



The 7 metre PlateMaster cutting a fine figure across a bay – the 200 Yamaha Vmax pushes it along effortlessly.

Fisher King

This super-tough Queensland plate boat has been built to fish but the makers haven't forgotten family oriented boaters either. Mark Ward reports.

PLATEMASTER Boats, based in Maryborough on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, mightn't be a household name but that doesn't mean it's a newcomer to the boating industry. Owner Andrew Shilleto has been putting aluminum boats together for more than 15 years and, with the support of some very experienced staff, PlateMaster boats

has the design features and finish only experience can produce.

Like many fishos, I have a soft spot for quality plate alloy fishing boats so this test was right up my ally. The paint scheme of the test boat also appealed to me as owners of green boats are certainly a minority. The esky was full (of soft drinks of course) and the Kingfisher 7000

sat proudly in the water of Moreton Bay just begging to be put through it paces.

Pushed along by a 200hp Yamaha Vmax, the PlateMaster was quick out of the hole and planing with little effort from the stern. Andrew explained the variable deadrise that starts with a 30-degree rise from the stern before flaring out into around 45 degrees at the bow. The hull was also supporting a single 75mm wide chine that was extremely efficient while under steam and worked to keep the bow higher in the water than the sharp V would normally allow.

The handling characteristics of the hull were very good. I have started to get spoiled with electronic steering on motors like the new Verados so the steering felt a little tight to me but the boat was very obedient to commands from the helm.



Pushing the Kingfisher into some swell, the boat felt solid and you could appreciate the cutting effect of the sharp bow on the initial impact of the swell. Like all alloy boats, the landing was loud but dry and no kick back was felt through the wheel. There were a few waves that were big enough to shoot spray over the windscreen but, generally speaking, the ride of the PlateMaster was good.

The 6mm bottom and 4mm side plate alloy hull has a lifetime manufacturer's warranty. Andrew commented that he believes if a hull is built right, it should be backed 100 per cent by the manufacturer. That's a huge commitment to the quality of the hull. Going over the finish, a lot of work has been put into the gunwales and overall finish of the hull that Andrew would like the PlateMasters to be renowned for. "No matter how many orders I get, all of my boats will have this type of finish," he said.

The trim tabs are hidden under the hull and do not protrude past the transom which is handy for both fishing and for when the kids are climbing back in after a swim. Trim tabs are often mistaken for ladders. Flattening the trims tabs out and working off the engine trim was very comfortable and with the trim tabs and the engine trim, the range of adjustment was amazing. I was able to go from almost sinking the bow to launching it out of the water at only 20 knots.

The Kingfisher was able to get up and plane at just a tad over nine knots. Trolling high speed jigs for fish like wahoo and mackerel can be done very economically when planing at just 2700 revs and still under 10 knots with three larger than average men on board.

Opening the Vmax up saw the PlateMaster top out at 33 knots with the tach hitting 5200 revs. Cruising at an economical 4000 revs had us moving along at a respectable 25 knots.

Fishing from the Kingfisher is made a lot more comfortable due to the high gunwales. I could also appreciate the large cutting board. There were six adjustable down lights at the rear of the

TOP LEFT: The helm has plenty of dash space, a wide view angle and comfortable seating.

FAR LEFT: There's plenty of room in the cockpit and there are adjustable downlights fitted for night fishing.

LEFT: A very handy salt and freshwater deck wash is tucked away at the stern.



For a boat of its size the PlateMaster was a very precise handler.

cabin for rigging and baiting up at night. The 57-litre live bait tank could be worked off the bait pump when stationary or force-fed by the boat's momentum while underway. Walking around the cabin and onto the bow was too tight to be able to do with a fish hooked up so a screaming mackerel heading for the anchor rope might have you in a spot of trouble.

Heading out to sea in the Kingfisher can be done in confidence. The hull features a self-draining deck and enough foam to keep you afloat even if a big one does come over the back. The boat hasn't been tested for positive flotation but the Kingfisher weighs in at 1750kg and has enough foam under her skin to hold over 2000kg. The hull also houses a 340-litre fuel tank.

Wash down can be carried out before the boat is back at the ramp. The deck can be washed down with a decent dose of saltwater before the 80 litre stainless steel freshwater tank is tapped into for a spot free rinse. As a separate feature,

washing yourself down is not a problem with a deck shower that is neatly tucked away under the starboard gunwale.

All in all, the Kingfisher would make a great high speed trolling boat and be very comfortable for day or night baiting sessions. The big cabin means that you have no real walk around option if hooked up but the Kingfisher comes heavily optioned in the cabin area so it is a fair compromise.

The helm has a nice wide view with a heap of dash space. Sounder, GPS, marine radio and CD player are all standard. Seating is nice and high with checkered plate steel kick boards. Climbing into the cabin, there is more than enough room to sleep two in comfort but is rated to sleep four and the centre cushion is removed to reveal an electric toilet. The test boat had no doors for the cabin but Andrew is working on the best way to hang some timber stained doors that will feature on the production model. A handy addition considering the toilet feature.

The PlateMaster Kingfisher 7000 was a very well equipped vessel that will please the angler in the family as well as the wife and kids who enjoy those day trips out on the bay. Toilet and shower feature along with the non-slip kick deck and walk around cabin makes it ideal for doubling up as a family boat. Make no mistake though, this boat has been built to fish, albeit in a little comfort.

» PlateMaster Kingfisher

Length: 7m
Beam: 2.5 metres
Plate thickness: 6mm bottom; 4mm sides; 6mm transom
Weight: 1750 kgs dry (complete with motor)
Fuel: 330 litres underfloor; 80 litres freshwater for d/wash
Rec. Power: 200 - 250hp
Max. Power: 250hp
Price as tested: \$89,000

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