



# BLUEFIN

Following on from the success of their popular Bluefin 700HT, the Sportcraft Marine team have recently released their new Bluefin 665 Offshore. While we exhibited Propeller magazine at the recent Hutchwilco NZ Boat Show, on two separate occasions during the course of the Show, I was approached at our stand and asked when we were going to get the new Scorpion out on the water for an evaluation. I strolled across to the Sportcraft Marine stand to see what all the fuss was about – the model exhibited at the show was so new that the Bluefin team had still not yet finalised its official label – at the show it was referred to as the Bluefin 650.





# 665 OFFSHORE

The Bluefin brand has been about for some time now. I remember calling in to visit Peter Emerson, the founder of Bluefin Boats, in his Silverdale factory over 20 years ago. In more recent times the Black family of Sportcraft Marine, have owned the brand now for over five years and have developed and extended the boats in the range to nine models, from the 6.2m centre console to the massive Bluefin 7.69m Wheelhouse.

The new Bluefin 665 Offshore and its big brother are large volume alloy fishing boats. Jamie Black of Sportcraft Boats said that his reasoning for the introduction of the new 665 was to offer a boat with generous space, which is manageable for those wanting to get out on the water who are sometimes a little short-handed in crew – the 665 being able to be easily managed by two or even one at a ramp with good launching facilities, at the same time keeping the price down under \$55,000.



## Propeller Magazine Boat Test | Bluefin 665 Offshore



The Bluefin 665 Offshore is a large volume alloy fishing boat

The test boat we evaluated at first glance seemed to appear as a bit of a plain Jane, but as we moved through the boat, the standard features became more apparent. The Sportcraft team chooses to market their boats as a good value for money package, and then allowing and guiding the customer to 'create' their own boat, tailored to their personal unique requirements and budget.

For this evaluation, we were supplied the basic entry level model, where all seen (except the tube matting, painted sides and top, plus \$4,500) was pretty much stock standard, with all options and features included in the price - these features easily covering the basic requirements for an entry level hard top fishing boat.

The Bluefin 665 Offshore is a large volume high-sided pressed alloy boat, with a 5mm hull and 4mm sides. The build quality is very good, something often compromised when a product is built to meet a price conscious market and purchaser. From the bowsprit to the transom the welds and finish are clean and neat. The split bow rail was strong and holds its own - which we inadvertently tested by giving the Matakana Island wharf a little nudge when boarding after photog-

raphy duties were completed. Immediately below the bowsprit is a reasonably sized open anchor locker, with room made available to mount a winch should the owner wish to save his body from anchor retrieval duties (there is a \$3,500 'Anchor Winch Pack' available that includes a Lewmar rope and chain windlass, rope chain and anchor - all installed). Also found on the foredeck is a hatch offering easy entry into the cabin area - access into the boat's cockpit area is available via the wide side decks either side of the cabin - the ample supply of hand rails made moving about easy and safe.

Within the lined forward cabin there still seemed to be plenty of room to store your gear or take a break, despite the 100mm, which has been taken from the cabin length of the 700. There is plenty of light within the cabin, from the wide entrance, cabin windows and glass foredeck access hatch. There is an infill provided to enlarge the upholstered area, providing an area to lay and rest should one need to. Under the infill in the step-down there is enough room for a marine toilet and a simple canvas flap fitted to the cabin door would provide cabin privacy and some security from prying eyes when you want to store

your valuables away from 'honest thieves'. Storage is available under the squabs and in the wide cabin side trays.

Stepping out of the cabin there is further storage by way of a large wet locker found under the cockpit sole between the two pedestal seats. This locker drains through to the bilges and is then pumped out by the bilge pump, as does any other water that finds its way into the cockpit. The comfortable upholstered rotationally moulded seats each swivel on their respective fibre-glass pedestal bases. These come standard on the 665, an optional King and Queen arrangement is available if more suited to your family and boating style, although this option would be at the cost of valuable cockpit space, but gaining extra seating and more storage.

When standing at the helm there is decent headroom and the visibility was good through the toughened forward glass (which are predrilled for optional wipers) and acrylic windows port and starboard. There is a GME GX600 VHF mounted into the lined overhead console. Other instrumentation which comes standard in the package includes a Navman FISH4430 fish finder, BEP switch panel and Mercury Smart-Craft gauges which are flush mounted into the helm. There is plenty of room for other bracketed instrumentation along with a place for your loose belongings such as keys, cellphones and the likes on the large shelf above. To port there is a hatch that offers access to a good-sized glove box.

The helm area, as with the cockpit sole, is of chequerplate with tube matting laid on top. The cockpit area is open and clutter free, with nice large flat side decks offering a good comfortable place to sit when fishing or socializing. The cockpit sides are comparatively high and are great for leaning against when fishing and also offer added security for those with younger boaters onboard. There are six alloy rod holders mounted into the side decks and provision for a further five rods in the rocket launcher, which is stylishly integrated into the hardtop. Under the cockpit sole there is a 140-litre underfloor fuel tank, with two

Tube matting underfoot offered sure footing and insulation from the cool alloy tread plate floor.



Storage is available within the transom or as an option - a walk thru transom.







Great visibility from the helm and plenty of room for electronics.

buoyancy chambers either side. The Bluefin team have added additional buoyancy on this new model through the introduction of two further buoyancy chambers under the side pockets which run the length of the cockpit.

