



The Surtees 540 Workmate Hard Top looks good in blue and silver, the shiny new craft gaining attention on the ramp when launching.

We took one from North Shore's Fishing Boats NZ out for a late spring fishing trip when the gulf was firing. Launching the boat at Takapuna boat ramp and it got a lot of stares and attention in its bright blue paint job. It was matched to a Yamaha F90hp and with an 100L fuel tank, we had plenty for our party of three to head out wide off Kawau in search of the work-ups.

NO SOUNDER

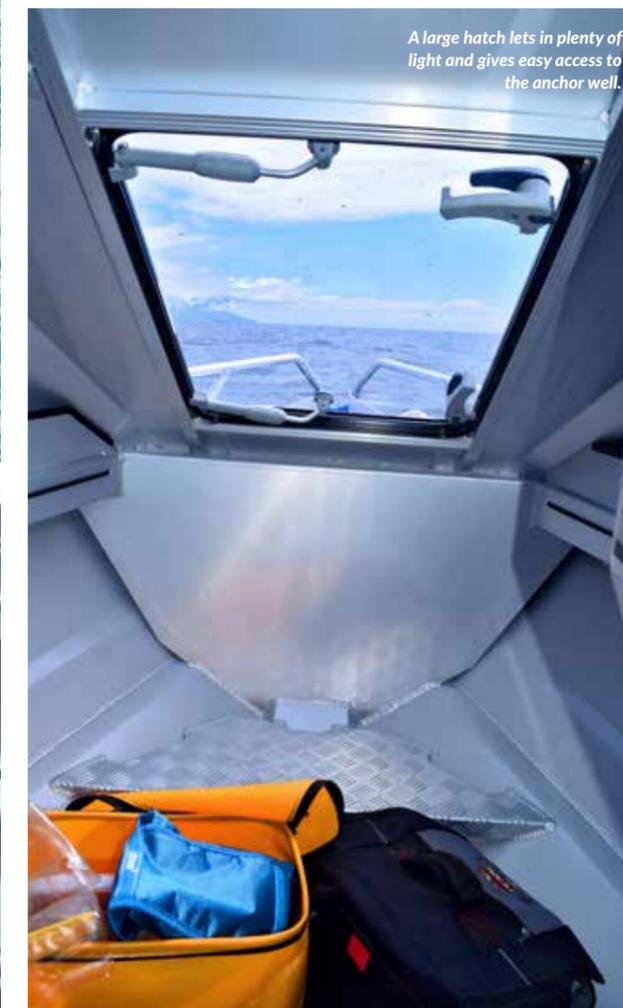
It wasn't until I was sitting in the boat on the water with the motor started, that I noticed this demo boat was yet to be fitted with a GPS/sounder! Well, that was going to make the fishing interesting and we had better find some bird and dolphin action to fish amongst.

We headed north from the ramp towards Tiri punching into a small northerly swell that was short, the boat didn't mind

at all as we cruised along at 25 knots at 4700rpm. The Yamaha F90 was responsive and provided power when needed, we only slowed a couple of times to go over the large wake of a ferry and charter boat.

We past Tiri and headed for Kawau as the fishing had been going off over the weekend according to a few contacts, with big 5kg+ snapper feeding amongst the dolphins, gannets and even whales. We could see several boats fishing outside the cable zone in 40m+ as we arrived and there were plenty of gannets sitting on the water.

We checked the Navionics chart on our phone to ensure our position and how deep we should be and then started to fish, watching the gannets intently for any work-ups as with no sounder, we really needed to rely on nature to help us find the fish.



A large hatch lets in plenty of light and gives easy access to the anchor well.

SURTEES WORKMATE 540 HARD TOP

STORY AND PHOTOS: MATHEW HEWETSON & SCOTT CUSHMAN

We profile another boat designed and made in the sunny Bay of Plenty from Surtees, a fresh upgrade from a legendary model that is well known by Godzone anglers across the country.

I've fished in many Surtees Boats over the years, a popular boat brand and one many of my friends and colleagues have owned of various sizes. They are a good fishing vessel, with their BOP fishing heritage coming through to take on bar crossings to get to the best fishing grounds.

This natural testing area meant Surtees came up with the right formula for a solid, safe trailer boat that rides well and offers a good fishing platform. Surtees has grown strongly during this time and they offer

many models in their line-up but in those early years, the Workmate 550 quickly became their flagship boat, it ticked all the above boxes and it was a star performer for the boat manufacturer for many years.

This year Surtees decided on introducing the 540 Workmate Hardtop and it was launched at the 2018 NZ Hutchwilco Boat Show, where it picked up the best 'Specialist Fishing Boat up to 6m'. So, it obviously appealed to the industry judges, but how would it go on the water with a bunch of regular fishos?



