

OFFSHORE MARINE MASTER 600 WA ULTRA VEE ALL-ROUNDER

- Reviewed by Wayne Kampe

I've reviewed several craft from this Sunshine Coast manufacturer in the past and have been impressed with the combination of high standard of finish, excellent sea keeping ability and a quality of ride and handling that makes them such good value for money.

The 600 WA Ultra Vee offers centre cab storage room or a place within the fully lined cabin for a tired angler to sit out of the weather or perhaps stretch out on a Vee berth bunk. Plush bunk cushioning, ample floor depth and head room and an overhead light plus side and front windows ensured that the cabin was light and airy. Below bunk storage was available, and as per owner's specs a zippered fabric cabin door was fitted while the standard marine toilet was not included.

A wide, deep and carpeted walk-around area on the 600 Ultra Vee All-Rounder allowed access up front should one wish to fish there or simply enjoy a ride on the seat in front of the cabin. This is clearly an offshore orientated craft and the forward cockpit area was well designed for this pursuit.

The high, overhead hard top allowed skipper and mate to either stand or be seated while underway and above windscreen clears featured a zip open section for hot weather conditions. The craft's marine radio and FM radio/CD player were high up within the hard top with speakers for the sound system being set into the side frame nearby.

The wide, flat area aft of the windscreen would be ideal for storage of personal items. Paired drink holders were provided and the first mate also had a grab handle, foot rest, plus two levels of storage as a bonus.

Whether standing or seated, a clear view of the Garmin GPS Map 750S on the broad shelf aft of the windscreen as well as the gauges mounted across the top of the upright dash section of the craft was available. The sports style steering wheel linked to hydraulic steering was set right in front of the driver, with a bank of switches (for items including the under-deck and hard top LED lighting, nav lights, controls for the deck wash and



bait tank pumps) being set lower and to port. The craft's winch controls plus QL trim tab switches were also handy. Forward controls for the 175 Suzuki were side mounted in the usual manner.

Skipper and mate's seating on the well built OMM consisted of very strong, sliding, adjustable and swivelling hand rail equipped seats mounted on storage boxes. The passenger's seat box also had the bonus of being equipped with five removable tackle trays.

Lined side pockets were a feature of the cockpit, with the starboard pocket containing the craft's deck wash and fuel filter while its port counterpart was wholly storage orientated. Work area within the carpeted cockpit was suitable for three or four anglers to enjoy, and while the reviewed craft was equipped with an aft lounge, this could be dropped down out of the way to provide extra fishing space.

Internal height within the 2400mm wide cockpit was some 730mm with external freeboard being 990mm. In all, ideally

set up for offshore fishing. Other features within the self draining cockpit included gunwale coaming, four rod holders per side with another two in the transom bait station, a large in-floor, plumbed kill tank astern, and a live well situated within the transom to starboard.

Grab handles plus stern rails and cleats completed the upper transom fittings, with a boarding ladder to port and berley muncher to starboard set into the paired boarding platforms located either side of the 175 Suzuki four-stroke.

The Suzuki 175, spinning a 16 x 21 inch prop was top power for the 600 WA's foam filled hull. Whisper quiet at idle and hardly intrusive into cockpit conversation at any revs thanks to its location well down below the transom, the Suzuki planed the hull at 3000rpm at 18.1kph and gave 41.4kph at 4000rpm. A brief burst to 5000rpm from the brand new motor recorded 60.8kph on the Garmin 750 GPS unit.

As an offshore rig this craft shines. During test runs in the confused mess of the

Caloundra Bar area I noted that the hull, with three aboard, rode very well with no tendency to bang or produce uncomfortable impact and at no time did any displaced water find its way aboard. These factors would suit offshore or bay anglers very well indeed.

Stability from the big six metre plate alloy rig was of a high standard both underway and at rest. Hull design saw a large spray chine up front forming into a wide outer reversed chine astern, with three folk on one side producing no appreciable lean from the hull at rest.

Offshore Marine Master's 600WA Ultra Vee All-Rounder combines a smooth blend of easy performance, terrific ride and handling and reliable sea keeping ability all matched by top shelf finish and angler friendly features. Price as reviewed was \$78,900.

For more information contact Offshore Marine Master on Ph: (07) 5492 6555, or through their website: www.offshoremarinemaster.com.au.



SHANNON BOATS FISSION 500

- Reviewed by Andrew Norton

When Nigel Shannon of Shannon Boats set about creating his first fibreglass hull he didn't follow conventional design ideas. He took full advantage of the complex shapes that fibreglass can be moulded into and created a design that appears very unusual but is one of the best fishing platforms of its length I've ever tested.

