

OPPOSITE Nearly 40kts and surprisingly low noise levels.

ABOVE Non-skid surface is key to utilising the huge deck, which provides a well-equipped fishing platform

TOP Large, sloping windscreens are both fitted with washers.

ABOVE Enclosed anchor well and Lone Star winch take care of anchoring.

Let me first declare some conflict of interest in this boat review.

Firstly, I love cats! No, not that fluffy feline type – I mean the nautical breed. I'm allergic to the furry variety, both physically and mentally...

Secondly, I love well engineered and nicely presented aluminium boats – particularly plate alloy.

In a previous life, I was employed by a dealership that sold the magnificent Sailfish plate aluminium cats.

That was some 20 years ago and I had many enjoyable days chasing pelagics off the southern NSW continental shelf in their early models.

I was always impressed by the strong and seaworthy attributes of these twin-hulled warhorses, and even more so today.

Roll on two decades and both Sailfish Catamarans and I have matured somewhat (but we both still have a boyish nature).

The biggest difference is that the boats are getting better and better, while the older I get, the better I was!

It's also important not to forget that during the past two years, these Sailfish S7 cat were rated by my associates as worthy of competing in the Australia's Greatest Boats competition. In fact, the S7 model won outright in the prestigious 2015 Aluminium Fishing Boat category.

No, I wasn't a judge, but five other highly experienced boating characters including Peter Pakula, Kevin Smith, John Ford, Jack Murphy and guest professional David Talko-Smith from Gippsland Ports came to that unanimous decision.

AIN'T NO KITTEN

So can such a good boat get any better? You bet – roll on the new Sailfish S8. Bigger is always better. Right?

Sailfish has the fundamentals set in stone through many years of seagoing experience.

The hulls ride on a cushion of air, taming the slop and challenging wild seas with utter determination. Their huge footprint and inherent stability provide the ultimate trailerable fishing platform, but still allow for all of the creature comforts of large enclosed wheelhouses and cruising facilities.

The relatively light weight and efficiency of these hulls means very low running costs, yet extremely gutsy performance.

Then there's the 'Wow' factor. This is a boat that can only be described as



nautical eye candy. She turns heads wherever she travels.

There's no doubt about it – bigger is better in hard offshore conditions. The all new Sailfish S8 has the same DNA as the highly successful S7, but with an added 600mm length.

Customisable build options mean you can choose to enjoy this added length in the cabin area or aft deck, where most fishos would probably want it.

Sailfish cats are an Australian designed and built product with the ability to respond to customer's wants, needs and expectations to create the ultimate dream machine for all tastes.

Lord knows us fishos are all frustratingly different in our personal opinions on what constitutes the perfect boat... But for me personally, the S8 is up there as one of the best

trailerable sportsfishing packages of all time.

Unfortunately, I didn't get the chance to prove that statement by taking her out to challenge a big sea on our test day, but I have done so in the S7 and the S8 could only enhance the experience.

CUSTOM DELIGHT

Sailfish has developed the Hydroflow Gen 2 Hull from around 45 years of design and testing experience.

Cats certainly take some getting used to if all of your experience stems from monohulls, so don't buy one if you want high speed maneuverability or a family skiboat.

But if you do want a big, safe, secure and extremely seaworthy platform for long range offshore excursions then this is a terrific boat.

It makes a wonderful family boat, or an excellent dive boat with its big decks, rear door access and immense load capacity for plenty of gear.

A high percentage of Sailfish customers come from commercial applications where safety, economy, longevity, payload and stability are primary requirements.

Our test boat had been produced for a couple of long term fishing comrades. Yep, another couple of angling lunatics who have worked up to their ultimate dream machine with the aid of the good people at Sailfish. They love their fishing and have definite preferences and ideas on what makes the ideal workhorse.

Living on Sydney's beautiful North Shore and with a host of family who also enjoy boating, their choice of ironclad offshore weapon also had



to look great, perform well, and have plenty of indoor and outdoor facility. The Sailfish ticks every box.

