



The 5.5 Cuddy punching through a bit of chop.

# Vindicator 5.5 Cuddy cabin

**I**N the October edition of BNB Fishing I tested the 6.2m Vindicator from Watson's Marine, based in Gympie, an easy drive north of Brisbane.

On the same day I also put its smaller brother, the 5.5 cuddy through its paces.

Swapping from boat to boat actually gave a good indication of what each boat could do and how it performed.

Although badged as a 5.5, the cuddy has an overall length of 6m, making it a good all-round sized boat that is easy to tow and handle yet quite at home in offshore waters.

The balance of this boat in relation to cabin, helm and fishing space is spot on, giving you an excellent package for your dollar.

The bunks are large enough for you to be able to stretch out and have a quick sleep if doing an overnighter.

And having the whole area open also makes getting in and out of the cabin so much easier.

Storage areas are located under each bunk and a toilet was fitted to the test model under the front bunk section.

Two shelves are located around each side of the cabin, giving you ample places to store all the bits and pieces you may need when doing extended trips.

Plenty of room at the helm is also a feature and having three people standing side by side is a breeze, while still maintaining good vision of the water and any instruments you may fit to the amply spaced dash.

Alternatively you could have two people standing behind the two seats.

As for the fishing room, although you would expect it to be compromised



Boat Test  
by BEN COLLINS

with the amount of room utilised in other areas of the boat, it is actually totally the opposite.

For a 5.5m boat, this rig had a huge amount of fishing room (beam 2.45m) and could easily fish four or more in any conditions.

I feel this is important because in all honesty you spend more time down the back of the boat than anywhere else.

A live bait tank has also been fitted in the transom wall and a boarding area is located on the portside.

Batteries are raised off the ground and stored behind a removable canvas cover, making access and removal a breeze.

Although not fitted to the test boat, the option of a deluxe bait board would be a welcome addition.

Apart from this option, there are heaps more available, making a custom-built boat like the Vindicator all the more appealing.

You can customise your rig to exactly how you want and it comes to you totally ready to hit the water.

And with the on-water experience of the crew at Watson's Marine you can ask about anything you want for your boat and they will be able to assist with comprehensive advice.

All those little personal touches make buying a new boat that much more appealing, and the end product exactly what you want.

Another feature of the Vindicator is the quality of finish.

I touched on this quite a bit in my review of the 6.2m boat, and have found the finish to be consist-

ently good throughout the range.

Having the top deck of the gunnels pressed and not welded is just one of the many things that put this boat at the top of its class.

Not only does this look impressive and make it easy to clean, it also ensures your boat looks like new for many years to come, with no corrosion occurring.

The quality of these boats isn't just in the finish, but continues throughout from construction to fit out.

The 5.5 Vindicator cuddy is built with a 5mm plate bottom, 4mm plate sides and 4mm plate floors, making it a very solid and seaworthy boat.

However being a solid boat doesn't mean it is necessarily going to ride well.

Ride is determined by the hull design and how well the boat is balanced.

Plenty of design features have been used in developing the well-performing Vindicator hulls.

Features like a good entry point in the bow for cutting through waves, combined with a large reverse chine to deflect spray and ensure stability at rest, and an extended vee of the hull through to the transom, which stops it leaning into the wind, are all key points in delivering a good ride.

As standard, all Vindicator are built to take either a twin or single engine setup.

The test boat was fitted with a single 115hp 4-stroke Yamaha, and although rated to a maximum of 140hp the 115hp punched out some interesting numbers.

With the optimal cruising speed coming in at 45km/h at 5000rpm you can achieve around 1.73km/litre, which combined with the 200-litre fuel capacity gives a range of over 300km.

Who would have thought at 5000rpm you'd be getting your best economy, but these 115hp 4-stroke Yammies are very fuel-efficient engines.

As an option it could even be worth spinning a slightly bigger prop, but that depends on your use of the boat.

If you intend having a few mates and some gear on board and heading offshore through bars and places where you need the punch, I would leave it as is.

But if you plan to be mainly cruising in the bay, a bigger prop might even get you some better top end if you wanted it.

However, there aren't too many days on the water where conditions will allow you to run at WOT.

Some of the standard features of the 5.5 Vindicator cuddy include hydraulic steering, under floor kill tank, ribbed carpeted floor, carpeted dash, four rod holders in the side decks, self-draining floor, swim transom, wide side decks, seat boxes, cabin grab rail and a five year warranty.

These are just a few of the standard features, to see them all check out [www.watsonsmarine.com.au](http://www.watsonsmarine.com.au) or give Watson's Marine a call on 07 5482 2135.

If you are after a quality plate boat, superior finish, and exceptional ride I would suggest going for a ride in a Vindicator. ⚓



Removable clear windows give good ventilation at the helm.



At rest it was very stable due to the reversed chines.



The spacious dash and bunk area.



These seat boxes are great for stowing your tackle.