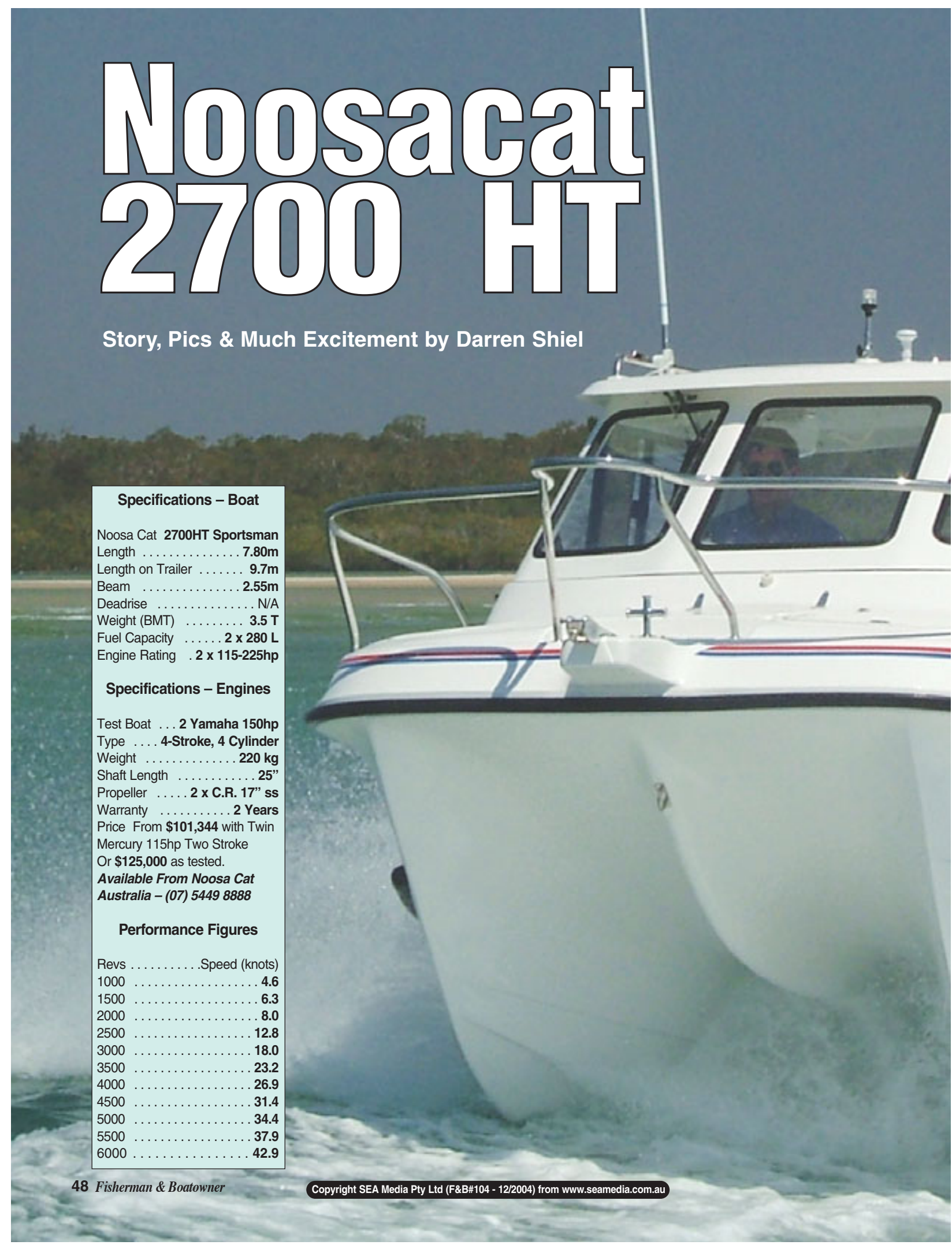
Noosacat 2700 HT

Story, Pics & Much Excitement by Darren Shiel



Specifications – Boat

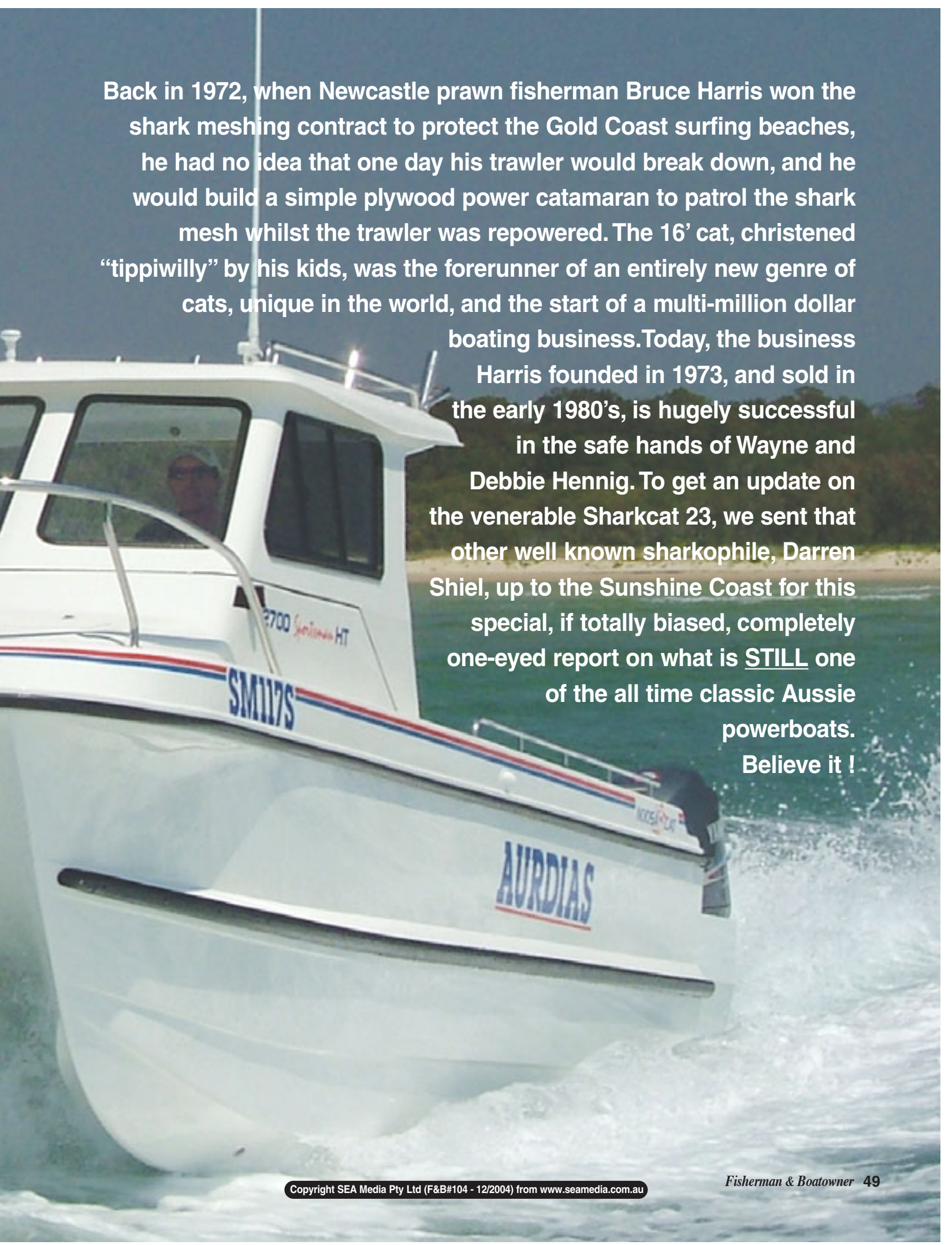
Noosa Cat **2700HT Sportsman**
Length **7.80m**
Length on Trailer **9.7m**
Beam **2.55m**
Deadrise . . . . . N/A
Weight (BMT) . . . . . **3.5 T**
Fuel Capacity . . . . . **2 x 280 L**
Engine Rating . **2 x 115-225hp**

Specifications – Engines

Test Boat . . . **2 Yamaha 150hp**
Type . . . . **4-Stroke, 4 Cylinder**
Weight . . . . . **220 kg**
Shaft Length . . . . . **25”**
Propeller . . . . . **2 x C.R. 17” ss**
Warranty . . . . . **2 Years**
Price From **$101,344** with Twin Mercury 115hp Two Stroke
Or **$125,000** as tested.
Available From Noosa Cat Australia – (07) 5449 8888

Performance Figures

Revs	Speed (knots)
1000	**4.6**
1500	**6.3**
2000	**8.0**
2500	**12.8**
3000	**18.0**
3500	**23.2**
4000	**26.9**
4500	**31.4**
5000	**34.4**
5500	**37.9**
6000	**42.9**



