



Freedom 6.4 Seasport

Revolutionary new bottom design makes the new Freedom 6.4m one of the most driver-friendly craft to hit the market in a long time. Test report James Hill, photos by Baitbox.

Freedom has been one of the more interesting players on the trailer boat scene for about a decade. In that time the Noosa-based brand has built up quite a strong market foothold by providing attractively styled, well-priced fibreglass boats.

Indeed, Freedom has been one of the few fibreglass brands to really take the tinnies on in terms of price. This market approach has certainly been a winner for the Freedom team and this summer the company has moved to a larger factory and introduced a number of new models.

In the last season the Freedom company has also been tinkering with new ideas and has come up with one

of the most exciting new concepts to hit the boating market in years.

The new Seasport 6.4 is the first of the Freedom models to feature a revolutionary 'tunnel' bottom shape within the bottom.

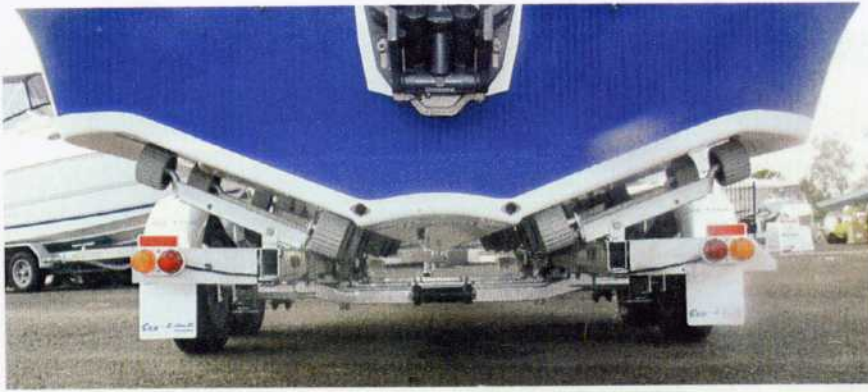
A recent test session in the new Seasport confirmed this simple addition is a real break-through. While the hull is a direct development of the earlier Freedom Elite 620, it handles far better due to the moulded tunnel, or hollow down the centreline of the Vee bottom.

While many boats have a flat 'runner plank' down the keel line, this narrow tunnel provides many more benefits. What it does is direct solid

water flow over the propeller at all times. This improves both performance and fuel consumption.

Another major benefit is the boat can be accelerated into a full plane without having to trim the motor down. This also means you can drive the Seasport over very shallow water without hurting the motor. These benefits make the Seasport one of the most user-friendly boats I've had the pleasure of sampling lately.

In an emergency, less experienced people in your crew could take the helm and drive the boat. And, of course, if the motor is properly trimmed you only gain even better performance and/or fuel consumption.



Earlier this summer we took the Seasport for a test run on the Gold Coast with Freedom CEO, Glen Grams. There's no doubt the tunnel is doing good things under the water and you can see it in the way the Seasport easily accelerates onto the plane from a standing start.

Design: The 6.4m Seasport is a modern sports cab design that incorporates a lot of what boat buyers are looking for these days. Apart from the low sports cab and curved windscreen it's got a stylish fastback transom, aerodynamic deck line and optional fibreglass targa arch.

Similarities with the earlier 620 Elite are obvious, yet the new model delivers more cockpit space and a better performance.

Apart from the tunnel, the bottom features a sharp Vee entry that flows back to deep Vee hull of about 22-degrees on the transom.

The bottom also features several lifting strakes and a wide chine edge that extends virtually to the bows. The combo of wide chines and bow flare helps to deflect spray and make the Seasport a pretty dry riding craft.

In the Freedom tradition hull weight is not overly heavy, however the boat is still structurally substantial and among other things features a 17mm hardwood ply floor, fibreglass both sides for strength and water-tightness.

With hull weight at 900kg, trail weight is about 1850-1900kg or just below the level where you need hydraulic over-ride brakes. This puts the Seasport comfortably within the range of mid-size four-wheel drives like the Pajero, Jeep Cherokee and even the Nissan X-Trail.

Performance: Conditions were looking a bit ominous in the south as we took the new Seasport for a spin on the Gold Coast Broadwater. Little

did we know that the 'rain storm' sweeping towards was to become one of the worst hailstorms to hit the Gold Coast in recent years.

Aware that something was on the way we proceeded to get our photo session done before it got nasty. After all, getting wet is something you have to accept when you're a boat tester!

In the process of photographing it was easy to see how well the Seasport slipped onto the plane and rode with a low, clean bow wash. It was by the far the driest of the three boats we were testing at the time.

As I stepped aboard the Seasport the storm was almost upon us so I ran the boat north looking for a bay for shelter. However, the storm soon overran us with not just driving rain, but hail stones like golf balls.

The Broadwater soon looked like a mini Bass Strait with 40-knot winds,



