

F&B's
Small Craft
Section

STESSL 4.2 HD
EDGE TRACKER

After a test program involving Noble Supa Vees, Bar Crushers, Signature sportsboats, Noosa Cats, Sea Swirls and Mustangs, we figured it was time F&B's ace rookie Darren Shiel got 'down and wet' in a REAL boat - hey, and didn't the weather turn it up for the day !!





Stessl Edgetracker 425HD & Yamaha 25 Combo . . .

I get to test some wonderful boats here at F&B magazine. In amongst the Kevlacats, the Whittleys and the Cruise Crafts, we are also provided with some less glamorous boats, more suited to certain applications.

When PW recently asked me to join him and Ruth in our new subscription prize boat, the Stessl Edgetracker 425HD, and take it for a run to do a mini test and photo shoot, nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

It wasn't until waking up on test day that I started having second thoughts.

In what seems to be the 'norm' these days, when we have a small boat test organised, test day proves to be overcast with a gale force wind warning – and yet, when we do the big boats, more often than not it is dead calm.

With a 25-30 knots nor-easterly howling down Runaway Bay, the morning promised to be a very interesting!

Specifications

Name	Stessl
Model	Edge Tracker 425 Heavy Duty (HD)
Configuration	Bass/barra punt
Overall length	4.25 m
Max Beam	2.00 m
Deadrise	“Edge Vee”
Hull weight	130 kg
Depth	0.76 m
Bottom thickness	2.0 mm
Topsides thick	1.6 mm
Towing weight	400 kg (est)
Maximum power	40 hp
Stessl Warranty	1 year
Power on test	Yamaha 25
Fuel capacity	25 L (tub)
Maximum speed	knots
As tested	from \$7,500
Engine	
Yamaha	25NMH
Type	2-Stroke, 2 Cylinder
	Outboard
Weight	49.5kg
Shaft	20” Long
Propeller Std	9x11 alumin
Warranty	2 Years

Design

Designed as a very basic tinnie, bare as bones to provide a cheap way of getting on the water, the Stessl Edgetracker has some advantages over

its competition.

The word Edgetracker in the title, basically describes the outer chines of the hull. A rather flat-bottomed boat, with vee shaped external outer chines, the hull design is certainly not run of the mill.

Internal design features are simple, providing a 3mm chequer plate aluminium fore deck, covering a partitioned bow anchor storage area, twin foam filled cross thwart seats, and also a fuel tank and battery rack in the transom region. The boat also comes standard with four large coaming handrails, a two-hole bow eye, rowlocks, three transom bungs and two transom handles.

Available as an option, is a full drop-in carpeted floor. This is a feature which I could not live without, and believe is a must for a fishing boat, to avoid tripping on the ribs, or having to worry about where you step.

Measuring 4.25m in length, and 2.00m at its widest point, this hull is much wider than a standard 4.2m tinnie.

This width is designed solely at providing a solid, stable boat, one that will suit the hordes of crabbers and lure fishermen.

The bare hull weight is claimed to be 130kg, and the boat's carrying capacity is for a maximum of four passengers, at 75kg each, taking the maximum carrying capacity to 300kg.

Engineering, Construction & Finish

Made from 2.0mm bottom, and 1.6mm side aluminium sheets, the Stessl is pretty standard in its build quality and finish amongst the industry.

The 425HD is constructed with the normal construction methods, using pressed aluminium sheets and athwartships aluminium ribs for strength.

The boat is finished off well and comes with a list of standard features. It does however stay true to its 'bare as' concept, and comes unpainted, and also lacks a bow cleat, which is available as an option.

Performance

Powered here by a Yamaha 25NMH, the 425 Edgetracker HD is rated to a maximum of a 40hp outboard. Set up here as it is, the 425HD is certainly no slouch. This hull powers out of the water effortlessly, and cruises along very briskly. Once the throttle is opened out on this rig, the hull feels quick, rock solid, and handles the 25 with ease, suggesting the larger 40hp is simply not warranted.

This rig could quite easily be tubing and knee boarding with the kids one day, and serious crabbing and fishing the next.

Handling and Ride

Test day bought about 25-30 knot north/northwest winds. The shallow water, combined with the strong wind against the tide, make the waterways around here less than desirable.

I must stress before I continue here, that this boat is not designed nor meant to be operating in these conditions.

We had all safety gear aboard, and was also accompanied by another much larger safety vessel, which allowed me to operate safely.

This boat is not one in which I would like to frequently use in these sorts of conditions, and I most certainly would not have been doing so if I had somebody else onboard.

After leaving the marina, and pulling out into the bay, I was immediately confronted with 0.75-1.0m wind swells, with the tops being blown off by the persistent winds. I tried to follow in the wake of **Whim-Away**, our camera boat, but the swells still remained. Once I realised there was no escaping the horrid conditions, I pulled the Stessl back to around 10 knots,



enough speed to make way and deal with the large waves.

With only myself aboard, I found the boat could get quite flighty in these conditions; the 25-knot winds were quite easily getting beneath the bow of the hull and lifting it. The weight in the transom of myself, the 25 litres of fuel, and the Yamaha 25hp two-stroke, combined to have the bow very light.

Interestingly, in these conditions, having the extra weight of a passenger on the forward thwart seats would have helped considerably, keeping the bow down, and probably enabling the skipper to push on a little harder. Then too, the engine could also have been run on a lower 'pin' setting on the transom. As it was, moving the tub forward helped a lot, but another person would have been better – and probably a lot wetter!

This boat however did prove to be a surprise package to me, and I came away feeling confident about its seaworthiness.

The most remarkable thing about this boat to me was the dryness of it. Even in the wind blown chop, I remained remarkably dry, even when running in all directions.

The Stessl was also surprisingly soft riding. At no time did the hull come off a wave and pound the water with the freerfall you sometimes get, even in larger vessels.

I felt comfortable in this boat from the outset, and when driven sensibly, even in these terrible conditions, the Stessl 425 gave confidence not normally found in a boat so small.

Fishability

The extra beam aboard this hull allows for a very stable fishing platform. This stability enables the occupants to get right into the sides of the boat, and lift crab pots or check on the fish.

The boat is well suited to a couple of guys to fish calm/semi calm protected waterways. For this purpose the Stessl 425 Edgetracker HD has few peers.

Trailing

Trailed on a single axle Pro-Line trailer, the all up weight of this rig loaded is estimated to be around 450kg. At this weight, the rig can easily be towed by most standard four cylinder cars, and does not require brakes to the trailer. The boat is also easy to push around the yard single-handed.

As an alternative to trailing, this rig could quite easily be roof topped aboard a decent 4WD or on top of a mother ship.

Conclusion

Used as an entry level, easy to clean boat for a couple or small family to get around their local river/dam/protected waters, this little boat is a gem. Providing superior stability, ease of use and power, this boat is a very versatile rig, at an affordable price.

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