

Sportcraft Boats first opened its doors when fluorescent clothing and bad hairstyles were all the rage. Now, some 23 years on, the hair and clothing have thankfully changed for the better, but one thing remains the same: Sportcraft Boats is still producing usable, affordable designs that enable more kiwi families to make the most of the stunning coastline we've been blessed with.

There is no middleman when it comes to dealing with Sportcraft Boats either; the company has left him out of the equation to keep its boats as affordable as possible, instead manufacturing and selling its own extensive range of aluminium designs. All bases are covered with Sportcraft: from small dinghies through to 10m commercially-used hardtops and everything else in between.

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As we move into the cooler months, the protection that a hardtop provides certainly becomes much more appealing, especially if, like me, you need your fishing fix to stay sane. Sportcraft Boats wanted to make year-round fishing as accessible as possible to the average Joe, so set about adding a hardtop to the popular, affordable and well-refined Scorpion 610 hull.

Managing director Jamie Black explains the philosophy behind the design: "We've taken our proven 6.1m Scorpion hull, which we've continually tweaked over the years to make even better, and added a full-width hardtop to give you more room in the cabin. The hardtop sides have been brought forward to reduce the weight and windage so the hardtop doesn't weigh the boat down or cause it to flop around. We've retained the 1.9m berths with good headroom in the cabin so even-taller people can sit or lie down without smacking their head, and it's actually got more room in there than some of our bigger hardtops, which our long-legged customers really like.

"It's also nice and wide, giving it good stability, and there's ample room in the back for fishing. It would have to be the best-value hardtop on the market. It's basically a good all-round boat for doing a bit of everything with, allowing you to expand your boating opportunities, while still remaining easy to tow," adds Black.

“A one-metre swell running outside The Mount provided a good launch pad to test the ride - it was very well-mannered and quite impressive indeed”



The protection that a hardtop provides becomes much more appealing if you need your fishing fix to stay sane through the winter