

trailerboat fisherman

WIN a
Sevylor Inflatable
Touring Kayak
valued at \$1200

MAR/APR 2010

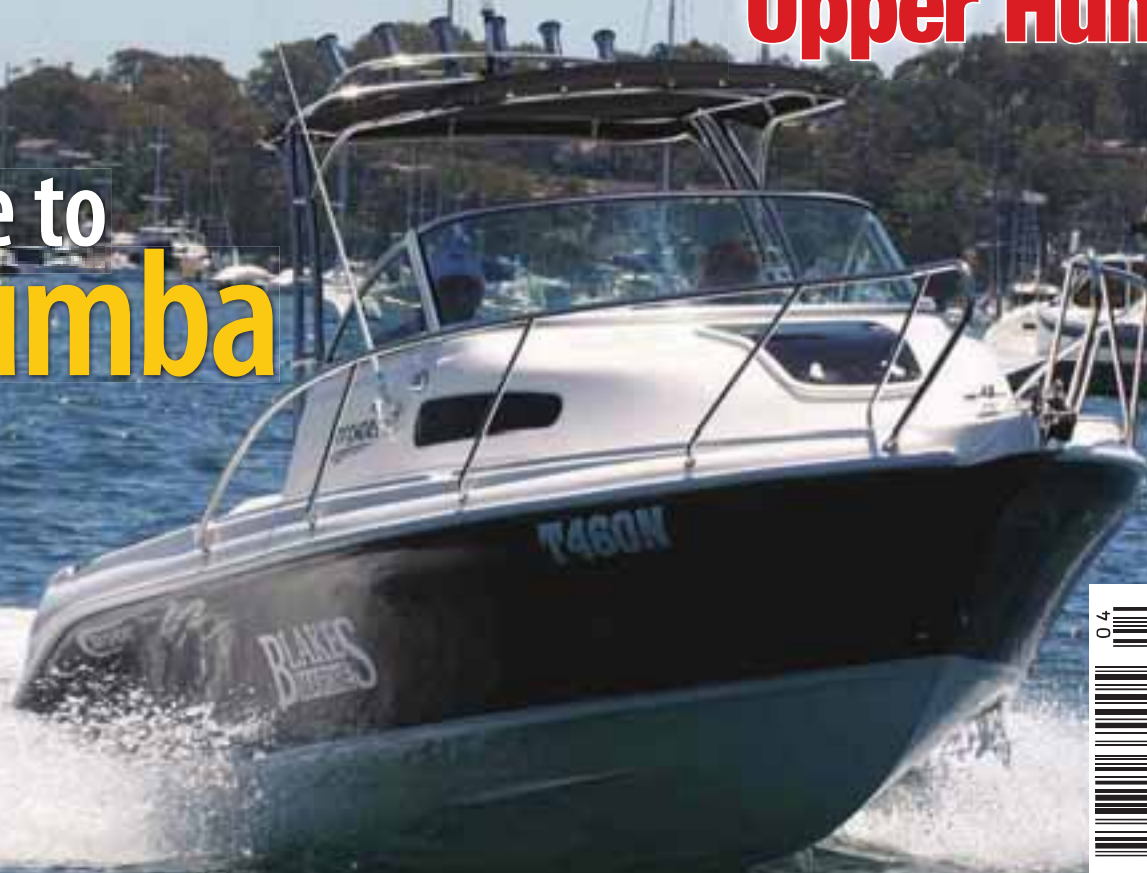
AU \$7.99 (incl GST) (NZ \$8.50 incl GST)

**Guide to Bluewater
Maori Fishing Charts**

**Exploring the
Upper Hunter**

Escape to
Borumba

Light Line
Offshore Action



2010
Car Towing Guide

**Baysport 620 Offshore
Huntsman 5.5M Dorado
Signature 485 SF Console
Stacer 479 Sun Master Runabout**

Those looking for an affordable big trailer boat to fish blue waters or bay will be impressed by this Queensland built newcomer. Test report JAMES HILL, photos by Baitbox.



