

Blue Fin Tomcat

Stephen Booth | May 2007 » Area Articles / Queensland / Southern QLD / Brisbane /

I've liked Blue Fin Boats ever since I saw the aftermath of one hitting a channel marker in the Broadwater at full noise. The boat didn't sink, the occupants were fine and nothing was lost over the side.

That was about six years ago and the Blue Fin Boats I have been in since then have all displayed similar strength and sensible, user-friendly designs.

The Tomcat

When Marg and Allen at Blue Fin asked if I wanted to have a test run in the brand new Tomcat I jumped at the chance. It was also the boat's maiden voyage as a fully rigged vessel as it had only been on the water previously for a motor test.

The Tomcat is what I'd call a deep-vee sportfisher. It has generous sides to help cope with Bay slop and spray chines strategically placed to deflect most of the spray. It's an open boat design with a sportfishing interior that comprises a carpeted front and rear casting platform with access and storage hatches, a 90L fully plumbed livewell, carpeted rod shelf with Velcro rod savers and a two-draw tackle box built into the rod shelf.

It's basically tournament ready if that's your game, but I can see the Tomcat being just as comfortable sitting off a bay reef with anglers fishing baits or flicking plastics. Another use would be for mackerel and tuna chasers hunting down their fish.

The 90hp Optimax on the back of the Tomcat got it up and moving without any trouble at all and with the higher sides you feel comfortable standing up front in a bit of chop. We tested this boat in a river while a 30-knot breeze was pushing up against the tide. To say the conditions were uncomfortable would be an understatement, but the Tomcat, with a bit of rock and roll, drifted around in this slop without making you feel like you were going to be thrown over the side.

The driving position is comfortable and the driver is well protected by the side console where you'll find all the motor gauges and off to the side is a convenient location for the sounder/GPS unit. The passenger is a little exposed, but that has to be expected in an open-style boat. We also found that the gentle 30-knot wind didn't do you any favours at mid-range revs before you got on the plane. The wind pushed plenty of spray onto the poor person on the windward side of the boat. Having said that, it really was the type of day where there was no way I would have been out on the water under normal circumstances.

The Ride

If you're doing a boat test you wish for bad weather so you can really see what the boat has got. Every boat I've been in is dry and comfortable in calm weather but it's when the weather turns a bit nasty that you really find out what the boat is made of.

The Tomcat was pretty comfortable overall in the two-foot, white-capped swell coming up the river. At mid-range revs it pushed through the swell well and kept the passengers on the rear seats comfortable, albeit a bit wet. One very noticeable thing from a tournament angler's viewpoint was that going up, over and through some of the swells the livewell didn't overflow like most on the market today. If there is one thing worse than wet spray in the boat it's your feet getting drenched as the livewell empties itself all over the floor after driving over a few bumps. This is a big tick for the Tomcat.

Coming with the waves at speed was pretty good too. The Tomcat showed no inclination to bury its nose into the wave you were catching – a situation that can lead to water over the bow and possibly worse. Side on to the waves at moderate speed the Tomcat rolled over the swell well, but if you gave it a bit of stick and bounced over a few waves you could guarantee someone in the boat was going to be wet and cranky.

When we took the Tomcat behind a protective island we got a chance to really give the motor a workout. In calm water with two adults, a full livewell and fishing gear, the Mercury 90hp Optimax jumped the rig onto the plane and when trimmed out properly really scooted the boat along. Over slightly wind-rippled water you could get the boat trimmed right out and humming, so the rig certainly has the speed to appeal to hardcore tournament anglers who have a desire to get somewhere quickly.

Cornering was smooth, but I would like to upgrade the steering system. The rig came with manual steering, but if I was going to own this boat, I'd upgrade to hydraulic steering to make things just a little nicer.

Other Features

Like all Blue Fin Boats the finish is exceptional with all carpet trimmed and finished excellently. The paint job is first class too, which matters these days, as most people want a flash rig.

The two tackle trays are a neat feature that will hold everything you need for a trip out into the bay, up a river or onto your favourite dam. A serious tournament angler will never have enough room, but if I was going out to catch a few Murray cod, yellowbelly or snapper, the two

trays is all I'd need.