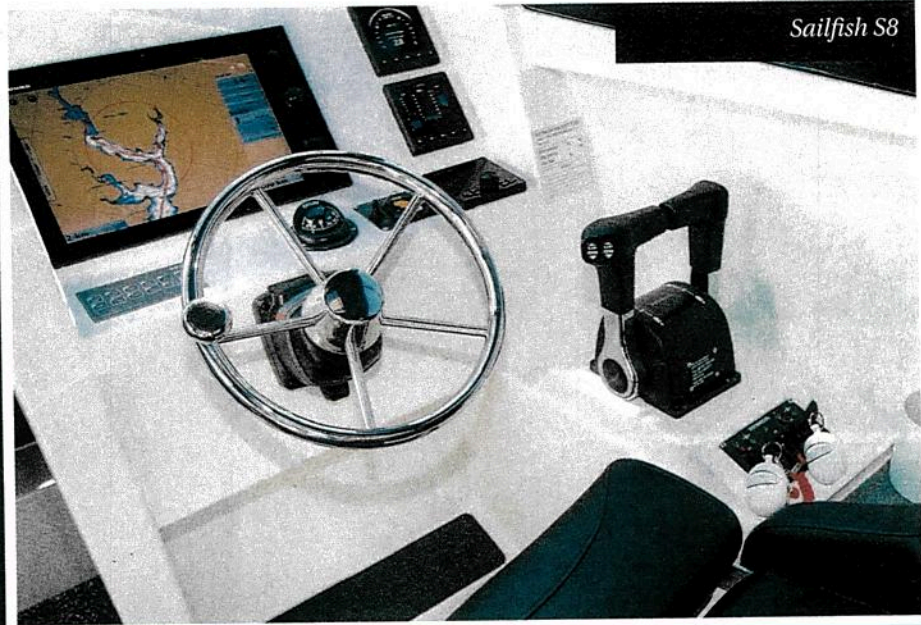
LOOKS THE PART

My first impression of the S8 as it planed toward us, was of a well-proportioned package.

She's pretty as a picture to any seafarer, with modern lines and a beautiful four tone colour combination. This is a boat that appears solid and also proud, ready for any offshore battle but also appealing for an afternoon cruise up the harbour.

The massive deck is large enough for a boardroom table and you could likely run an annual general meeting, with the skipper at the helm and caterers working the galley.

The wheelhouse is simply brilliant and gives you a real sense of confidence



Sailfish S8

"Sailfish has the fundamentals set in stone *through many years of seagoing experience*"

LEFT The wheelhouse gets plenty of natural light, with glass all round, and two roof hatches. Everything critical is within easy reach.

ABOVE Large multifunction screen provides the focal point at the helm.

BELOW Two sizeable bunks and plenty of storage up forward.



in the hull's massive abilities.

Out front, the sloping cabin roof has grey non-skid and it peaks with a bowsprit and enclosed anchor well, where a Lone Star stainless steel drum winch does the heavy lifting of a Mud Magnet.

It's a little awkward to get around the sides with my ... stature, but quite safe and achievable with plenty of hand grips and a big strong bowrail to enclose you.