Baysport 620 Off

It's more than the shopping bill that's upsetting us of late. Boat prices have been creeping up as well, making it just that much harder to realise our dream of boat ownership.

However, some boat manufacturers are doing their bit to keep our favourite pastime within reach. Baysport from sunny Queensland is one brand that really springs to mind.

This attractive-looking range of fibreglass boats combines practical virtues with plenty of cockpit space and strong fishing orientation.

Recently, we caught up with the flagship model, the Baysport 620 Offshore. As tested, this boat costs \$61,485 ex-Sydney, including high quality Evinrude 150hp E-Tec and dual-axle trailer.

Sure this is a lot of dollars, however, it's excellent buying for what it offers.

Perhaps it's a boat two mates could buy in partnership because it's a boat that offers so much in terms of fishing and family 'cruise' potential.

Particularly if you have that yearning to head offshore and achieve sport fishing glory, the Baysport 620 has a lot of appeal. It's a genuine six-metre plus craft, which is generally considered to be the 'right' size for serious blue water fishing.

Just before Christmas, our team had the pleasure of putting this newcomer through its paces with Sydney dealer principal, Alan Blake. From the moment the boat drew into view we could see she was a craft of distinction – and for saltwater action. Everything about this striking black boat says offshore action – including the deep Vee bottom, plenty of bow flare and generous-sized fishing cockpit.

Design: The factory that produced Baysport previously went under the Freedom banner. Not surprisingly, there's a strong design similarity, however, the Baysport features a subtle improvement in quality and finish.

Just to emphasise that point, there is an exceptional long, seven-year warranty on the hull.

Baysport offers several models at present – all of fibreglass construction and with a strong emphasis on coastal fishing and family boating.

With its black hull contrasting the sparkling white decks, the Baysport 620 Offshore certainly is an appealing craft. It's cutting-edge modern and measures 6.2m overall, including a stubby bowsprit for the anchor.

Beam is a generous 2.48m, while the hull is quite deep due to the topside build up above the gunwale line.



shore

Personally, I just love the curved aerodynamic cabin line and that fastback transom. However, what really makes the boat shine is the wide, walk-around deck. The latter is not recessed but simply a wide deck around a conventional cuddy cabin.

This is a very sensible design, however, also revolutionary too in the way it runs a small 'tunnel' down the keel line. This feature was first seen in the Freedom boats and has been carried over to the Baysport.

The tunnel is within the runner-plank area and tapers away to a point up near the bow forefoot. Meanwhile, the hull features a 21-degree deadrise and small down-deflection chine edges to help to cut through rough water.

Essentially, what the tunnel does is increase water flow back over the propeller, thereby improving the boat's

planing ability. In practice it allows the Baysport to slip onto the plane without you needing to fiddle with the motor trim button. It also makes the boat track better (hold course) at speed as well as do fast turns in a more controlled manner.

All told, the tunnel is a win-win design feature and I would expect it will eventually be included across the Baysport range. In an emergency this will make it a lot easier for a less experienced crew to take the helm and drive the boat.

Returning to the issue of structure strength, buyers will be pleased to find these boats have a moulded fibreglass stringer system. This not only means no timber to go soggy, but also foam-filled stringers that help strengthen the boat and make for a quieter ride.

The fastback transom forms a nice landing deck for getting aboard.



There's also a folding, stainless steel ladder on the stern as well as a walk-through stern door. Stepping into the cockpit you will find the rear lounge is offset so you have a clear walking space.

