

# Bonito 560

The latest iteration of one of the most popular family fishing boats in Australia and New Zealand is destined to top the sales charts, and is a long overdue, soft riding alternative to the ubiquitous pressed tinnie.

**T**ucked away from the mainstream amidst the sugarcane fields of southern Qld, is an ol' boat shed and wharf that has been there for decades. Stieglitz Wharf has been the back drop of the small commercial crabbing and fishing world just north of the big Horizon Shores Marina, and south of the quaint little village time seems to have overlooked, at Cabbage Tree Point.

This is a very old area indeed, as it's one of the first parts of southern Qld to be settled, as a result of the very fertile soils in the district which proved a boon for the sugarcane plantations that sprung up across this valley.

Today, the boat shed houses a development that is going to take many people by surprise, because although the area is old with significant history, the fibreglass boat that is the subject of this report is arguably one of the most sophisticated fibreglass fishing dories made in Australia.

With the original design stemming from renowned Kiwi designer Frank Pelin, this new Bonito 560 tooling was produced by Roger Barnes, a builder who's been in and out of the pages of boating magazines for quite a few years, stemming back to

his foray with South African Osprey Cats, and later, his very interesting Legacy sportscruiser. Roger is widely acknowledged as one of the best tool makers in the business, and if the finish on this new Bonito 560 is anything to go by, it's not even debatable.

Recently, Roger teamed up with another of Australia's top fibreglass men, in Martin Slennett, a bloke who's been around the boat yards for a long time, and worked with all of the major players, but is best remembered as one of the principle fibreglass operators with Lindsay Fry's original Seafarers.

Roger and Martin have now joined forces to produce a very simple looking fishing dory, with a standard of construction and finish that is outstanding. Given the integrity of the fundamental design by Frank Pelin, the result is something of a new benchmark.

*But wait, there's a whole lot more, and this is where it gets very interesting indeed.*

### It's A 'Coosa' Project

Both Roger and Martin have grown up in the world of fibreglass where timber stringers and plywood transoms have been the death knell of many a fine

*First impressions? It's a really big eighteen footer, with a fabulous, flat, self-draining, non-skid deck that can be set-up to suit a myriad seat, steering, console and kill tank combinations. It's even got a nifty moulded pad-stand for the electric outboard off the bow. Perfect.*

*(Oh - The rare black bucket and valuable ice cream containers are optional at no extra cost with every purchase!)*

