



This has to be the biggest 17 footer in the world - Alf Stessl has gone for almost the full allowable width beam (2.3 from 2.5m) in a deep bodied, plate alloy configuration. Not surprisingly then, the boat is softer than normal, has astonishing stability and acres of space for the family and friends. The Yammy 100 4-stroker handles it easily, turning 34 knots with a standard alloy prop.



Alf Stessl's 5.2m 'Fun Seeker' Bowrider

Regular F&B scribe, Jeff Webster chose a Stessl Fun Seeker bow rider when it came to purchasing a boat for his young family. With just a few modifications, the Fun Seeker was set up for a variety of boating and fishing applications.

Aluminium bow riders have skyrocketed in popularity in recent years. All the big manufacturers now have at least one model, and many have four or five different boats.

Quintrex started the ball rolling a few years back with the release of the 500 Freedom Sport. When this model became a surprise hit, other alloy boat builders were quick to follow Quintrex's lead. Now, buyers can choose an aluminium bow rider from around a dozen different brands.

Of course, fibreglass bow riders have been available for some time. Sleek, glossy, luxuriously appointed bow riders from brands like Cruise Craft, Signature and Haines Hunter have been available since the early 1980s. Some

models have even won Boat of The Year Awards - including the early 1980s Cruise Craft Hustler, and the Haines Hunter 530 SLA from around 1987.

The trouble with the glossy, American style fibreglass bow riders is that they have never appealed to fishermen. I must admit that I too was somewhat disparaging about bow riders as fishing boats - although this was mainly due to the interior layout of most of these craft. Luxurious back-to-back helm chairs, gunwale to gunwale carpet, and low transom cockpit freeboard, was less than ideal for fishing. If one of the fibreglass builders had released a more basically outfitted bow rider - with a decent fishing layout and good cockpit freeboard, then the bow rider might

have taken off much sooner with a broader range of boat buyers.

Anyway, that's all ancient history now. We now have a large range of bow riders on the market and most of the alloy models are well suited to fishing and general family boating. I was so impressed with the versatility of the modern alloy bow rider that I have now bought one.

Why A Bow Rider? Easy. I wanted to leave my options open. For family boating and offshore fishing, I was initially in favour of a cuddy cabin. However, given that the boat would rarely be used to go offshore (at least with my youngsters aboard), I decided the space taken up by the cabin structure