

Boating

Continued From: Previous Page

I also feared if you went even slightly under the max recommended horsepower of 40hp (especially in a four stroke motor) the boat would feel very doughy and sluggish off the mark. This one didn't have that problem with the 50hp.

Internal features: ham off the bone!

The tiller arm on the Yamaha ergonomically suited the driving position quite well. That said, other brands make tiller lengths that I know for a fact would be too long to use properly in the Razorback with the current seat position. Otherwise, in terms of comfort, there are plenty of obvious differences that stand out from other boats of similar size. For a start, the boat has two very well designed casting platforms that double as storage areas. The front platform is lower than some others on the market, and combined with the high sides makes for a spot to rest your knees/shins against when casting/jigging. For the family conscious, this large front platform can also be used as a sleeping area for children by placing some pillows against the internal part of the hull – top idea! Scott actually had his front platform extended to accommodate a front fuel tank setup – but I'm told the standard version is a very similar layout with three hatch access. The front hatch area is massive and ideal for a big deep cycle battery plus safety gear. Full points there too! The other front deck hatches provide entry to a single separate latitudinal/narrower

compartment. I was a bit intrigued to see the latter twin hatches open side-on (rather than front on). Still, it was a real nice set up.

In the rear platform there are three smaller compartments designed for the main fuel tank and battery. The centre of these compartments is the smallest due to the transom design. This was a nice no-nonsense setup, albeit a bit cramped behind the driver's seat. A slight criticism of the rear compartments was the absence of a dry well or live bait tank. In a boat of this quality, these features would be a plus (but could possibly be optioned upon request).

Fishing applications: snouts in the trough

With all this boat talk, you'd be forgiven for thinking we never had a fish – well think again! One of my favourite snag-casting stretches of the Moresby was earmarked before we even launched. For some twenty minutes Scott's 54lb Minn Kota had the Razorback gently ticking along our preselected shallow embankment and the low tidal differential meant a slow drift speed suited a mini jack session well. TABS has realised that many of their customers will need a thruster plate, so this is fittingly included as a standard feature – and Scott's electric motor was adequately directing us to the fish. Similarly, a transducer plate is included as standard and suited the fitted Lowrance HDS 7 transducers well. When I finally hooked a jack, I noticed both Scott and I could stand on the edge of the boat comfortably.

Admittedly, it did tilt more than a flat bottom punt at rest, but this observation was hardly a concern. At certain moments I even pictured myself casting some big poppers to a shallow reef from the Razorback. In my opinion, it would be capable of fishing two casting anglers in such a brutal blue water situation. The jacks we caught were a touch less inspiring unfortunately! While we saw plenty of lure-takers lurking on the side scan sonar, the high water clarity caused by the small tides really made them very skittish. With the lightest leader onboard being 40lb, getting committed bites was more frustrating than watching some swine award a seventh tackle try in a crucial rugby finals game. To add insult to injury, a massive school of giant trevally exploded about forty metres away. They would have been easy pickings with light spin tackle, but not the case with snag casting outfits (which we had).

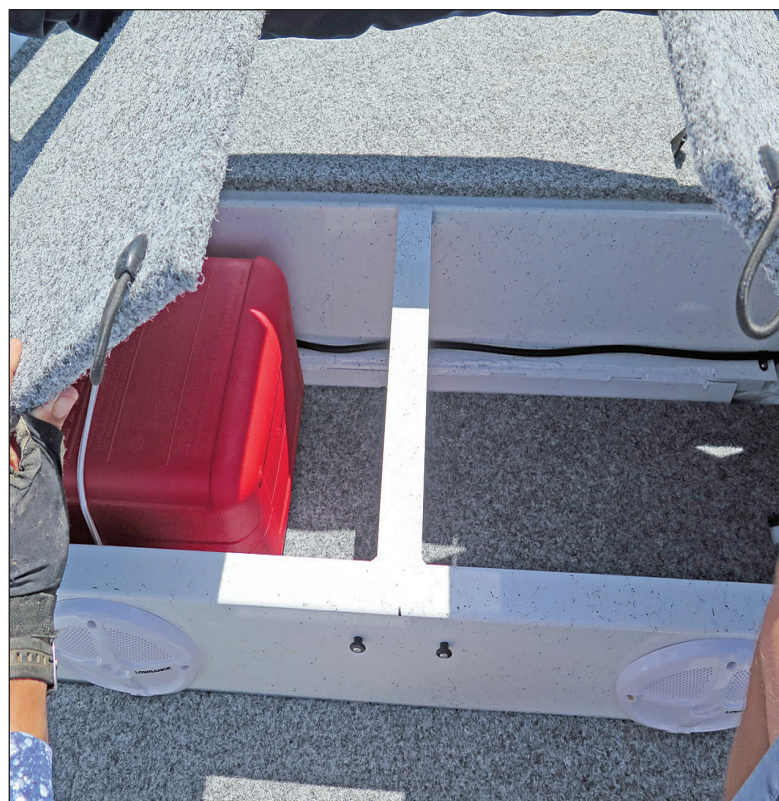
Additional features: chewing the rind

It was hard to be dispirited heading for home when Scott cranked up some tunes on his speakers installed against the front casting platform – a classy idea for a tinnie. Our heavy duty bucket seating also helped increase the comfort factor. We had two seats onboard that could be adjusted to four different positions, although it would be a bit crazy to change the driver's seat position. That pesky sea breeze had further increased but we knew the power of the Razorback would get us comfortably through a few open sections of ugly surface chop.

