

The Quicksilver 445 Dinghy Deluxe skates across Darwin Harbour.



The small side console has plenty of room for all your electronics, and a windscreen for driver comfort.

QUICKSILVER 445 DINGHY DELUXE

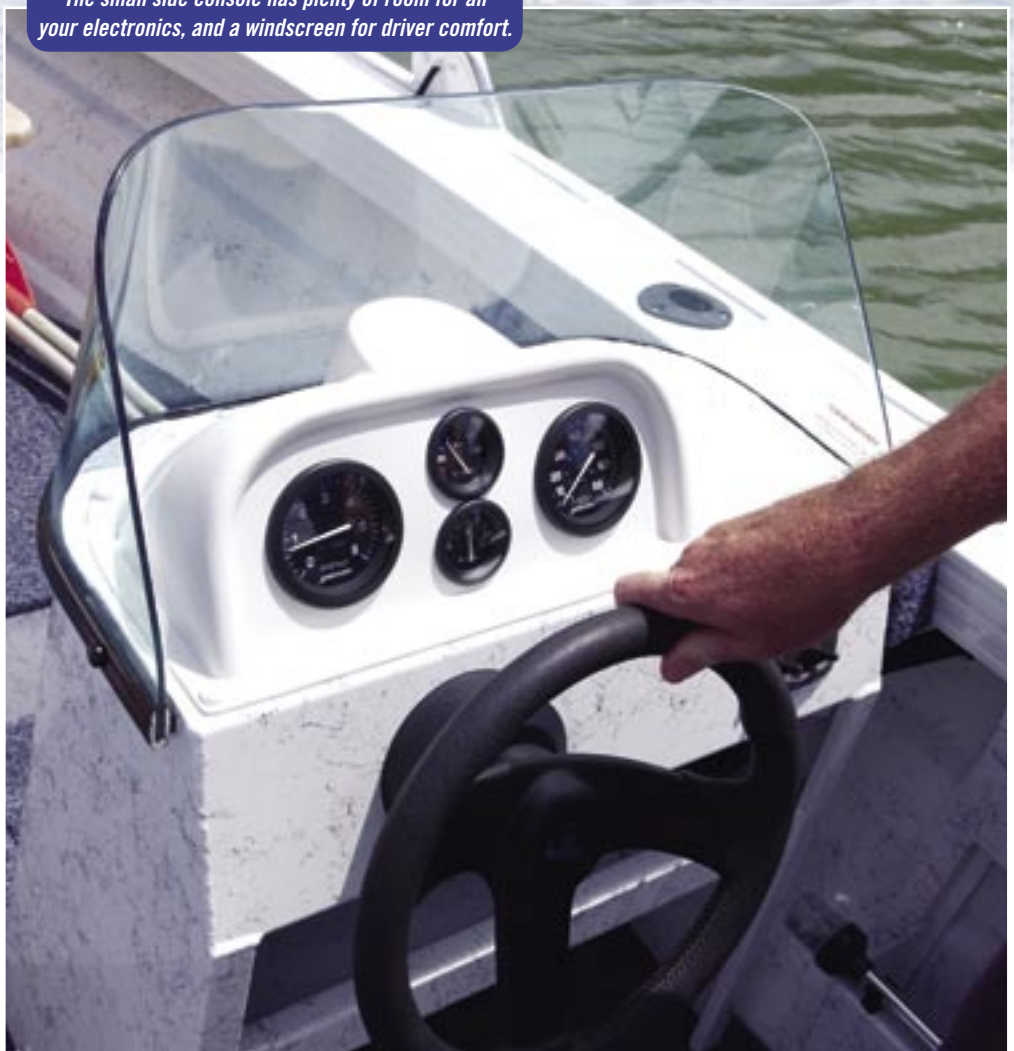
By Dave Krantz

The Quicksilver range from Mercury Marine are well known across Australia as being tough, practical aluminium boats, and the 445 Dinghy Deluxe is no exception.

Despite a few passing squalls, Darwin Harbour was flat and welcoming on the test day — perfect for fishing, but not so good for seeing how a boat performs under adverse conditions.

We made the most of it though, running around to find some boat wakes and choppier conditions to test out the performance of this smart looking small dinghy. It tucked into turns nicely and was very easy to handle. The ride was smooth and dry, with the hull lapping up all the chop we could find for it.

The boat has a deep V-hull design with plenty of freeboard, making it an ideal





The forward casting deck is spacious for such a small boat, with plenty of under-floor storage.

all-rounder for river, estuary and impoundment fishing. It could also be used for inshore bluewater work.

