

propeller *Magazine* BOAT TEST



Bluefin 620 Hardtop
Freddy Foote

Winning Bluey

Bluefin is the sister brand to Scorpion, and both are manufactured and marketed by Sportcraft Boats through their branches in Morrinsville and Tauranga. Freddy Foote went to a sunny Tauranga and tested one of the smaller Bluefin hardtops, the 620.

The Bluefin 620 HT is a practical fishing boat.

The Bluefin range goes from a cuddly model of around 5m, up to a 7.69m hardtop, which has just been released. While the Scorpion and Bluefin names are owned by the same people, the boats of the two brands have totally different handling characteristics, hull design and features. Bluefins are targeted more towards the fishing market. Where a lot of manufacturers are promoting the overnight and weekend capabilities of their boats, the company is paying more attention



to the fishing and diving aspects of the boats, making sure there is plenty of room for such pursuits.

"Generally our buyers of a Bluefin are guys who are looking for a well priced boat that will do what they want it to do without being over the top. They want a nice solid boat, strong and practical for their application, but they don't want to spend a whole heap of dollars either," says Glenn Haack of Sportcraft Boats.

"We have tried to make the Bluefin what we call a user friendly boat, where it is easy to use, and has the features that people need."

Sales of the Bluefin range have been good to date, and this year Sportcraft Boats wants to push the brand even more.



Left: The Mercury pushed the 620 to 41.0 mph.



Fisher Friendly

The overall layout is one that is tidy, practical and well finished. Forward in what is a very small cabin, space was minimal. Storage was available underneath the squabs and in side shelves, and access to the anchor well is via the deck hatch. However, I'd be inclined to install a helm operated winch. The cabin was fully lined with carpet and gave it a warm feel, and two adults could sit in there if need be, but really, how much time do you actually spend in there? Practically zero, so it's an ideal place for gear storage.

The helm area was finished well, with the carpeting from the cabin carrying on through, and really giving the whole area a nice look. The dash had plenty of room for gauges and additional electronics if need be, and above the dash there was even more room that would allow you to fix mount various instruments on brackets. The benefit of this is that if your boat isn't stored entirely securely you are able to remove the units when not in use.

A light is fitted to the roof of the helm – ideal for night-time fishing.

On the boat tested, the seating arrangement was made up of twin fix-

mounted pedestal seats with storage space underneath. This is only one of many seating options available; you could opt for a king/queen set-up if you desire.

Additional seating is available in the aft corners, but with three of us out on the boat on test day, we all mainly stood, utilising the hand rails above on the roof. I would have liked to have seen more handrails, perhaps one forward of the passenger seat, and one mounted onto each side of the cockpit.

The hardtop was nicely finished and is fitted with a rocket launcher for additional rod storage. The roof section overhangs the windscreen slightly which aesthetically looks quite good, and does provide a little bit of extra sun protection. Water collected on the roof, is caught and passes down through two internal pipes and drains over the side; a deflection plate is mounted on each side, sending the water over the gunwales and not into the cockpit.

The cockpit area was ideally set up for fishing. There is plenty of room for at least four to fish comfortably. Four rod holders were positioned in the top decks, two on each side, and additional rod storage is available by using the

extra long side pockets, that would be able to accommodate gaffs, boat hooks, oars and dive bottles – pretty much most things really.

The tread plate floor is fully sealed and this is where the boat gets its buoyancy from. A larger built-in fuel tank can be installed aft, where it is bolted to the floor. Our test boat was fitted with tote tanks, which were easily stored underneath the aft shelf.

Also aft, a bait board is fitted, and on the transom itself there was space to fit a burley pot if you wanted to.

A fairly basic boarding ladder is fitted, and if you're a diver you would be able to up-spec this if you wanted something a little bit better. Boarding the boat would be easy, as there is a reasonably sized boarding platform that is a feature of all Bluefins, and a handrail is within easy reach as well.

Soft Rider

I liked the driving position, it was quite comfortable to stand and drive, which is what I tend to do in most boats if possible. The throttle control was well positioned, and I had a clear view out through the windscreen and the side windows.

We did some speed runs on Tauranga's inner harbour and in the flat conditions managed to get a top speed of 41.0mph @ 5200rpm, powered by a Mercury 115hp two-stroke.

This is the standard engine package for the 620, and is what most of them are sold with. I felt this engine was a perfect match for the boat and provided plenty of speed and performance. Perhaps if you are into game fishing and you wanted to save some money on your fuel bill, then either a direct-injected two-stroke or a four-stroke would be a good option. Glenn told me that the game fish were right in close this season, and he had landed a good 114kg marlin in a similar boat only a few weeks previously.

Venturing out into the outer harbour past Mt Maunganui, there was a gentle swell rolling through, which the 620 handled with ease. I took the boat in a number of directions, such as running into a following sea, oncoming, quartering and crossing, and it handled it all very well. Some might say that trim tabs are a must on a hardtop, which in a lot of cases is quite true, particularly in smaller models. However, the boat wasn't really doing anything that would make me want to install some.