Back in 1972, when Newcastle prawn fisherman Bruce Harris won the shark meshing contract to protect the Gold Coast surfing beaches, he had no idea that one day his trawler would break down, and he would build a simple plywood power catamaran to patrol the shark mesh whilst the trawler was repowered. The 16' cat, christened "tippiwilly" by his kids, was the forerunner of an entirely new genre of cats, unique in the world, and the start of a multi-million dollar boating business. Today, the business Harris founded in 1973, and sold in the early 1980's, is hugely successful in the safe hands of Wayne and Debbie Hennig. To get an update on the venerable Sharkcat 23, we sent that other well known sharkophile, Darren Shiel, up to the Sunshine Coast for this special, if totally biased, completely one-eyed report on what is STILL one of the all time classic Aussie powerboats. Believe it !

Noosacat 2700 HT

As many F&B readers are aware, I am a registered, certified catamaran junkie. I'm not quite in editor PW's league, but I'm fast closing the gap. This love of multi hulls has been fostered and developed through 10 years of skippering at my local Volunteer Marine Rescue unit at Southport, on the Gold Coast.

In this time, I have experienced some extremely sloppy and rough seas. So when people ask me "What is the best hull you have ever driven offshore?" like clockwork the 23 foot Shark Cat hull comes to mind.

So when PW asked me to head up to Noosa to test the new Noosacat 2700 Sportsman HT, I jumped at the opportunity, knowing the combination of this boat, the Noosa bar and Noosacat owner Wayne Hennig would make for a memorable day on the water.

Design The 2700 is primarily designed to be used as a serious offshore commercial or recreational boat. This boat lends itself well to applications such as a long-range search and rescue, charter, abalone, research or a parasail launch boat. The applications for this boat are only limited by your imagination.

The hull takes its origins from the original 23-foot SharkCat; its likeness is easy to see when on the trailer. The unmistakable sponsons with their rounded shape and fine entry, is fine art for any cat junkie.

The hull mould has undergone minute adjustments with a tunnel wave piercer added recently to assist the hull going head on into the sea. Wayne Hennig has also added aluminium pods to the hull allowing a small amount of extra waterline length.

The hull is available in a number of different guises. Options such as an open cuddy, fibreglass hardtop, full hardtop, enclosed hardtop and extended hardtop certainly add to the Cat's versatility

Designed purely with workboat intentions, the boat is purposely sparse without the bells and whistles of the soft production cruisers of the Riviera or Mustang kind.

The cabin has taken second place as the saloon and cockpit are both large and user friendly.

The saloon is designed for comfort whilst the cockpit is intended to be worked hard.

The 2700HT carries a centreline measurement of 7.80 metres (including pods); the beam is 2.55 metres, while the draft is 0.43 metres.

Engineering/Construction True to the original SharkCat theme, Wayne has carried on the tradition of overbuilding his boats. Most boats coming from his factory endure a very hard life and need to be built well to last.

After a tour of the factory and spotting a new 8.0 metre hull on the production line I am convinced these boats are almost bullet proof.

Built using all GRP construction, including a full fibreglass floor, bulkheads and beams, NoosaCats build standard and attention to detail is second to none.

The underfloor area on this boat is strengthened by full fibreglass beams spaced at a distance of about 400mm making for an extremely strong system to support the floor.

All underfloor areas are flow coated on every boat to provide protection for any raw fibreglass surfaces exposed to water.

The underfloor area is made up of 8 watertight compartments in each hull, making a total of 16 throughout the boat.

After seeing a similar boat work a hard life every weekend for ten years straight, I have nothing but confidence in the Noosacat product.

Finish Often criticised for their poor standard of finish, Noosacat has lifted their game somewhat in this area.

Although not up to the standard of the 'soft' cruisers in this part of the market, the Noosacat is more concerned about the function of the finish, than the materials chosen for the job. Wayne states that his boats don't pretend to be pretty and are not designed or aimed at the same market as much of his competition. "You either want/need a Noosacat or you don't". That is the company philosophy.

The company today utilise a lot of fibreglass mouldings for items such as the hardtop, cabin doors, side pockets, overhead radio console, seat boxes and hatches.

The floor is covered in a new style of flecked flow coat that looks smart but is not over the top.

All these finishings are designed to be hardwearing and easy to clean but aren't necessarily the prettiest finishes available.

The boats are fitted up to a very high standard, overbuilding the majority of their fittings including large bollards, glass windscreens, strong bow rails and top quality navigation lights.

Helm Set-Up As you would expect from Noosacat, the helm position is all about work and functionality. It is very simple, attractive and smart.

