

SURTEES 4.85 WORKMATE



The little boat that punched well above its weight — that's how the judges felt about this tough little Kiwi workhorse. It didn't have the sophistication or grunt of the big boys but it left a hell of an impression on all who drove it.



SURTEES 4.85 WORKMATE	
LOA:	4.85m
BEAM:	2.0m
WEIGHT:	350kg (hull)
MAX. HORSEPOWER:	75hp
PRICE AS TESTED:	\$29,900



The "Keep It Simple Stupid" principle characterises this tough little boat. Good anchor access, wide side-decks and a sensible layout allow it to compete with comparable (but much more expensive) 'glass boats.



“Way better than you have any right to expect from a plate-boat its size!” This

comment from Warren Steptoe neatly summed up the brave little Surtees 4.85 Workmate. This was the little pocket rocket that took on contenders nearly twice its size (and five times its price!) and came close to stealing the show.

The Surtees' honest workboat appeal was the overriding winner for this "hose me out" contender that was almost devoid of upholstery and trim. It's a tough little contender where the underlying beauty is its basic nature. Practical little workhorses like this have a place in every fisho's driveway — and it would even take you places where larger contenders are left high and dry.

The little Surtees was certainly more than a sweetwater boat. We gave this hot-blooded Kiwi minx a thrashing in choppy offshore conditions and it laughed at everything we threw at it. At one stage Bear and Rob (Rob is from Victoria's Russell Cairns Marine) found themselves launching off the face of a 2m wave with a large trough on its back. They looked at each other in mid-air and yelled, "Yeah — bring it on!" The ride was one of the smoothest experienced by many judges in a small aluminium fishing boat, and

"The king of its class."

— Jeff Strang



it'll certainly beat loads of comparable fibreglass competitors as well.

All the judges also commented on just how good this braveheart handled in the rough, especially when you consider that it was powered by a simple Yamaha 60hp two-stroke.

The Surtees is an easily towed, budget-oriented boat that will appeal to a large percentage of the fishing market — offshore, inshore, estuary, lake or river, you name it. It embodies the old KISS principle ("Keep It Simple Stupid") and while it'll happily respond to some personalizing in the fitout, its equipment list includes a well designed array of features, such as nice wide sidedecks, a well-laid out transom, and a smallish cuddy with good anchor access.

Jeff Strang described this boat as "the king of its class" while John Ford said it "punches well over its weight". Everyone agreed — the Surtees 4.85 Workmate was a surprise package and a worthy contender at that. This brash little boat won untold admiration from everyone at Port Stephens.

THE JUDGES' NOTEPAD

Kevin Smith: Typical little bay fisher / general runabout that can handle some offshore use. This boat looks nice and sharp with a decent dash that will accommodate medium sized electronics. I felt the open cabin could do with some simple cleats to strap in Esky-type coolers or storage boxes. The heavy duty welds throughout are superb and there's plenty of non-slip material on the gunwales. It's a well trimmed boat all round but I felt the bimini could be sturdier. Overall, it's an awesome little pocket rocket with an exceptional ride for its size. Stability is as you'd expect for a small boat but with a ballast full of water it gets quite sturdy. I note the good stand-up vision for the boat's size although I'd prefer a slightly higher control box. Access to anchor through the front hatch is also great — you could even fish from here. Being an entry-level boat it's easy to add options but what comes as standard is enough to get you

on the water. It offers great quality at a good price and it packs a solid punch for such a small boat. Just a fantastic all-rounder!

John Ford: A good overall performer and a step up from a basic runabout. Water ballast in a boat this size is a big bonus. Its appearance is a bit industrial — the stitched welds and the checkerplate floor contribute to this look — but serious fishos will love the strength on display. The ride is exceptional in the rough and it punches well over its weight. The water ballast greatly assists with stability and handling. The easy access bow is another very usable feature. This boat has a basic fitout, but its air chambers and water ballast balance this out. I did feel that the controls were set low but it gets full marks for value for money. Not much in this price range is going to beat its seakeeping ability.