The ride was soft and hull noise very quiet, with no rattling or banging felt through the boat as we came off the waves. A little bit of spray was taken onto the windscreen, mainly whipped up by the direction of the wind and the

Top: Inside the hardtop there is plenty of headroom and it keeps you well protected from the elements.

Right: Plenty of storage in the side pockets.



Bluefin 620 Hardtop

Model: Bluefin 620 Hardtop
Price as Tested: \$41,750
Designer: Bluefin Boats
Material: Aluminium
Type: Hardtop
LOA: 6.20m
LOH: 5.80m
Beam: 2.23
Deadrise: 17 degrees
Hull Configuration: Monohull
Trailerable Weight: 1200kg
Height on Trailer: 2.75
Engine Capacity: 90-115
Power Options: Outboard
Fuel Capacity: Optional 80L

Performance

800 rpm	3.0mph
1000rpm	4.5mph
1500rpm	5.5mph
2000rpm	7.0mph
2500rpm	9.0mph
3000rpm	20.0mph
3500rpm	24.5mph
4000rpm	28.0mph
4500rpm	30.5mph
5000rpm	34.0mph
5200rpm	41.0mph

Speeds recorded on a Lowrance GPS and rounded off to the nearest 1/2 mph

Notable Standard Equipment

Baitboard, boarding ladder, rod holders, hardtop light, side pocket rod storage, Navman VHF, Navman Fishfinder, lined cabin.

Notable Options on test Boat

Painted hull, hardtop paint

Engine

Make: Mercury
Model: 115 ELPTO
Horsepower: 115
Cyl. Type: In-line 4
Max rpm: 5250
Propeller: 20" Laser II
Retail Price: \$13,969

Trailer

Make: Sportline
Model: Multi roller
Braked: No
Rollers: Yes
Std Equipment: Wind up jockey wheel

Retail Price: \$3750

Manufacturer: Bluefin Boats

Boat Supplied by:

Sportcraft Boats Ltd

Tauranga Ph 07 928 7193

Email: sportcraftboats@clear.net.nz

Morrinsville Ph 07 889 7193

Email: sportcraftboats@xtra.co.nz



direction we were travelling.

Engine noise heard at the helm was fairly minimal; three of us were able to talk to each other without excessive shouting.

In the conditions we experienced around Mt Maunganui, I found that like most boats the 620 worked well at around 30mph giving a comfortable ride for all aboard.

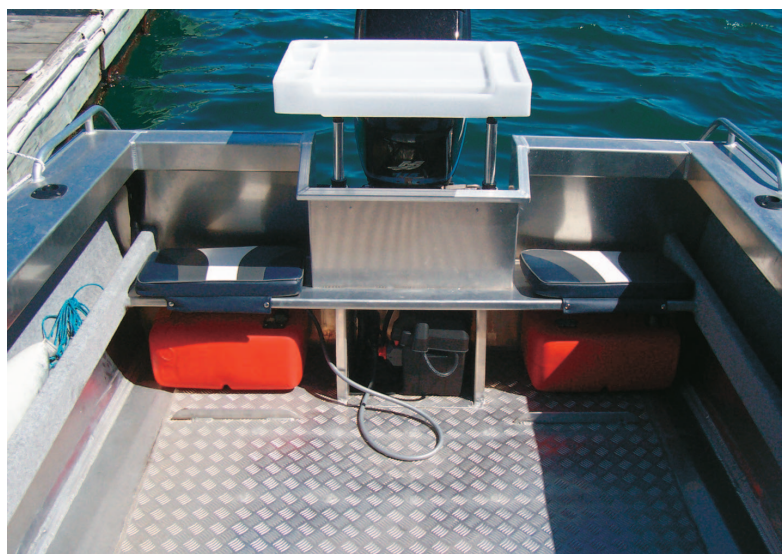
The Bluefin 620 Hardtop certainly does provide an excellent way to get out on the water for someone with a limited budget. Look at the price – \$41,750 as tested. Packages start from \$39,750, and the boat comes with pretty much everything that you would need to get out on the water with a few mates, or the family to go fishing.

It's an easily handled boat as well, it

can be launched single-handed or with two people, and with its towing weight of around 1200kg, it's also a boat that is easily towed by a large family sedan. Value for money, it's a hard package too walk away from.

Destinations will also not be limited. For boating in the Bay of Plenty, Mayor and Motiti Islands are well within reach and it is a boat I would also be comfortable taking even further out if need be.

The Base One fishing tournament started on the morning I arrived in Tauranga, with hot fishing action reported out at Mayor and Motiti Islands, I was wishing I had brought my fishing gear with me. However, Glenn says there is always next time, an offer I will be taking him up on!



own a Bluefin

EXAMPLE BASED ON

Purchase Price incl GST	\$41,750
Deposit	\$9,000
Balloon	\$8,300
Monthly Payment	\$600
Term	60 mths

FOR OTHER QUOTES

Go to our calculator
www.getaboat.co.nz
 Or call
 0800 GET A BOAT
 (0800 438 226)

TOYOTA FINANCIAL SERVICES

Normal Toyota Financial Services lending criteria apply. Interest rates are subject to change without notice.

Top: The built in boarding platform comes with a boarding ladder.

Left: Plenty of room aft to store tote tanks.