The hard top offers great protection from the sun and rain, with the windscreen providing good visibility for the skipper. Solid grab rails for crew and 7 rod holders in the rocket.

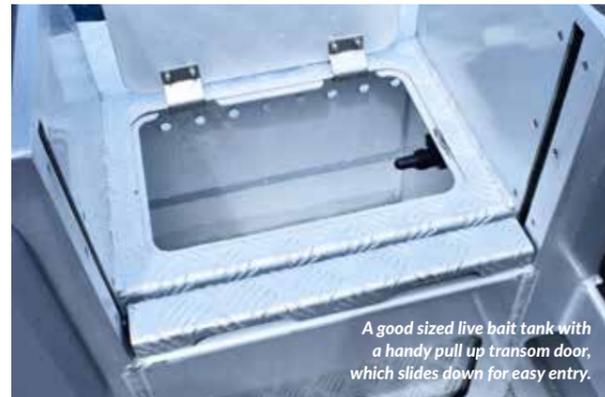
PROFILE Surtees 540

Matched with the economical Yamaha F90hp and 100 litres under the floor, this 5.4m boat has a great range for a day trip.



"At speed, I really liked the comfortable Hi-Tech Elite Bolster seats as they come with a lift-up bolster for ease of access and when standing up, support your back well."

The 90hp was excellent, cruising at 25 knots at 4700rpm while economical on fuel.



A good sized live bait tank with a handy pull up transom door, which slides down for easy entry.

COCKPIT AND SEATING

We drifted around sitting gannets and dropped jigs down, we only caught kahawai after kahawai, so I picked up the binos to look further north and could see a gathering mass of birds circling in the sky. "Let's go boys!" as we wound up our lines and gunned the 540 towards the work-up.

At speed, I really liked the comfortable Hi-Tech Elite Bolster seats as they come with a lift-up bolster for ease of access and when standing up, support your back well. We arrived to diving gannets and we quickly set up a drift away from them to find the snapper

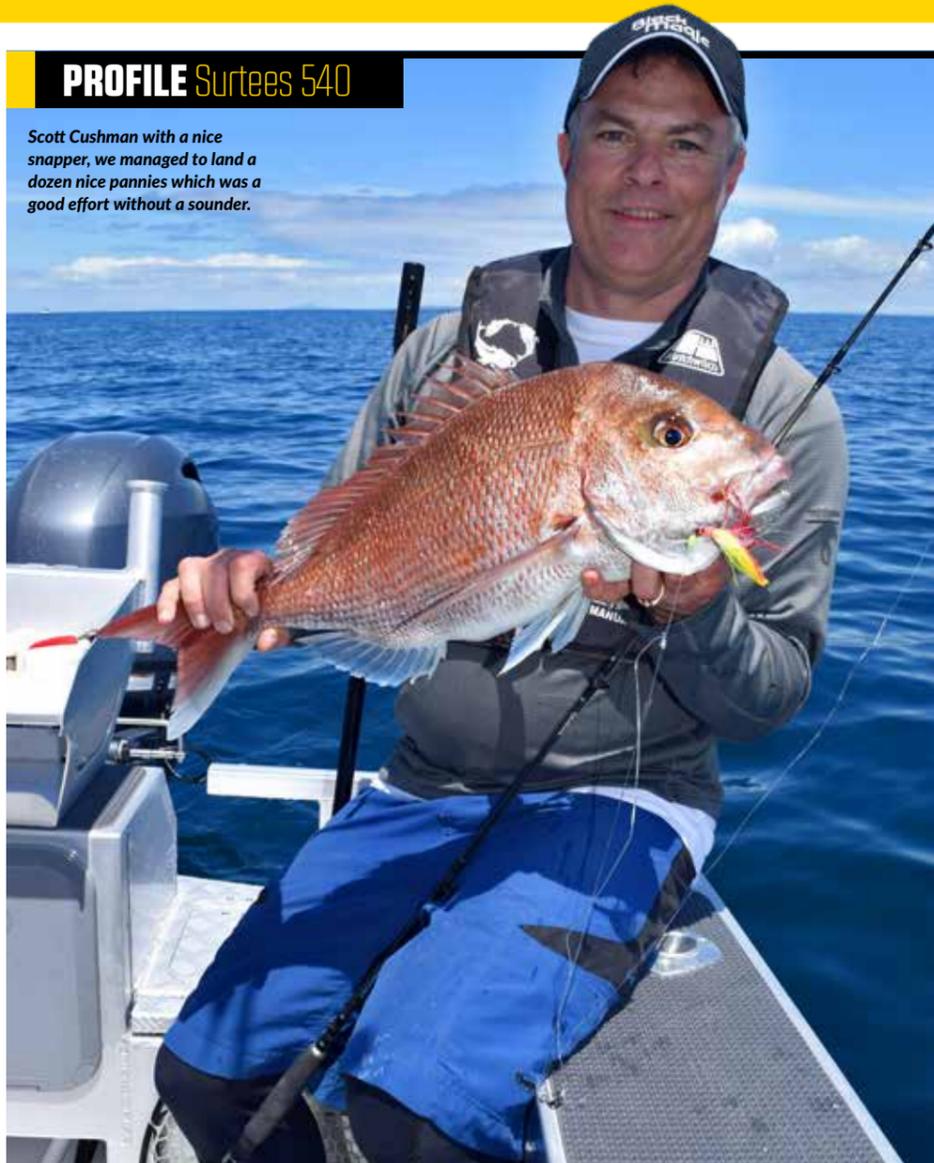
feeding on the bottom.