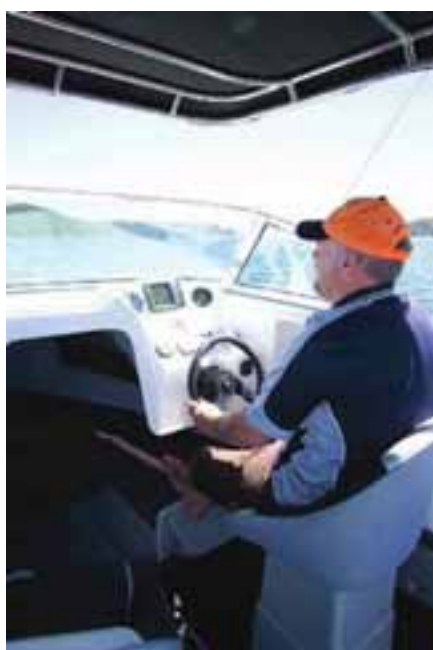
From a trailing point of view this is a serious rig, since the hull itself weighs about 950kg ex-factory. The total road weight is about the 1900kg mark with fuel tank filled so you're going to need a four-wheel drive to tow this baby. However, not necessarily the really biggest 4WD model.

Two vehicles that spring to mind include the Ford Territory (with 2300kg tow capacity) and Toyota Prado (2800kg tow capacity). Others would include the Nissan Pathfinder and the new Mitsubishi Challenger that looks very impressive.

Performance: It was a lovely sunny morning the day we joined Alan Blake for a spin on Pittwater, north of Sydney. It was just the sort of day you could imagine heading out to the far offshore reefs with a brace of Calcutta reels on the targa rack.

However, with deadlines looming we didn't have the luxury of time to go fishing all day. Instead, we spent a few hours cruising this beautiful waterway and putting the Baysport 620 through its paces.

What we were patiently waiting for was the cool, sea breeze to kick in and give us some decent wind chop. In due course it turned up and the Baysport 620 revelled in the conditions – slicing the tops off the waves and blasting away in a very smooth, easy fashion.





there are a number of excellent motors in the 130-150hp power band both in the two-stroke and four-stroke capacity.

And talking of power the Baysport 620 comes with a 170-litre in-floor fuel tank with deck filler and fuel gauge.

Deck Layout: In keeping with the 'offshore' tag the Baysport 620 comes with a moulded fibreglass bowsprit, Tee bollard and split stainless bow rail. A hinged bow roller makes it just that much easier to retrieve the anchor.

Further back is the cabin trunk with a specially designed curved forward hatch with moulded window. This design is very clever and allows more light into the cabin as well a way for the crew to easily reach the anchor from the safety of the cabin.

The wide side decks mean you can also reach the bows from the 'outside' and attend to the anchor. And yes, there is a decent non-skid where it's needed.

Ducking below we find a comfortably upholstered Vee berth with full-size sleeping berths. You also have comfortable backrests and enough room to stretch out and have a snooze, or have a meal in privacy.

Moving to the dash area you find a scooped instrument panel with plenty of space for the motor instrument gauges and flush-mounted sounder/plotter. Also fitted is a flush-fitted throttle box, bank of waterproof switches and GME VHF radio.

There's also stowage spaces in the moulded seat boxes, though I wish they'd put the openings on the back so they could better suit tackle drawer stowage. However, this is something you could easily fix yourself with a few hours and the right tools.

Fishing: The cockpit proper features a nice 72cm internal depth for safe fishing offshore. There are also raised moulded side pockets so you can get your toes under for a better fishing position.

No hull chatter here as the hull seems to ride rather easily through wave chop and feels quite solid.

There's no doubt the tunnel works its magic on the performance because the Baysport is particularly good at powering through a turn. No doubt the tunnel is acting like a turbo-charger pushing the water onto the propeller even as the hull turns.

The 620 Offshore also tracks pretty well even as the water conditions get choppier. It was an impressive performance all round and gave us the confidence about taking this boat well offshore.

The deep cockpit and wrap-around curved windscreen also gives you a great sense of security. Meanwhile, the hip-hugging bucket seats also keep the skipper and first-mate pretty snug and comfortable.

I also like the way the helm position lets you slip easily from the sitting to standing position and the side wings protect you from spray. The steering wheel is set low on the modern curved dashboard so it falls nicely to hand in both positions.