The Tomcat was fitted with one of the new 75lb MotorGuide Wireless electrics and it's a really sweet toy. The large electric motor mount bracket up the front will take whichever electric motor you want, but the new MotorGuides are well worth checking out, as there are no cables to get in the way of your fishing. This too would be a great electric for fly fishers as there are fewer things for that tangle-prone fly line to get caught on.

The big, comfy seats are a feature too. These days as the bones get a bit older and the footy injuries start to play up it's nice to have a seat that doesn't hurt you over bumps and is big enough for the middle-aged spread.

OVERALL

If you're after a versatile craft that will give you a bit of protection when the weather turns foul, the Blue Fin Tomcat could be just the thing for you.

It's a comfortable boat that is designed for fishing and the people at Blue Fin make no bones about that fact. I was impressed by the rig from the trailer to the water and back again. In calm weather you'll get places fast and with sensible driving in bad weather you'll make it home safely without the need to see a chiropractor the next day.

The Tomcat, fitted out with a 90hp Mercury Optimax sells from \$_____. Give Mr T's Tinnies a call on (07) _____ for more information or to take the Tomcat for a test run. If you do, have your chequebook ready because you'll probably buy the thing on the spot.

Facts

Features

Carpeted raised casting platforms front and rear with access hatches; fully plumbed 90L polyethylene divided livewell; sports side console with steering, wrap around screen, dashboard with carbon fibre insert and a vertical rod holder; carpeted rod shelf with Velcro Rod Savers and two-drawer tackle box; two adjustable upholstered seats with adjustable cushions; carpeted floors; under floor floatation; 80L under floor fuel tank; bow mount electric motor bracket; wide side decks; low front and back rails; spray chines; side pocket; transom step; nav light brackets; bilge pump bracket; double bow eye; motor pad; and painted with decals and striping.

Facts

Specifications

Length:	4.75m
Beam:	2.05m
Sides:	3mm
Bottom:	3mm
Approx weight:	370kg

Rated to 90hp

Images



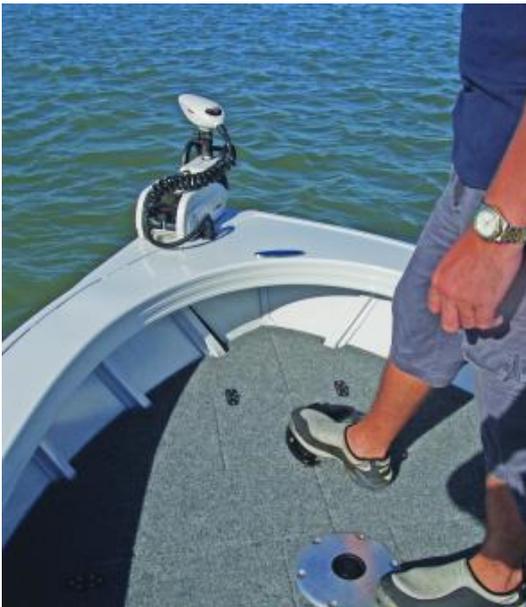
The Mercury Optimax provided plenty of power to the Tomcat. It jumped the boat onto the plane and kept her travelling at speed even through the wind chop created by the gentle 30 knot breeze.



The smart gauges were all easy to read over the steering wheel, which gives the driver all the motor information they need to make sure everything is running smoothly.



The tackle storage unit is handy for a couple of trays of tackle, which keeps the boat deck uncluttered and your tackle organised for a day on the water.



The test rig was fitted with the new MotorGuide wireless electric. It takes up very little space on the front casting deck and allows the operator to position the foot control wherever is most comfortable for them.



The driving console is not big and obtrusive yet has enough space for all your gadgets. The seating position keeps everything within easy reach too.



Lure and sport fishers will find the Tomcat a great mixed species rig. It is equally at home casting at pylons for bream, fishing for snapper on close reefs or chucking around bigger lures for jew in the larger coastal creeks.



The Tomcat rides superbly when powered by the 90hp Mercury Optimax in short, wind generated chop.