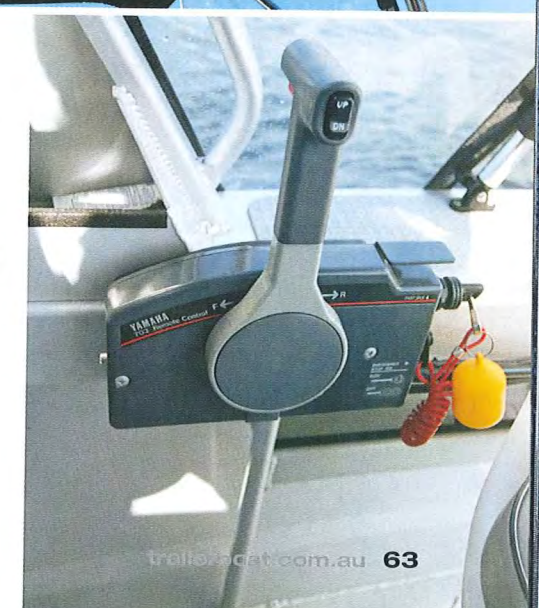
Jeff Strang: It has plenty of working space, plenty of rodholders, room for Esky coolers and more. It's a great boat for the old codgers to bring home dinner. I like the flooding and shutting ballast, belt (launching) and clip-in side seat. Layout and appearance are pretty basic but the Nylac surface coating looks good. Quality of finish is also very good for its class with



Above top: Our judges gave this gutsy workhorse a serious thrashing at Port Stephens but nothing seemed to faze it, even a 2m swell and Captain Courageous wave jumps.

Middle: When you buy a Surtees 4.85 Workmate you certainly get enough gear to get you out on the water. A few practical niceties would be useful though — cleats to strap in cooler boxes for example — but it's a well trimmed boat with plenty of rod storage space and healthy value for money.

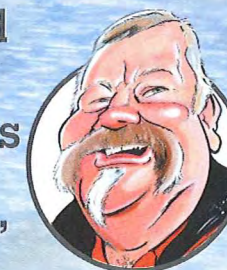
Right: Tall blokes might like the controls set a bit higher.