Measuring 5.0 by 2.3 metres, the 500 is very beamy for its length. But what really sets it apart from conventional deep vee 'glass hulls of this size is the hull tunnel running either side of the bottom. The tunnels are wide at the bow but taper towards the transom and - assisted by the deep chines outboard with spray strakes - trap air compressed at their entrances and create additional lift aft. As the tunnels narrow, the flat bottom at the centre of the hull broadens forming a very wide planing plank.

Combined with a sprung sheer and buoyant bow, the result is a hull that has plenty of buoyancy when nosing into a slop or running downwind, yet has an incredibly soft ride into a chop when planing. And because of the broad planing plank the hull floats in around 12cm of water, enabling it to get into shallow areas that would be inaccessible to a deep vee hull.

The demo hull I tested was also the prototype and although of foam sandwich construction it weighed 350kg; about 100kg more than the eventual Fission 500 models produced for sale which will have resin-infused, foam sandwich hulls.

As Nigel uses the prototype with a Minn Kota bow mount trolling motor in addition to the main engine, the foredeck has a mounting pad to accept this, although a bow roller could easily be fitted if required. Aft of the pad is a stainless steel cleat either side which is through-bolted to the gunwale. The foredeck is part of the deck moulding with side decks wide enough to sit on, and production boats will have non-skid panels moulded in.

The raised, carpeted forward casting platform has a socket for a swivelling bucket seat on spigot and four storage compartments with hinged lids. Just aft of the bow is the anchor locker and behind this a huge storage locker flanked by a smaller locker either side.

A cut-out in the aft end of the casting platform enables a centre console to be fitted and either side of this beneath the platform deck overhang



is space for an 80 amp/hour deep cycle battery. Being a tiller steer model, the prototype had two plastic rod holders where the console would fit, but these could be incorporated into a Targa top over the console if needed.

The main floor runs full width of the hull and right aft to the transom and is fully self draining. Ahead of the single outboard well with direct motor transom mounting is space for a live bait compartment, and the sockets for the helm and passenger seat aft were well positioned in relation to the multifunction tiller arm of the two-stroke Yamaha 50 fitted.

Outboard of these seats was a low stainless steel grab rail either side and a through-bolted stainless steel cleat was fitted to each transom quarter.

Either side of the motor well moulding is space to take a portable fuel tank on one side and the starter battery opposite. Because the hull bottom is completely foam-filled and sealed to comply with survey standards for guide boats, Nigel prefers not to fit an under-floor fuel tank.

The manual start Yammie fitted had already suffered a hard life as an oyster punt engine before Nigel acquired it, but still performed

very well on the prototype hull pushing Nigel, Di (aka the fish magnet) and myself. Despite running on a 50:1 premix, the engine didn't stall once during extensive idling periods between the performance trials.

Spinning a well-used alloy prop of what appeared have a 12 inch pitch, the Yammie planed our 700kg total displacement at 13.7kt according to my handheld Lowrance GPS, and averaged 23.7kt at Wide Open Throttle. When the throttle was opened fully from trolling revs the hull reached maximum speed in just ten seconds!

Through full lock figure of eight turns at two thirds throttle no prop ventilation occurred and the hull cornered almost flat. Good thing the aft grab rails were there!

Apart from its soft ride over our own wake at WOT, what really impressed was the low wash from the hull. This was thanks to the deep, narrow chines aft which concentrate wash in the tunnels and not outside the hull. And despite the low topsides, no spray came aboard at any time from running into or across the low river chop.

Back at rest the three of us (250kg) could sit to one side without fear of capsizing, and even with my 110kg bulk moving around the forward casting platform the hull barely reacted. When backing into a slop-even with two of us aft the stern had plenty of buoyancy with no water coming back through the transom deck scuppers.

The hull would easily handle a four-stroke 60hp on the transom.

Back at the well-appointed Manning Point ramp (just across from Harrington), Nigel was able to drive the hull back onto the over-engineered prototype custom trailer, which uses Teflon skids and a shaped, carpeted wedge for the hull bottom. The hull sits low on this trailer where the tunnels are over the wheel mudguards and the chines atop the outer trailer frame.

As tested on this trailer with the Yammie, a full fuel tank, ground tackle and safety gear, the towing weight is around 850kg. But on a slightly lighter custom trailer production hulls will weigh in at around 700kg, eliminating the need for potentially troublesome trailer brakes. Nigel's 2.4 litre petrol dual cab Nissan Navara had no trouble towing the prototype boat.

The standard of finish was excellent with no moulding flaws, good lustre in the gel coat and solidly-mounted fittings. Production hulls will be rated to take four-stroke outboards such as Yamaha's FT60D, but as tested with a two-stroke Yamaha 50 and on a custom trailer the package price will be around \$30,000.

Shannon Boats is located on Mitchells Island, near the entrance to the Manning River, NSW. For more details visit: www.shannonboats.com.au or you can contact Nigel on Ph: (02) 6553 2988 or email: nigel@shannonboats.com.au.SWF

