

Fresh look for Savage



Savage's updated 485 Jabiru Pro.



The budget priced Kava.

Since buying Savage boats back in 2008, Gold Coast-based boat builder Telwater has made significant changes to the veteran alloy boat brand's line-up.

By Mick Fletoridis

Soon after purchasing Savage in 2008, Telwater streamlined the range, which saw model numbers cut from 35 to 24. Interestingly, the state of play for 2012 will see Savage model numbers bumped to 39, which also takes into account Savage's fibreglass sports boats produced in Asia. The company has also cut production of its pre-existing fibreglass top deck models, expanded on existing alloy models and introduced several new ones.

At Savage's media day the latest incarnation of an Australian brand that dates back to 1898 was revealed. At the event, Savage's national account manager Cameron Wood was quick to point out that while Telwater also produces household name tinny brands such as Quintrex and Stacer, the goal is to differentiate Savage from its stable mates and re-establish it as a stand-alone entity, albeit one that competes with the aforementioned brands.

"We want to market Savage as a unique brand, not just another Telwater manufactured brand," Wood said.

To achieve this goal, he says the company has taken feedback from its dealers and long-standing customers to revitalise Savage boats in preparation for a 2012 market.

A newly designed hull known as the Ultra Lift Hull, which will feature of all Savage models from 455 and up (excluding the new Jabiru Pro range), was the main focus of the launch. The Ultra Lift Hull incorporates an increase in deadrise to 13.5 degrees (previously 11.5 degrees) and a 15 per cent increase in overall size of the hull's reverse chine in a bid to aid stability and overall ride performance.

According to Savage's R&D manager, Craig Madam, the new hull design is the result of using a state of the art computer design program to develop the design prior to production.

"The Ultra Lift Hull allows boats to be run with smaller horsepower for greater fuel economy, which ultimately saves money by using less fuel and also allows customers to buy a smaller engine at a more affordable price," Madam said.

Perhaps highlighting the point of giving boat buyers more choice in the power stakes, the eight new Savages on show were fitted with Telwater's "in-house" Vortex two and four-stroke outboard engines as well as Evinrude E-TEC Direct-Injected two-strokes. For 2012, Savage boats also have a fresh new look in keeping with the brand's renewed direction. Gone are the pressed clinker sides of old to be replaced with flat plate alloy sides (all 385 models and above) and a variety of bright colours and modern graphics.

The updated Savage range runs from "bare bones" open dinghies through to purpose-built tournament style fishing boats. Savage's long-running Jabiru has been boosted by the addition of two new models, the 455 and 485 Jabiru Pro. These feature a bigger beam than pre-existing Jabiru hulls as well as a deeper cockpit and refinements such as full length rod locker, front and rear casting platforms and live bait tank. The smallest of the Jabiru Pros, the 385, will appeal to the budget conscious angler with a standard BMT package coming in at \$10,990, fitted with a Vortex 30hp tiller steer outboard. At the other end of the scale, buyers can take home a 485 Jabiru Pro/E-TEC 75hp (and bow-mount electric) package for \$28,990.

Savage's Piranha is more of a pointy-nosed punt than the "squarer" Jabiru, and for 2012 has been updated with the addition of 435/455/485 models in side and centre console or tiller steer configurations. The 435 and 455 Piranha's feature a flat transom design, the 485 a new Fast Back Transom design, and with the 455 model the Ultra Lift Hull.

The 385 Big Boy, a no-frills open tinny, is the baby of the group. It measures 3.9m in length, has a 1.85m beam and thwart seats and can be optioned with a casting platform and looks to offer value at under \$8000, fitted with a 20hp Vortex two-stroke.

Savage's all new 435 Karva is another entry level dinghy that looks suited to owner customising. It has a max power rating of 40hp, comes with anchor well, flat carpeted deck, bow and transom handles and sidepocket for \$11,990 with a 25hp Vortex four-stroke tiller steer.

Another budget priced open dinghy is Savage's 525 Safari. The plate sided dinghy is rated to a 75hp outboard, features the Ultra Lift Hull and is built tough with 4mm alloy bottom and 2mm sides. The Safari carries a healthy 2.09m beam, front and rear thwart seats and flat carpeted floor and again has the makings of a customiser's delight. Buyers can take delivery of the 525 Safari fitted with an Evinrude E-TEC 60hp outboard for \$23,490. ■