

Boat Review: **Everyman 550C Cuddy Cabin & 550 Centre Console**

An option for **Everyman**

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With features galore and competitive pricing, Everyman Boats looks to be on to another winner with its new 550 models. *Boating* photojournalist **Mike Hunter** put the centre console and cuddy cabin options to the test.

Everyman Boats made quite a splash with its 635HT. Unveiled at last year's Waikato Boat, Fishing and Leisure Show and reviewed in the January issue of *Boating New Zealand*, the 635 hardtop was the first of nine models the Hamilton-based boatbuilders now boast in their alloy range.

Boating was recently invited to test two further models – the 550C Cuddy Cabin and 550 Centre Console – which are already proving a hit with owners in terms of price and performance.

The 550 Centre Console

When the 550 Centre Console rolled up to the boat ramp, the bimini top had been folded down for towing; reducing windage makes a lot of sense for towing, as well as keeping bugs off the perplex screen.

The boat's builder, Nigel Langdale, whipped the top up into its locked position in minutes and the boat was ready to go.

Langdale knows a thing or two about aluminium boats. He started out at Ramco in Hamilton, doing his time there.







felt quite light in the circumstances. The hydraulic steering worked a treat and the helm could be left to its own devices, so balanced was the boat.

Heading into the wind and sea was a cautious affair for me, but was still a lot of fun. Running before the seas was good; the width of the boat in relation to its length helped the boat move easily downhill. Across the waves was dry and comfortable. The width of the boat and the positioning of the layout are excellent.

Storage at home is no longer an issue either; this boat slides into the same space as a medium-sized car.

The 550 Centre Console starts at \$36,406 for the base boat with a 70hp, two-stroke Yamaha and on a V17 Voyager trailer. The fold-down bimini and paint add another \$3000 to the base price.

The 550C Cuddy Cabin

One of the first things I noticed on the 550C Cuddy Cabin was the open anchor well in the

bow. I must confess the open hatch looked a bit vulnerable to a head sea, especially given the conditions on test day, which whipped up 25 knots on the Waitemata Harbour. However, the attitude of the bow quickly allayed any concerns.

The 90hp, two-stroke Yamaha mounted on the back gave plenty of power, producing a soft ride. The wide reverse spray chines helped push the sea away, while the windscreen deflected wind and spray from the crew. The cuddy cabin is compact, but provides ample space for keeping everything that is needed for a day's fishing out of the weather.

The cuddy's almost-vertical steering position for the helmsman leaves a large area for fisherman and passengers. Seating placement is excellent, with good visibility for the helmsman when standing or sitting.

The cuddy cabin version is \$38,400 with a 90hp Yamaha outboard on a trailer; the rocket launcher as fitted is an extra \$1500.

Boating's verdict

Both these boats have a bigger brother in the Everyman 635 HT. Like the two 550 models, the 635 is built tough with looks and performance to match; owners of the bigger boat have reported returning from the often rugged Kawhia Harbour no worse for wear after a day of fishing in wild weather.

The 550s are being marketed by Langdale's cousin, Russell Spiers. Spiers recognised a great product and got involved in the development of the brand. That has included setting up a dealer network – a tough ask in what appeared to be a softening market. But that, until last month anyway, looked a myth, with the Everyman riding a wave of sales success that had Langdale and Spiers struggling to keep up with demand.

Put simply, the 550s are built well and priced right; they punch well above their weight, with the hull design and construction finish making them fantastic performers and enormous value for money. ■



550 Centre Console

loa	5.50m
beam	2.05m
deadrise	15 degrees
recommended hp	70-90hp
hull thickness	5mm
topsides thickness	3mm
price (base boat)	\$20,095
price as tested (incl. Yamaha 70hp and trailer)	\$36,406

550C Cuddy Cabin

loa	5.6m
beam	2.05m
deadrise	15 degrees
recommended hp	70-90hp
hull thickness	5mm
topsides	3mm
price (base boat)	\$22,388
price as tested (incl. Yamaha 90hp and trailer)	\$38,699