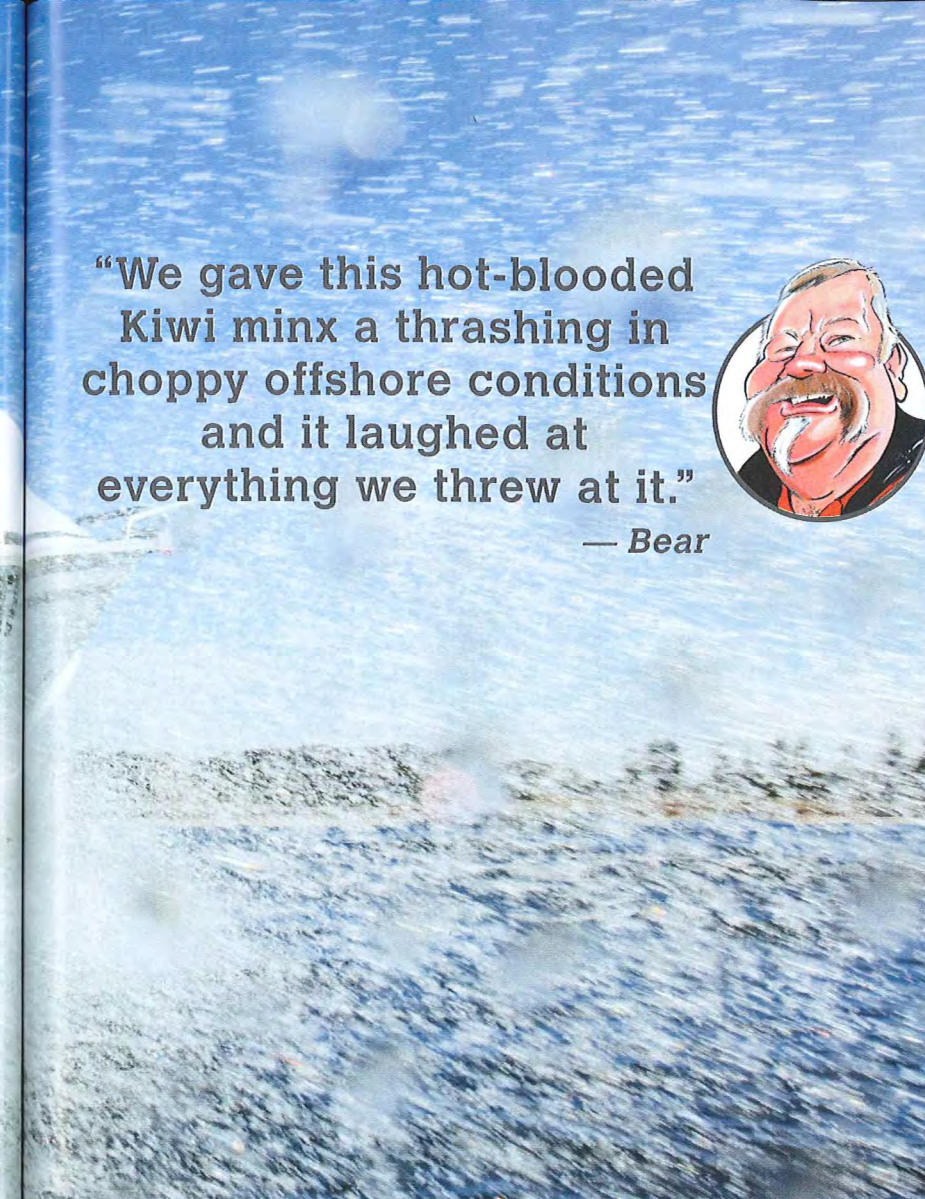
TRAILERBOAT RATES THE SURTEES 4.85 WORKMATE



“We gave this hot-blooded Kiwi minx a thrashing in choppy offshore conditions and it laughed at everything we threw at it.”



— Bear



The standard of construction is excellent, the deck and transom well laid out and the general level of welding is first class.

top quality welding and construction quite evident. Ride and handling were better than expected for a boat in this class, however the cable steering feels a bit heavy. Even so, stability is a Surtees hallmark thanks to the flooding keel. Ergonomics are very good for a boat in this class. Its raised and isolated battery boxes also lift the safety level. It's cheap to purchase and it holds excellent resale value. This is a boat out of its class that would no doubt be the king of its class.

Warren Steptoe: It's a great boat for its intended purpose and a great concept, although the idea has been around for a while. Even so, it's very well designed for enclosed and semi-open water fishing. It would certainly be a wise choice for any fishos who need something in which they don't mind getting a little rough. This boat is way better than you have any right to expect from a plate-boat its size. Stability

“It punches well over its weight.”

— John Ford



is also quite reasonable for a fairly steep deadrise boat of its size. It has a good standard equipment list for a basic boat and additional gear would complete it. It represents excellent value for money and it's a very appealing boat for the many people who need a tough, workhorse fishing boat.

Bear: This boat does everything you could ask of a budget-oriented boat. Sure, it could do with some customising but otherwise it's a great little package. It has

some really nice and simple little touches. For example, the trapped water in the flooding keel really helps. Its design is all about the KISS principle — Keep It Simple Stupid. Welds and folds are very strong and the overall finish is excellent for a basic boat. I just can't think of a better riding vessel in this class — in fact, it's better than 99 per cent of comparable fibreglass boats. Stability at rest is not its strongpoint (but it's still acceptable), but the ride is exceptional. This is a basic boat and that's the beauty of it.

	1 Fishing suitability	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	OVERALL
WILLIS	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
STEPTOE	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
STRANG	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
FORD	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
SMITH	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢