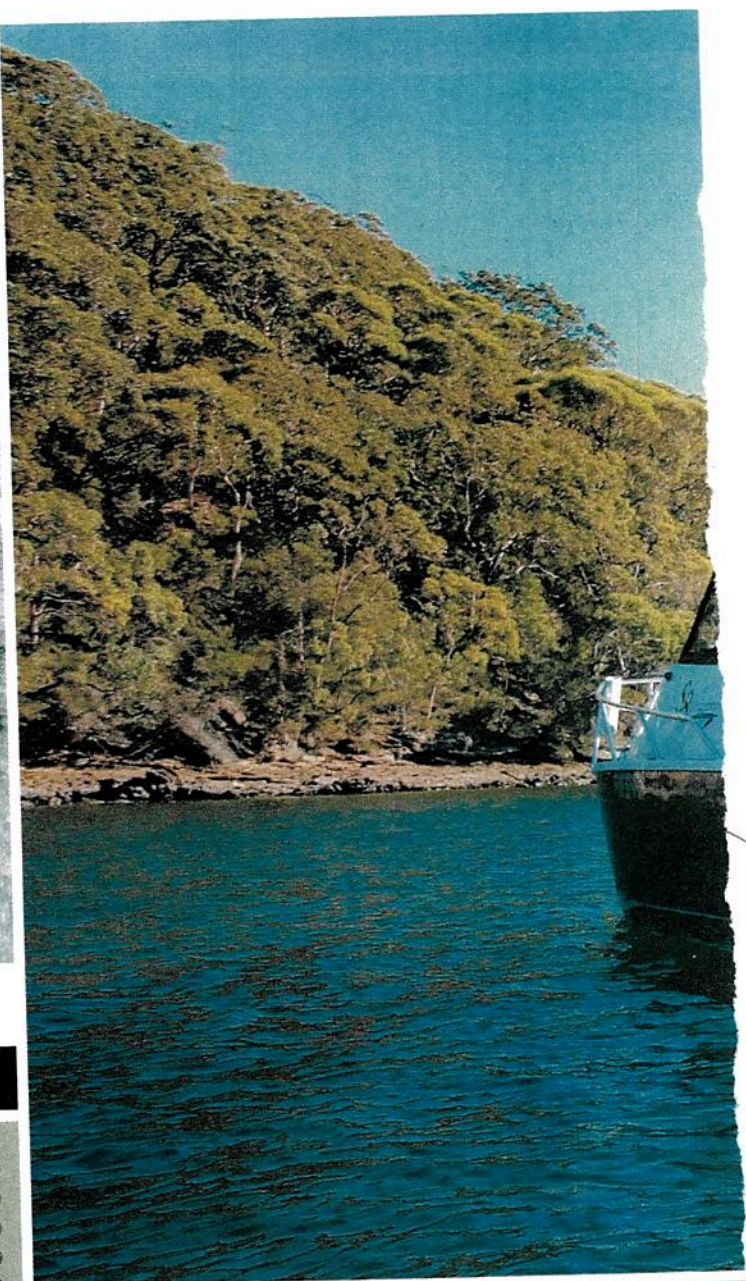
The cabin roof was fitted with dual ventilation hatches, twin aerials,

Sea Trials

Sailfish S8 catamaran with twin Honda BF150 four-strokes; three passengers; ¾ fuel load

RPM	SPEED (KTS)
3400	18.9
3500	19.7
4000	24.3
4500	29.2
5000	33.5
5500	37.3
5600 (WOT)	38.3

*Sea-trial figures supplied by author



How does it rate?

Sailfish S8

1	FUN FACTOR/FISHABILITY	★★★★★★★★★★★★
2	INNOVATION	★★★★★★★★★★★★
3	DESIGN AND LAYOUT	★★★★★★★★★★★★
4	QUALITY OF FINISH	★★★★★★★★★★★★
5	HANDLING AND RIDE	★★★★★★★★★★★★
6	STABILITY AT REST	★★★★★★★★★★★★
7	ERGONOMICS	★★★★★★★★★★★★
8	STANDARD EQUIPMENT	★★★★★★★★★★★★
9	VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★★★★★★★★
10	X-FACTOR	★★★★★★★★★★★★

Average ★★★★★★★★★★

HIGHS

- Strong and stable
- Enclosed wheelhouse
- Huge deck area
- Towing weight

navigation lights and the arch for the customers' Furuno electronics, including radar.

The customers also opted for a set of Relax outriggers with tilting vertical mount bases.

COMFORT CAT

The internal cabin layout is large, comfortable and all-embracing.

There are two forward bunks with storage, and (usually) a full pump-out electric toilet – however the owners chose not to fit it.

The cabin entry is large enough for big blokes and is open and airy.

It's hard to believe this package is

under the legal towing width, but it is actually 50mm less than the maximum allowable beam of 2.5m. She carries that beam all the way fore and aft, giving immense volume.

The cabin features commercial-grade toughened glass windscreens, providing excellent vision and sliding side windows for ventilation.

The owners optioned windscreen wipers with washers on both sides, and the cabin roof is lined and has a good solid bar overhead for standing passengers when the need arises.

Sailfish has worked hard on perfecting its helm. The layout is simple but effective, with great vision

and space for large electronics, multifunction screens, anchor controls and the twin binnacles for the Honda BF150 four strokes.

You can be quite comfortable either standing or seated, with upholstered bolster seats, a footrest and a strong stainless-spoked wheel for attacking the rough stuff.

Sailfish provide plenty more storage with a pair of large seat boxes extending to the rear enclosure.

The barn doors entry allows the security of a solid lock-up cabin, combined with easy traffic flow, and vision is excellent right around the boat.