The at-rest stability is another feature of this big Baysport 620 and yet another reason you'll feel safe taking her offshore.

Power: Baysport 620 Offshore is rated to a maximum of 175hp power, though the builders recommend motors between 115hp-150hp. We tested with the latter size motor and it proved to be a very nice combination for this powerful craft. Our V6 Evinrude E-Tec pushed out the following impressive performance figures:

3500rpm	22 knots
4500rpm	31 knots
5500rpm	40 knots

These speeds put the Baysport well ahead of the average trailer boat, however, not in a way that makes it unsafe. Obviously, you could bring the power back to 140hp, or even 130hp pretty happily without hurting performance. However, I'm a little shy of going down to an 115hp as I think this would throw away too much of this performance advantage. After all, there are times we want to go fast and having that speed reserve is handy.

Conversely, I see little point going for the 175hp size donk unless you were carrying an exceptionally heavy payload (crew/gear/fuel). Obviously,





The cockpit is not self-draining, however, a sump drain under the outboard well takes care of most loose water via an electric bilge pump.

The Baysport 620 also has flat-topped side decks to suit fishing needs and three rod holders per side. And talking about the lounge, it seats

three adults quite comfortably. Below this is a removable fibreglass stowage bin (kill tank) that has quick-release floor latches. So you can pull this bin out into the cockpit for fish catch, or leave it at home.

Our test boat was fitted with a Humminbird sounder colour sounder, however, future boats will have a Garmin factory-fitted.

Other features I like about the new Baysport include attractive Italian-style recessed deck cleats, LED navigation lights and a stainless steel targa arch with six-pack rod holder. And to match that jet-black hull is black canvas bimini topping it all off very nicely.

Summary: Given the current economic times boat buyers are naturally looking for maximum value. And that's where a keenly-priced boat like the Baysport 620 comes into the picture.

Sure, you're forking out big dollars, however, just think of the value you get back in terms of the extensive fishing, in and offshore you can do in this craft. And also the quality time you can enjoy cruising on holidays and spending time with the kids (or grandchildren).

And don't be put off by running costs. Thanks to modern technology motors like the Evinrude E-Tec have greatly improved fuel consumption, if not service costs.

Overall, the Baysport 620 Offshore appeals whether you are just after bottom-bouncing or more ambitious sport fishing pursuits. Either way, it really is a boat for the bay or offshore waters.

BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

Boat supplied with Evinrude 150 E Tec, dual-axle trailer, hydraulic steering, stainless steel Targa/bimini top, colour topsides, deck wash, live bait tank (plumbed), 788CX Humminbird combo sounder, GME VHF radio, navigation lights, inshore/offshore package. Price \$61,485 from Blakes Marine ph 02 4577 6699.

SPECIFICATION CHART

	Baysport	Signature	Clearwater	HainesHunter	Mustang
Brand	Baysport	Signature	Clearwater	HainesHunter	Mustang
Model	620Offshore	600R	2150Sport	600Classic	2000 Offshore
Material	Fibreglass	Fibreglass	Fibreglass	Fibreglass	Fibreglass
Style	cuddy/cabin	cuddy/cabin	cuddy/cabin	cuddy/cabin	cuddy/cabin
Length	6.2m	6m	6.5m	6.2m	6.2m
Beam	2.4m	2.4m	2.4m	2.4m	2.3m
Rated power	175hp	175hp	230hp	230hp	200hp
Power as tested	Evinrude150	Yamaha150	Yamaha150	Evinrude175	Evinrude140
Hull weight	950kg	850kg	1020kg	1150kg	1000kg
Fuel capacity	170L	250L	205L	210L	185L

STAR RATING

Finish	★★★★★	Helm Set-up	★★★★★
Fitout	★★★★★★	Fishability	★★★★★
Ride	★★★★★	Safety Features	★★★★
Dryness	★★★★★	Value for Money	★★★★★

*Data ESTIMATED by the TBF team when accurate information is unavailable. Maximum star rating 5 stars.