The hull has a three millimetre bottom and two mil' sides, so it's tough enough to withstand the bumps and knocks that are inevitable when fishing hard.

The standard 445 Dinghy Deluxe has a transom-mounted motor. The test boat had

a small pod transom, which is a variation produced by Mercury Marine for the Top End market. The pod adds more versatility to the package, allowing a larger motor to be mounted, and improves handling and sea-worthiness in a following sea.

The test boat was powered by a 60 horse four stroke EFI Mariner outboard. It was quiet and responsive, and matched the hull well. It planed quickly and easily with three people on board, and at 6000 rpm the Mariner pushed the boat along at an impressive 55 km/h. Dropping the revs back to a more economical 4500 saw the boat travelling at approximately 37 km/h, and it was quite



A 60 horsepower Mariner four stroke is perfect for the pod transom model.

comfortable cruising on the plane at slower speeds.

At idle, the 60 kept the boat moving at a perfect barra trolling speed, something that is very important in the Top End and elsewhere.

Boatland Winnellie, who supplied the test boat, also offer the standard 445 Dinghy Deluxe without a pod transom. In this configuration, power is supplied by a 40 horsepower two stroke Mariner with electric start.

Inside, the 445 Dinghy Deluxe has a neat and uncluttered layout. Steering is from a small side console with a windscreen, with plenty of room to mount a sounder/GPS on top. Boatland Winnellie like to fit their 445 Dinghy Deluxe

with a Garmin FF120 sounder, but buyers can fit any electronics package they like.

The console provides a sheltered, seated driving position, and it's also possible to steer the boat comfortably while standing up.

There is a hatch in the front of the console, which opens to reveal a twin tray tackle box ideal for storing terminal tackle and the other essential odds and ends that fishos like to keep handy.

There are carpeted forward and rear casting decks, with hinged hatches accessing underfloor storage. The step-up to the forward deck has been designed to allow an angler enough height to spot and cast to fish, while keeping it low enough for good stability.

There is a live bait tank under the rear casting deck, which comes un-plumbed



The console contains a neat little tackle box.

Barra, Bass & Bream Rigs



This is the 445 Dinghy Deluxe without the pod transom. Boatland recommend a 40 horse Mariner two stroke for this configuration.

on the standard model. The tank is easily plumbed for anglers who do a lot of live baiting, or perhaps need to keep fish alive for weigh-ins.

Seating is in comfortable Deluxe Raeline seats, with four seat mounts to accommodate different seating set-ups. The seat mounts are well placed to allow the skipper to move passengers around to trim the boat.

Boatland Winnellie also offer an optional esky seat fitted at the front of the forward casting deck, which is a popular option for often thirsty NT buyers!

With a beam of 2.1 metres and a depth

of 1.16 metres, the interior is surprisingly roomy for such a small boat. Up to three anglers can fish in comfort, and the manufacturer rates it for a maximum of five occupants.

Fuel is stored in a 60 litre underfloor fuel tank, giving the 445 good legs. With the economical 60

on the back, this would be good for a solid weekend's fishing without refuelling.

Other standard features include bow and

side rails, rod holders, fully carpeted floor, painted hull inside and out, rear transom step (standard model), transducer bracket and side pockets. The test boat with transom pod also had a rear ladder and transom door for ease of access.

Weighing in at approximately 750 kilos, the test boat was a breeze to tow and launch. While it is possible to use a very basic trailer set-up, Boatland sell the Dinghy Deluxe package with a brake-equipped trailer.

The Quicksilver 445 Dinghy Deluxe is great little all-rounder for fishing and family boating. It would make an ideal starter boat, and is good value for money. While the pod transom does add to the cost, it also adds to the versatility. It is an option well worth looking at if you do a lot of fishing on more open waters.



The Quicksilver 445 Dinghy Deluxe (as supplied by Boatland Winnellie) with Mariner 60 ELPT EFI four stroke motor, side console, new style pod transom, transom door, ladder, two seats, canopy, trailer with brakes, trailer registration, full offshore safety kit and Garmin FF120 sounder costs \$23,950.

The Quicksilver 445 Dinghy Deluxe (as supplied by Boatland Winnellie) with Mariner 40 horsepower ELPTO LW two stroke motor, side console, two seats, canopy, trailer with brakes, trailer registration and full inshore safety kit costs \$17,995.

www.quicksilverboats.com.au

The 445 Dinghy Deluxe cruises comfortably at 4500 rpm and 37 km/h.

