

FREE FOR ALL

WORDS + PHOTOS ANDREW RICHARDSON





Bluewater battlewagon or family cruiser... the Offshore 595 gives you freedom of choice

It was holiday time for the kids and I, but my wife had taken a part-time job during January, so I decided to bring my kids along for the ride. To Alan Blake, we probably seemed like a panel of extremely demanding judges but he took it in his stride and endeavoured to answer a string of questions put to him by my three-year-old boy.

"Scuse me, what's this button for? Can I climb up there?" Alan did have a bit of trouble grasping the complex emotions of my six-year-old daughter who continually fought with her little brother over the ever-changing 'best seat' on the boat — all in a days family boating!

KIDS ONBOARD

Having kids onboard is a good test for a family fishing boat and straight away the Queensland-built Freedom 595 WA revealed her good points. Such as the way that substantial stainless steel Targa top provides good protection from the sun and the walk-around deck and wide, flat aft combings offer

safe access around the boat. The kids also loved the large custom-made bow hatch that made forward access easy and they spent a lot of time jumping around in the roomy cabin and on the practical vee-berth in the bow.

But most importantly for a family boat, there's a portable toilet located under the berth.

This is the first time I've been onboard any Freedom boats and I was pleasantly surprised by the build quality. She features thick aluminium windscreen surrounds and stainless steel grab rails in all the right places. The Targa top, with its rocket launcher rod rack, is exceptionally well built and has the ability to fold down to reduce the rig's height. And the bowrail is high enough to offer genuine security and easy access when forward to the open bow with pulpit.

WE HAVE LIFT OFF!

Alan explained that the Freedom's hull has a concave running plank that



allows the craft to stay on the plane at lower speeds and boosts the rig's get up and go. We timed the leap out of the hole and went from two to 30 knots in around six seconds, which is pretty good going for a 6m boat. She also holds on the plane down around 12 knots.

The 150hp Evinrude E-TEC purred out to around 5000rpm where the 17in stainless steel propeller delivers a top speed around 40 Knots. A bigger prop would deliver more top end but the test combo seemed the perfect starting point, because the craft was light on the helm and comfy right across the rev range. The hull responded well to leg trim and when we encountered some rough stuff the 21-degrees deadrise hull cut through the mess without taking spray over the bow.

The helm position was set up for an 'over the screen' view and the fibreglass pedestals supporting the bucket seats felt a lot more solid than posts. The pedestal mounts also had storage compartments for small items.

HOW MUCH?

The base model Freedom 595WA has a starting price of around \$44,000, fitted with a 130hp Yamaha. The test boat is priced at \$56,786 and featured a few desirable extras including the super efficient 150hp Evinrude E-TEC outboard; the impressive Targa top; high

spec electrics; and a GPS/sounder. You can chop and change between options and the craft can also be fitted with a windlass for those not keen on lifting the anchor by hand.

The 150hp E-TEC consumed a bit more than 1lt per nautical mile across the cruise range, so with full tanks this craft would go 125 nautical miles plus, which explains the denomination "Offshore".

Other standout features included the rear mounted bait-prep table, a rear bench seat that offered good storage and the slide-out battery system for easy access and good battery security.

As I've already mentioned, the side combings are very wide and easily doubled as cockpit seating, but only when the vessel is at rest and the walkways are more than ample for a 6m craft. There was no step from the cockpit to the walkway's but I am sure this could be a fitted option if required.

WRAP UP

Overall the Offshore 595WA is a tidy Aussie-built rig that caters well to fishos and families. The 150hp E-TEC give a handy turn of speed while the solid hull will easily handle her rated max of 200hp. This outing on the Freedom Offshore was a great way to start the New Year's working week, even if the kids took it all for granted. ⚓

▶ NAVICO RECOMMENDS...

Leading Australian-based electronics distributors Navico recommend the Lowrance LCX-37c as an ideal Chartplotter/sounder combination for the Freedom 595 Offshore. This waterproof unit has a 8.4" screen that's easily viewed day or night.



SPECS | FREEDOM 595

ENGINE ROOM

A 150hp Evinrude E-TEC spinning a 17in stainless steel prop powered the 595 Offshore.

PERFORMANCE

In a mild chop on Sydney Harbour the 595 returned the following speed-to-rpm figures.

KNOTS	RPM
2	800
5.5	1500
6.7	2000
12	2500
19	3000
30	4000
35	4500
40	5000

- Length:** 6.2m
- Beam:** 2.5m
- Hull Weight:** 950kg
- Deadrise:** 21 degrees
- Fuel:** 175lt
- Price:** \$56,786
- Contact:** (02) 4577 6699
- Web:** www.blakesmarine.com.au



Split rail makes bow access easy.



There'll never be a lack of power here.



Larger hatch means more light and air.



This E-TEC 150hp is the right stuff.

+	Excellent ride 150hp E-TEC
-	Nothing to report