The openness of the internal layout meant that it would be possible to attach a set of foam rod holders opposite to the inbuilt long port side pocket. Externally, the boat features a range of generally well positioned standard additions: a transom step, rod holders, cleats and grab rails – which were all strongly made. My only criticism would have been the driver's grab rail position being set a touch too far back for my liking. Otherwise, I noticed the transom step would be ideal for snorkelling and collecting passengers. The exposed cleat attachments were also



Up close it is easy to see the strength/quality of welding that is a hallmark of all TABS boats. (Dean Wilson image)



This photo shows the unique front casting platform hatch-opening design. In this extended platform Scott could add extra fuel tanks up front.

perfect for tying up to the boat ramp pontoon while Scott collected his car.

Trailer choice: pig on the spit!

Finally, it is worth noting that the 440 Razorback is right on the weight limit for being towed with an un-braked trailer. If you hit the hog bell with a massive load of gear (e.g. multiple big eskies) it may eclipse the legal weight requirements and necessitate the need for a braked trailer. Scott had upgraded his RED-CO1313 model trailer with 14 inch truck tyres over standard 13 inch versions. The suspension was also heavy duty with shackles supporting the leaf springs instead of locking them into a hanger. These would be great options if you were to be towing long distances or doing light off-road driving. Of course, all trailer upgrades are really up to the individual!

That'll do pig...

If you are looking for a simple open boat setup that incorporates the advantages of strong plate construction, the TABS 440 Razorback would be a great choice. In my home waters I know many anglers favour

a tinnie that can do a mixture of crabbing, barra fishing and island hopping – this one would fit that niche to perfection! Anyone who has seen or hunted a big wild boar in full flight knows their extreme power and strength; these traits were exemplified perfectly in the TABS 440 Razorback. It also comes in a smaller 420 size and both come with a two year limited warranty. Once you get behind the throttle, you'll be as happy as a pig in you know what! For more information check out the TABS website at www.tabsboats.com.au or contact Dean Wilson: dean@tabsboats.com.au

TABS 440 Razorback specs:

- Maximum horsepower: 50hp
- Recommended horsepower: 40hp
- Maximum passengers: 4
- Beam width: 2.0 metres
- Overall length: 4.4 metres
- Freeboard: 500mm
- Maximum transom weight: 112kg
- Dead rise angle: 10 degrees
- Weight (hull only): 300kg



This factory image shows the layout of the TABS Razorback 440 before flooring has been added. (Dean Wilson image)



The TABS 440 Razorback provides a simple yet very effective fishing platform.

\$130,000 presented to Prostate Cancer Foundation

The world's biggest fishing competition isn't all about catching fish. The Pirtek Fishing Challenge is a charity event supporting Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia.

This year's Challenge had a record 8500 competitors and raised an incredible \$130,000. CEO of Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, Associate Professor Anthony Lowe accepted the

cheque. The funds will go towards further research and awareness programs.

Michael Guest, Stephen Dutton CEO Pirtek Fluid Systems and Dr Lowe were invited to join the crew from the Matty Johns Show which airs on Foxtel every Monday at 9pm. Gorden Tallis, Nathan Hindmarsh and Brian Fletcher are regular panel members on the show and are also great supporters

of the Fishing Challenge.

Stephen Dutton commented, "It was great to have three Pirtek Brand Ambassadors together for the cheque handover. Both Nathan and Gorden have been fishing with Michael and have first-hand experience on what the Challenge is all about. Pirtek are very proud to be supporting prostate cancer research and awareness programs."

In the last six years the Pirtek

Fishing Challenge has raised almost \$650,000 for prostate cancer. The Challenge is an annual event held in late March every year. The competition is open to anglers right across Australia with 20 target species and \$150,000 in cash and prizes.

Michael Guest, Director of the Pirtek Fishing Challenge said, "\$130,000 is a figure all fishos should be proud of. It's amazing

what a group of keen anglers can do when they get together. We're looking to make the Challenge even bigger for 2015 with a target of 10,000 competitors."

Pre-registrations are open now at www.pirtekfishingchallenge.com.au.

Every month one lucky person will win a \$100 Berkley tackle prize. Pre-registrations will be open until 1 December, 2014.