

## Off the Trailer

While there are many aluminium boats – ‘tinnies’ as they’re affectionately known – not many are, in my view, as classy as those made by Sailfish. This Australian manufacturer has quite a reputation for its quality, tough aluminium catamaran-style boats with just as many used by commercial operations as recreational buyers. Its Platinum Series offers owners a complete turn-key package with the added option of customised layouts.

Our test boat, a Sailfish 2800 Platinum, is the owner’s second Sailfish. He chose the brand because he was looking for something more stable and bigger than his 6.5m mono-hull, but still towable so he can go anywhere, anytime.

That said, he had to buy a Dodge RAM to go with it, of course. It’s an imposing package that is, all up, close to 15m long – the boat alone would be close to 10m on the trailer (it has an LOA of 28.9ft/8.80m and a 2.5m beam).

### CONSUMMATE FISHER

The owner of our test boat is a keen angler and loves to chase tuna offshore, so he has set his new boat up accordingly. The deck is self-draining, non-skid acrylic that looks like paint chips. It’s perfect for him, offering easy cleaning once a fish has hit the floor. Underneath, two large killtanks can accommodate the catch.

The design and layout is exceptional. There are hatches hiding the batteries and multiple storage areas all around the sides of the cockpit. The gunwales are wide enough to sit on comfortably, even with the handy inset grabrail. They have deck grip on top which, in a clever touch, has the brand and model designator etched into it. It also has three moulded rodholders either side.

Across the back, at the business end of the boat, is a bait/prep station that is the perfect height so you don’t have to bend over uncomfortably to use it. The centre of the transom is split by a wide walkway between the twin outboard set-up, something that can only be done on a cat hull. This allows anglers full access out and around the engines, which is crucial if

# FISH FOCUSED



The Sailfish 2800 Platinum’s fish-raising pedigree doesn’t leave much out, with a plethora of innovative solutions and premium offshore qualities.

By Dominic Wiseman



you're chasing a tuna around the cockpit. On the port side is a large livewell and sink set-up.

### SPACE SAVING

Innovative solutions to some of the space issues include the addition of two aft-facing bench seats, handy for sitting out the back when watching the lines. Storage is located under the starboard seat and a slide, located in the rear wall of the cabin reveals a stainless-steel barbecue. The port seat has another slide hiding a fridge. It leaves the entire cockpit clean and uncluttered ... which is the way we fishermen like it.

Up front, the accommodation on the Sailfish 2800 Platinum is simple, yet functional, with a dual door that swings to reveal a full-height toilet with handheld shower, and a double berth on the starboard side that could easily accommodate three people or plenty of fishing gear.

The cabin features suspension seats for the driver and passenger. All the grab bars are located within reach, although I felt the passenger side could do with one more. Just inside the cabin, beyond the French doors, is a sink to port and a dual-burner stove top on the starboard side, directly behind the driver's seat. Access to the bow is via the starboard side only, as the cabin is offset to portside to create more width through the centre and between the deluxe helm seats.

Twin 225hp Honda engines deliver the power on the Sailfish 2800 Platinum. The BF225 engine is built on a single overhead cam V6 platform, delivering a maximum rev-range between 5000 and 6000rpm. They deliver strong performance, with the hull able to reach planing speeds relatively quickly. The package is well balanced, with plenty of power – even mid-range – allowing you to find more when (and if) you need it. At idle, they're extremely quiet ... but when you open them up, they're throaty enough to know they're running, without being so overpowering that the sound destroys all hope of conversation in the cockpit.

The boat is available with twin 150hp engines as a base set-up so, if you're not looking for overall speed and can deal with less acceleration, these would be more than suitable.

### HAPPY AT THE HELM

This Sailfish 2800 Platinum has been designed for long trips offshore and, once you're in the driver's




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seat, you feel like you could stay there all day and be comfortable the whole time. All the controls are in the right place and the dashboard has been set up perfectly. The suspension seat takes out all the lumps and bumps. If you prefer to stand, you can fold up the bolster and still be comfortable. Visibility through the cabin is excellent and offers almost 360-degree views.

Twin-hulled boats are a little different to drive than standard mono hulls, but the stability is far better. The twin-hull set-up also means less water is in contact with the hull, which delivers better fuel economy. The test boat's new hull was built on the Hydro Flow Gen 2 design, which not only planes faster, but also cuts through the water more efficiently. It's a good compromise between speed and comfort.

We headed offshore in a reasonably choppy sea and found the hull cut through most of the chop. There sometimes is a tendency for the hulls to tip from one to the other but, once you have mastered setting up the trim correctly, it's easy to drive. I noticed water left the hull quite perpendicularly, so the game rods in the gunwale

rodholders did cop some spray. The only spray in the cockpit on the test day was reflected off the game reels. The window also stayed mostly dry.

This is a quality boat and one I'd be more than happy to have in my garage. It's trailerable which, for me, is a huge bonus. It's got masses of deck space (another tick) and is versatile enough to keep everyone happy. In this guise, the boat is aimed at serious anglers who need the extras to enable family and friends to have fun on the water, too. 

SAILFISH 2800 PLATINUM	
LOA:	8.80m
Beam:	2.5m
Construction:	Aluminium
Weight on trailer (approx):	1850kg
Power:	Two 225hp Hondas
Fuel capacity:	Two 240lt
Price as tested:	\$259,990
More information: Webbe Marine, tel: (02) 9521 7944. Web: WebbeMarine.com.au.	

*Opposite (top to bottom): A fair-sized tow vehicle is necessary; cabin is offset to maximise available space; 450 Honda horses are more than sufficient.*

*Above: At speed – little spray onboard.*