

## Saltwater Fishing Boats

# SAVAGE 495 PIRANHA SIDE CONSOLE

- Reviewed by Andrew Norton

**B**uilt by Gold Coast-based Telwater, the 495 is a deep, beamy, side console design that's seaworthy enough to be used on exposed lakes and estuaries, and in the right conditions could even be taken offshore. It measures 5.0 by 2.02 metres, with a hull depth of 1.07 metres, and has 3.0mm bottom and 2.0mm topsides sheeting. The bare hull weight is 369kg, and the maximum power 90hp or 184kg on the standard longshaft transom. A 70 litre underfloor fuel tank with side deck fill is standard.

The hull design is conventional with moderate convex topsides flare forward and a reasonably fine entry below chine level, flattening out to a moderate transom deadrise and a full width transom pod to handle hefty four-stroke outboards. Towards the transom the broad chines have a slight down-angle to assist planing and create good reserve stability when fishing from one side.

Forward is a cast bowsprit with bowroller and locking pin, flanked by high split bow rails incorporating nav light mounting plates. However, these are too far forward to shine through the correct arcs and should be moved further aft. The deep anchor well is lined to prevent ground tackle from damaging the topsides, and aft of this is a mooring cleat.

The raised forward casting platform has a socket for fitting a lean seat and a large forward-hinged hatch accesses the forward lined storage compartment that can be plumbed as a kill tank. The main carpeted floor runs right aft to the transom, and two upholstered, swivelling pedestal seats are fitted, the forward one just aft of the casting platform.

The compact side console has adequate space for full engine instrumentation and a sounder, and has a (thankfully) clear windscreen framed by a substantial grab rail. The forward end of the console footwell is open to enable stretching out your legs on longer runs, and the steering wheel is well positioned in relation to the helm seat. A nice touch was the binnacle-mount engine remote



control box, easily reached but out of the way of the helm position.

Aft are a side rail and single angled plastic rod holder in each side deck, which has typical Savage rolled edges, and ahead of the transom a folding removable lounge was an option, as was a side-hinged transom door that's above the seat cushion when erected. This enables a full-width backrest bolster to be fitted and improves hull balance when carrying passengers on the seat. The transom door provides full access to the full width transom pod surface and the maxi bracket, which can accommodate either a boarding ladder or an auxiliary outboard bracket.

To starboard of the single engine mounting was an optional live bait tank with rounded corners and a circulating pump, which unfortunately appeared a bit of an afterthought. At least it was out of the way of the cockpit.

Initially the dealership that provided the demo 495, Yatala Yamaha of Yatala, QLD, told me it had concerns the four-stroke Yamaha FT60D fitted might be inadequate for the 495. But as the engine has the high thrust lower unit with deep gear reduction that effectively converts engine torque into thrust,

this concern was unfounded. At 115kg the 60 was only 63 percent of the allowable transom weight and it barely affected fore and aft hull trim, enabling the 495 to plane easily and perform surprisingly well.

The 60 started instantly hot or cold and never blew any oil smoke. The 2.33:1 gear ratio and large-bladed prop gave excellent manoeuvrability when coming alongside a jetty, with hardly any throttle opening needed even in the blustery nor'easter of the test day. Providing the anti-ventilation plate was kept three quarters immersed, power astern was very good which is useful for backing off sandbars.

Spinning a 15 inch pitch Yamaha alloy prop and pushing a total of 750kg including two adults, the 60 trolled us at 2.2kt and 700 revs using 0.8lph with scarcely any vibration through the hull structure. A clean plane was achieved at only 12.2kt and 3000 revs, and cruising quietly at 4000 revs the averages were 22.6kt and 7.7lph. Through full lock figure of eight turns at these revs no prop ventilation occurred, and the mechanical steering was direct but reasonably light for a side console hull.

Into a chop to 40cm on the Gold Coast



Broadwater the ride was soft, but when taking the slop on the port or starboard bow a fair amount of spray reached the cockpit. Across the slop or downwind the hull tracked well with minimal helm corrections needed.

When the throttle lever was 'floored' from 4000 revs the 60 accelerated strongly out to Wide Open Throttle revs. At my recommended maximum cruising revs of 5000 the averages were 28.0kt and 11.7lph, still very economical for this speed, but as expected due to the additional engine load at WOT the fuel flow jumped to 19.3lph at 5600 revs where the average was a surprisingly fast 31.2kt. The 60 was so quiet it could barely be heard, and for longer runs to and from a favourite fishing spot this rig would be very pleasant to drive!

Back at rest the 495 had a slow, slightly bow-downwind drift rate and easily handled two adults (210kg) standing to one side. The 495 was easily retrieved on its single axle braked keel roller and bilge pad Dunbier CL5M-13BMD trailer, which has submersible lights for reduced maintenance.

Overall the demo 495 was well finished and all it really needed for warmer climates was a folding Bimini top. As tested on the trailer with ground tackle, safety gear and a full fuel tank, the towing weight was 830kg which would be easily towed by a four cylinder Toyota Camry.

As of October 2009, the rig retailed for \$31,640 with the optional transom door and live bait tank. For more details call Yatala Yamaha on Ph: (07) 3807 8299. **SWF**

