of these different models, the best selling Edge Tracker continues to be the basic two thwart, 3.7 m heavy duty.

Design It is not difficult to see why the Stessl Edge Tracker 3.7 is so popular. It's relatively inexpensive, yet it is big enough to fish two or three anglers. At the same time, the hull is strong, extremely durable, very stable at rest, and it handles and rides as well, if not better than most of its competitors.

With regard to its basic



Above: This is a really useful size for a boat destined to do a bit of everything, and probably venturing where maybe it shouldn't sometimes. But such is the seaworthiness and stability, it will handle just about everything that comes along - including choppy, blustery dam conditions.

Right: Terrific layout, isn't it ? Simple, elegant, effective.

Below: The canopy is obviously a pain in the neck with rods, but the benefits for older and younger folk warrant that you persevere - to the extent of raising and lowering the "lid" according to the type of fishing being undertaken.



measurements, the hull is 3.7 m long, 1.65 m wide, and it weighs 70 kg. The hull bottom and topsides are made from 1.6 mm pressed aluminium. This moderate weight alloy, combined with a series of seven interior bracing struts and internal keel, gives the boat ample strength and rigidity.

The standard 3.7 m Edge Tracker comes with two bench seats, forward anchor shelf, rowlock holders, bow and stern hand rails, along with the transom corner carry handles. There is also a fuel tank rack, two-hole towing eye, and three screw in plastic bungs.

The Edge Tracker we tested was fitted with several optional extras. Between the front and rear thwart was a drop in style plywood floor. The floor was neatly carpeted, and made moving about the boat much easier.

With a flat floor like this you can also place your tackle box down without worrying about it tipping over - keeping in mind that without the false floor, the cockpit is criss crossed with bracing struts and hull pressings.

In addition to the centre cockpit floor, the test model was fitted with a carpeted forward casting platform. For

SPECIFICATIONS	
Length	3.7 m
Max. Beam	1.65 m
Depth	622 mm
Bottom Thickness	1.6 mm
Sides Thickness	1.6 mm
Hull Weight	70 kg
Weight On Trailer (approx)	230 kg
Maximum Power	25 hp
Power As tested Tohatsu	18 hp
BMT Price	\$6,500



calm water lure and fly fishing, this feature is a major plus - and given the minimal extra cost to have the platform fitted, I can't see any reason why you wouldn't go with it.

The two other options fitted to the test boat included hull painting, and the overhead bimini top. If you had to choose between the two, I would go

for the bimini - especially if you regularly fish with young children. It might be okay to cop a bit of sunburn yourself, but it's unforgivable to regularly expose young children to our harsh summer sun.

Handling, Ride & Performance

The 3.7 Edge Tracker is rated to accept short shaft outboard power up to 25 hp - though frankly I can't see a situation where more than 20 hp would be necessary. We tested the boat with an 18 hp 2-stroke Tohatsu, and it gave the boat plenty of acceleration and a top speed in the middle 20 knot area with two adults onboard.

For most fishing situations, with two or three adults onboard, I believe a 15 hp two stroke would provide plenty of acceleration and a useful top speed.

With regard to ride and handling, the Stessl Edge Tracker 3.7 m is up among the best of the v-nose punts available. The combination of its heavy duty construction and the "Edge" chine extensions allows the boat to ride more comfortably through the water than most comparable models.

Of course, like any basically flat



bottomed tinnie, if you do push the Stessl hard into a choppy headsea, then the ride will firm up - but if you drive the boat sensibly, throttling back before the steeper waves, then the level of ride comfort is more than acceptable.

Running before the sea, the Stessl was also very good. Provided you trimmed the outboard correctly for the load inside the boat, then the boat was dry, and it rode comfortably down and over the wave troughs.

Following the test in choppy Gold Coast Broadwater conditions, we pulled the boat up to check stability in a fishing situation. Here, the Stessl was excellent. For what is basically a very small boat, the lateral or side to side stability is excellent.

Fore and aft stability, and bow buoyancy, was also very good. This means you can stand and fish right up at the bow, and the boat dips only a small way into the water.

Conclusion As smooth water fishing boats go, the Stessl 3.7 m HD Edge Tracker is a ripper. For most people, it is big enough for most estuary and freshwater fishing applications, yet it is easy to man-handle, and to tow on the



road. Above all, it's also very affordable. No wonder this boat is so popular.

As tested, complete with a single axle unbraked trailer, Tohatsu 18 hp outboard, basic safety gear and options (painted hull, cockpit floor, bow casting platform, and bimini top), the Stessl Edge Tracker 3.7 m is priced at \$6,500 at Currumbin Tinnies, 6 Stewart Road, Currumbin Qld 4223. Phone (07) 5534-6606.

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