"The S8 is up there as *one of the best trailerable sportsfishing packages* of all time"



LOWS

- Sounder mount (owners' choice)

OPPOSITE TOP Central rear exit gets you out between the two Hondas.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM Buzzing along at 5600rpm, the 150 Hondas are the maximum recommended.

ABOVE The pair of Hondas complement the overall purposeful look of the S8, which sits well at rest – one of the benefits of a cat.

WHO LOVES TO FISH?

The deck is big enough to hold a barn dance, but it's also extremely well-constructed and appointed. The floor has speckled non-skid paint that works really well when wet or covered in fish blood.

Under the floor are wet boxes both sides, and the owners have fitted a mounting plate for a game chair.

Immediately outside the cabin are a more storage boxes that have been customized in this case with upholstered rear facing bolster seats, so you can be really comfy while waiting for that strike.

A metho stove and 47lt cooler usually

slot under the starboard seat, with a sink and tackle drawers to port, but in this case there's just more storage.

Overhead you find a shade awning and rocket launchers, while the side pockets contain rod, tag pole, boat hook and gaff storage, plus a huge array of welded alloy rodholders for every type of fishing fitted to the gunwales.

The transom layout is sensational. She has a plumbed livebait tank with viewing window in the port side, combined with a large hatch housing one of the three batteries and fuel filtration.

On starboard is a complete workstation with lift-up cutting board

and saltwater tap, high pressure wash-down, plus a deep bait bin.

Typically for a cat, you can walk right out between the outboards on the centre platform which has its own gate and folding dive ladder.

You'll feel very safe with the freeboard and won't ruin your knees in a serious sea, with padded coamings to the rear workstations.

Of course, the entire deck is self-draining for maximum safety and there's a bright array of gunwale lighting, combined with sensible LED worklights both on deck and throughout the boat, including underwater.



"I would be more than confident to take her on extended ventures in the top end, *or fight a big fish well into the night*"

EXPEDITION KITTY

Much like its feline namesake, this kitty leaps with agility as you plant the throttles on the Hondas.

There's a real spring in her step, right through the rev range and we hit a sprightly top speed of 38kts at 5600 revs with three on board and three-quarters of a tank of fuel (2 x 175lt tanks). And I daresay you could get even more out of her with a bit of propeller tuning, too.

More importantly, there was confident and immediate power, right through the rev range with incredibly low noise levels.

I like the feel of this boat and would be more than happy to take her on extended ventures in the Top End, or fight a big fish well into the night out at the shelf. Or what a great boat for a broadbill excursion!

THE WASH-UP

The custom fitout options on this boat are endless, but the standard package

is pretty much all-inclusive and only needs your electronics selection.

She comes on a custom tandem aluminium trailer and those 150hp Hondas are standard for the very attractive package price of around \$165,000.

The hull length is a full 7.5m and each sponson is compartmentalised and foam-filled for even more peace of mind.

For such a big boat, she can still be towed legally, with a dry weight of around 3000kg.

There's plenty to like about the all-new Sailfish S8. This is one hell of a competitor in the tough world of offshore sportsfishing machines.

With more than 45 years of dedicated experience, the crew at Sydney's Webbe Marine will help you design your dream machine, ensuring you get a perfectly tailored package for your sporting life.

There's no doubt, this is one cat that left me purring. ■

facts & figures

Sailfish S8

PRICED FROM
\$165,000

PRICE AS TESTED
POA

GENERAL

MATERIAL Aluminium

TYPE Trailerable catamaran

LENGTH 7.5m

BEAM 2.45m

WEIGHT 3000kg (BMT approx)

CAPACITIES

PEOPLE 7

REC. HP 2 x 135

MAX. HP 2 x 150

FUEL 350lt

WATER 45lt

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL 2 x Honda BF150

TYPE Four-stroke DOHC with VTEC

WEIGHT 220kg (each)

DISPLACEMENT 2354 cc (each)

GEAR RATIO 2.14:1 (counter-rotating)

PROPELLERS 2x Solas 19in three-blade stainless

SUPPLIED BY

WEBBE MARINE

17 Yalgar Road, Kirrawee, NSW, 2232

PHONE (02) 9521 7944

EMAIL gavan@webbemarine.com.au

WEB webbemarine.com.au