All three of us were jostling for positions in the cockpit as we were keen to get amongst the hot action. The boat will take up to five people, but my pick would be for three average sized anglers in the boat as a comfortable day's fishing as our trio.

There is ample room in the cockpit for fishing, as we started to catch nice pannie snapper on lures and we had several in the bin when the work-up finished. We continued to drift through the area over the next few hours picking up a few more fish on softbaits and flasher rigs.

PROFILE Surtees 540

Scott Cushman with a nice snapper, we managed to land a dozen nice pannies which was a good effort without a sounder.



The new hard top features all the Surtees iQ that's made the brand famous, including water ballast technology and two fully sealed safety buoyancy compartments for peace of mind.

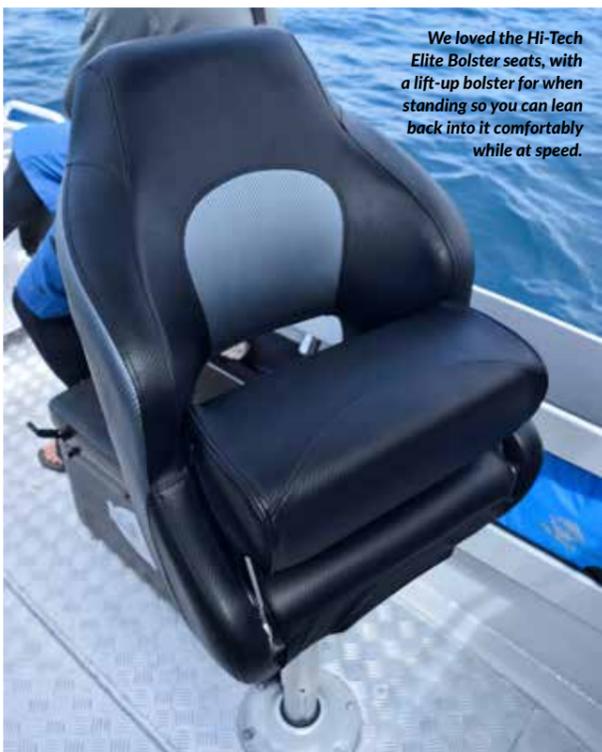
is positioned on the side of the boat and not on the floor of the boat. This was always a tricky refuelling point and you needed care not to get spilt fuel over your floor.

The Surtees 540 Workmate Hard Top is a practical fishing boat that will appeal to many day fishermen, who are looking for a bit of protection from the elements and a boat that offers a solid fishing platform. Its easy to tow and a 2.0L car would have no problem, give Andrew at Fishing Boats NZ a call to organise a test and your sounder of choice! **FIGZ**

The tide was high and slack water meant the fishing had died off for the time being. We had enjoyed a steady morning session and we wanted to get back in by 2pm, so we headed back to the ramp and the wind had died and sea conditions were glassing off.

The new hard top features all the Surtees iQ that's made the brand famous, including water ballast technology and two fully sealed safety buoyancy compartments for peace of mind. As expected, the 540 comes with plenty of rod holders with 3 more on the bait station, plus a good-sized live bait tank and very handy transom door, that can be pulled up when needed and hides away when not.

Another good redesign (in all models now), is the fuel intake



We loved the Hi-Tech Elite Bolster seats, with a lift-up bolster for when standing so you can lean back into it comfortably while at speed.

Boat Specs

SURTEES 540 WORKMATE HT

- + Length overall: 5.40m
- + Beam: 2.19m
- + Deadrise: 16 deg
- + Powering: 80-100hp
- + Fuel capacity: 100L (under floor)
- + Hull bottom: 5mm
- + Side: 4mm
- + Top Side / Cabin: 3mm
- + Max load: 625kg (5 people)
- + Water ballast: 190L
- + Approx tow weight on trailer: 1100kg
- + Price as tested from Fishing Boats NZ \$59,084 (includes an alloy trailer)

FOR MORE INFO:

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