A shelf, with two hatches for access, runs the full width of the transom, which is home to the battery and oil reservoir on the starboard side, with further storage available to the port – this could be changed to a walkthrough transom if desired. Also standard comes the Quicksilver bait station, which securely mounts into the top of the transom shelf. For ease of access on and off the boat, particularly for divers, there is a good deep boarding platform for divers, with hand rails either side and a boarding ladder to the port side.

### On the water:

Travelling out of the cool and relatively calm and windless Tauranga harbour we all looked at each other wondering why

we did not have any rods and soft baits onboard – I guess, being late afternoon on the Friday of a long weekend was good enough reason – even though Mayor Island (23 miles from Tauranga Harbour) did not seem all that far away, and would not be in these conditions, at 3500 rpm travelling at 24.4 mph burning just 17.6L/h it would be easily within range. In fact the 46 mile return trip, would burn just 34 litres of the 140 litres available.

After putting the 665 through its GPS paces, we looked for some rougher water to test its sea handling capabilities, but the best we could find on this extremely tranquil afternoon was the wake of a huge 18m commercial fishing boat returning from its day out fishing. The underwater sections of the 665 have no planing strakes and 17-degree deadrise at the transom, with a slight downturn close to the chines.

The 665's fine entry made easy work of our simulated conditions, and we landed comfortably on the other side of the fishing boat's wake. Travelling both out and back, the ocean swells had little effect on the handling, and were unable to influence our course. Although the boat was fitted with hydraulic steering, the steering did feel a little heavy and 'notchie' – perhaps just an adjustment required in this instance – the boat had just been fitted up for our evaluation not long before we had arrived.

The 135hp Mercury Optimax got us up on the plane quickly and with ease, offering plenty of mid range punch from the 2.5 litre V6 engine – the same engine Mercury use for the 150 and 175hp outboards.

Climbing on and off the 665 was easy, although at rest the 665 did seem a little bouyant, perhaps more fuel or weight onboard (particularly down low) would reduce this, but to be fair, the boat was very bare, and as we all know, it does not take too long before one's collection of personal gear loaded onboard soon adds up to several hundred kilograms, which would assist.



Nice high cockpit sides - great for leaning against when fishing and when younger boaters are onboard.

Under the infill in the step-down there is enough room for a marine toilet.



The large wet locker for your wet gear and dive bottles drains into the bilges.







There was insufficient wind for us to know what heeling effect a good crosswind would have. Hardtops occasionally have a tendency to heel into a crosswind due to their extra height, and trim tabs are often fitted to help to remedy this. However, there were none fitted to our test boat, but they would be a worthwhile option. Bluefin handily fits a plate to the transom to save drilling into the hull when fitting transducers and trim tabs. In general, the boat ran well, felt well built and strong on the water.

A generous boarding platform with strong ladder and hand rails is great for divers setting off and reboarding.



## Summary

While the 665 is by no means abundantly spec'd in its standard form, the finish quality is first-rate and the package seems very good value for money, offering the owner the opportunity of working with a blank canvas, personalizing the boat to their own requirements. With a trailerable weight, empty, of just 1800kg, it can be towed easily behind most family cars, although, for a typical family car, brakes would be needed on the trailer.

If you're looking for a large volume six and a half metre plus boat for under \$55,000, then the 665 is most definitely worth taking out for a spin on the water.

### Standard features on Test Boat

- ✓ Navman fishfinder ✓ VHF radio
- ✓ Rocket launcher ✓ Rod holders
- ✓ Sealed buoyancy pockets
- ✓ Toughened glass screens
- ✓ Hydraulic steering ✓ Bait board
- ✓ Helm and cabin upholstery
- ✓ Lined hardtop and cabin
- ✓ Cockpit and cabin lighting.

### Notable Options on Test Boat

- ✓ Painted ✓ Tube floor matting.

Make:	Bluefin
Model:	665 Offshore
Price as Tested:	\$59,995
Packages from:	\$54,995
Designer:	Sportcraft Boats

Material:	Aluminium (5mm hull, 4mm sides)
Type:	Hardtop
LOA:	6.65m
Beam:	2.5m
Deadrise:	17 degrees
Height on trailer:	3050mm
Hull Configuration:	Warped plane monohull
Trailerable Weight:	1800kg est.
Engine Capacity:	115 to 225 hp
Power Options:	Outboard or sterndrive
Fuel Capacity:	140L underfloor

Performance	Speed	Fuel L/h
550 rpm	2.4 mph	1.0
1000 rpm	4.8 mph	1.8
1500 rpm	6.6 mph	3.9
2000 rpm	7.8 mph	6.7
2500 rpm	10.7 mph	10.5
3000 rpm	17.7 mph	13.2
3500 rpm	24.4 mph	17.6
4000 rpm	29.8 mph	24.6
4500 rpm	34.6 mph	32.3
5000 rpm	37.9 mph	39.4
5500 rpm	41.0 mph	48.7

Speeds recorded on a Lowrance GPS

## Engines

Make:	Mercury
Model:	135 OptiMax
Horsepower:	135hp
Cyl. Config.:	V6 (2.5 litre)
Max RPM:	5500
Jet unit:	17" Vengeance

## Trailer

Make:	DMW
Model:	Tandem
Braked:	Hydraulic Discs
Rollers:	Multi
Std Equipment:	Jockey wheel, LED lights

**Boat Supplied by:** Sportcraft Marine  
Tauranga - Ph 07 928 7193  
Sportcraft Boats  
Morrinsville - Ph 07 889 7193