The helm position houses all the essential items. The helmsman has a clear and unobstructed view of all instruments. A centrally mounted compass is located to the top with a large flat section for the four engine-monitoring gauges and a separate GPS/Sounder unit mounted side by side. Behind the stainless steel steering wheel houses the 6x switch panel along with the twin-engine key set-up.

A large flat dash is also begging to become home for a large colour screen GPS or radar system.

The helm and passenger chairs are top quality Reelax type mounted atop fibreglass seat boxes with storage under incorporating rear facing dickie seats. The helm driving position is very comfortable, with footrests provided for seated driving when cruising the calm waters. There is plenty of supported standing room for driving when in the rough.

The twin recessed throttles fall nicely to hand and visibility through the glass windscreen is excellent. A helm side windscreen washer and wiper is also provided as is a roof top radio console, sizable enough to house VHF and 27 Meg radios side by side.

Storage is addressed for both driver and passenger by way of an upper and lower side pocket on both sides.

The fibreglass hardtop is good, providing protection from the wind, rain or sun. It allows for clear vision and ventilation with its side opening windows and rear opening. Stainless steel grab rails are conveniently built into the underside of the hardtop to allow for secure footing in the worst of conditions. Grab rails are fitted to the topside to assist when going forward around the side of the boat.

Access to the bow for anchoring is available by either walking around the sides of the cabin or through the front cabin access hatch. Side access is by far the easiest and will be preferred by 90% of buyers, as the rails on the hardtop roof allow for safe footing. An excellent bow rail complements these supports. The foredeck is home to a large anchor well with access hatch big enough to house a couple of hundred metres of rope and heavy ground tackle. A small bowsprit also assists with the anchoring process.

Down Below With its workboat intentions the 2700HT is not designed to cater for any accommodation and therefore has a very small cabin or berthing arrangement. The two single berths are short of a full length and are clearly not designed to be comfortable sleeping quarters. A step is built into the cabin sole allowing the job of getting on deck from the cabin a little easier.

In its standard format this area is only suitable to be used as a large storage or seating area. The cabin could quite easily be changed into a full transverse twin bunk and sleeping area if required for serious cruising and overnighting.

For most customers this transformation is simply not warranted.

The rear dash wiring is also accessed from the cabin. All wiring is a true indication of Noosacats excellent workmanship and proof that most of Wayne's boats are built in survey.

Performance Powered by twin Yamaha 150hp 4-stroke engines and fitted with two 17" stainless steel standard Yamaha propellers, I eagerly anticipated this test.

Having previously driven this hull with engines of up to twin 225hp 4-strokes I was interested to see how these lightweight (220kg) 150hp 4-strokes performed.

The 150hp Yamahas were seriously impressive. In light ship mode, with 200 litres of fuel aboard, this boat leaped onto the plane without any four-stroke lag.

The 2700HT cruised comfortably and efficiently at 4,000rpm allowing a fast cruise of 26.1 knots. The hull opened out to a maximum speed of 42.9 knots at 6,000rpm (very fast in anybody's mind for such a big boat). Some readers may meet this with some conjecture but the truth about this boat is that it will allow you to use a lot of that speed even in choppy conditions.

I could not see any need for this hull to be powered by any other engines when used for recreational use. With a high top speed of 42.9 knots I suggest a buyer could easily power this boat down to (say) 2 x 115hp 2-strokes to allow for a lower initial purchase cost.

The Yamahas were propped perfectly and allowed excellent all round performance, great response and fantastic torque. Coupled with the Seastar hydraulic steering, the boat was a pleasure to drive.

In standard form this hull is fitted with twin 225 litre fuel tanks, but is available with twin 280 litre fuel tanks as an option. These large tanks allow for a big range especially when coupled with the twin 150hp four-strokes.

Although a very new product we can expect these engines to consume around 20-22 l/ph each at a cruise speed of 26 knots. When added up and allowing for a little extra in reserve, the standard tanks should give this boat an estimated cruising range of 250nm.

Handling and Ride Test day on the Noosa Bar provided 10kn SE winds with a 0.5-1.0-metre swell on the bar coupled with around 1.0 metre of chop on the start of the run out tide. Some of the larger sets were breaking and tested this hull enough to prove its worth.

Just about every 6.0 metre production boat would have passed through the Noosa Bar on this morning, however the difference here is that this boat made you want to stay and play!

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What can I say about a hull that has proven itself hundreds of times over? It is simply sensational and is the standard all other manufacturers strive to get close to.

The way this hull hits the waves; the way it can be worked confidently through the white-water; the way it installs confidence and begs for more; all of these are factors set this boat aside from ALL others.

This hull is excellent and once you learn how to get the best from it, you would be happy to power through a cyclone!

Generalising here for a minute most twin hulled craft such as this one lean out of a turn, as opposed to a monohull, which leans into it. It can be a bit unnerving at first, and then simply becomes the norm.

Twin hulls don't like to hit waves square-on, as the inevitable tunnel slap will occur. This is where the wave top can hit the flat section of the tunnel, causing a shudder through the boat, and not a hard landing. The wave piercer moulded into the tunnel of this boat almost eliminates this from happening.

Twin hulled boats also require a driver to be alert and thinking more so than a monohull as they are very sensitive to trim, needing to be trimmed out when running with the sea, and trimmed in a little when running into it, along with "quartering" to each wave.

Having the twin-engines also allows easier athwartships trim ability. Using the trim systems on each engine individually a good skipper can maintain control at all times and eliminate any need for trim tabs.

In any direction this hull is fantastic. Running into, beam to or with the sea, the boat performs admirably. Small adjustments in the heading make a huge difference and can make the boat performance come from good to exceptional. A cat's most vulnerable position is running with the sea on a rear quarter - however, even this is very low risk.

The self-draining ability of this hull is also a very notable safety feature.

Fishability The workboat base of this boat shines through with a huge, deep and safe working rear deck. The rear deck allows unobstructed work with the freeboard giving comfort to anyone working the area. The rear cockpit is huge and with its flow coated floor is easy to use and clean.

The rear deck is surrounded by a total of seven side coaming mounted rod holders along with the hardtop mounted seven stainless steel rod holders. Two down lights illuminate the area at night time and the entire cockpit is surrounded by stainless steel handrails which allow good support anywhere on the deck.

The entire cockpit is lined with deep side pockets along with enclosed rear

battery compartments either side of the transom.

The port side rear coaming mounted plumbed live bait tank is also very good. It is large in size (although square) and is fitted with a clear front to allow easy viewing of the lively baits.

A pull out rear deck door is centrally mounted in the transom. It is large enough to pull the biggest of fish aboard or allow easy access to the transom duckboard to enter the water or service the engines.

A salt-water deck wash on the starboard side allows easy cleaning of the rear deck or the catch.

Trailering Not normally considered by many to be a trailer boat, this boat can be legally towed on our roads with a few considerations. Like most of the American imports we are seeing come into the country, this boat is over-width at 2.55 metres, meaning it must be towed using flags, flashing lights, and "Oversize' signage.

Weighing in at an estimated 3.5 tonne as tested, a serious tow vehicle and trailer is required. Wayne can easily tow this rig with his Ford F-350 diesel powered vehicle.

The physical size and weight will put most people off towing a boat like this, but for the diehards, it is certainly possible.

Fitted with a triple axle Noosacat custom trailer, believe it or not this boat is a breeze to launch and retrieve single-handed, as proved to me by Wayne. The centre guides on the trailer mean it is virtually impossible not to get the boat straight on the trailer. The teflon set up means the boat is not damaged and will move easily on the trailer when needed.

The trailer is also fitted with a Sensa-Brake System, bow ladder and heavy-duty fittings which all add up to make the trailer alone cost a little over $12,000.

Conclusion Once again Noosacat have come through with the goods and set a new offshore performance benchmark for any future boat tests.

The 2700 HT has serious application for Search and Rescue Operations, as well as countless commercial uses. Does it suit you, the private buyer you ask? I guess that all depends on how serious you are about your boating.

Although the excellent handling of the hull is enough to win a lot of buyers, the costs of purchasing, running and servicing the twin engines, along with the costs of storing or trailing (tow vehicle) puts the possibility of buying this boat out of reach for most people.

As a long-range rough water boat where the conditions could be questionable, you couldn't get a better boat.

Available direct from the factory or from one of the Noosacat dealers Australia wide, this boat is priced from $101,344 powered by twin 115hp Mercury Outboards, plus trailer. At that price this boat is competing very strongly with their twin hulled competition, let alone the smaller walkarounds such as the Haines Hunter 800SF or Seaswirl 2301WA.

As fitted here with twin 2005 model Yamaha 150hp 4-strokes and all the other extras this boat runs up to a total of approximately $125,000 .

If you are after a boat of this calibre, check out www.noosacat.com.au, or call Wayne on (07) 5449 8888.

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