

Scorpion 535 Cuddy

By Freddy Foote



Heavy Duty Tinnie

Sportcraft Boats' range of Scorpion boats is one that certainly has plenty to offer, with more than 30 different production models. Recently the company launched the new model of its Scorpion 535 Cuddy, one of its most popular boats. Freddy Foote checks it out.

Jamie Black and his team at Sportcraft Boats have steadily worked away, establishing the Scorpion brand and in doing so gaining wider recognition. Where other aluminium manufacturers have diversified into other areas of boat production, or as more recently fallen off the face of the market, Sportcraft

has continued to produce affordable and practical kiwi 'tinnies' – the type of boats that are still greatly sought after by kiwi buyers.

Mind you, this is not just an ordinary kiwi tinnie. With the redesign of this model, gone are the days of using lighter materials – the new Scorpion 535

Cuddy boasts a sturdy hull, constructed from 5mm aluminium.

The Scorpion 535 is being bought by a wide range of people, including families who are new to boating, and keen fishers wanting a boys' fishing boat. Whatever the situation, the boat is easily manoeuvred and handled.

The new Scorpion 535 Cuddy running on Auckland harbour.

Boat Test



Back to Basics

The overall layout of the 535 is pretty simple, yet entirely functional as a day tripper/fishing boat.

For'ard is a small cuddy cabin that can come with a variety of options, from rails that stop gear sliding out, to squab seating and side shelving. The top of the cabin was fitted with a hatch that was big enough and easy to get to for an adult, to gain access to the anchor well to perform anchoring duties.

The seating arrangement on this test boat was in the form of two pedestal-style single seats with storage underneath. However, the seating options are very much open and a king/queen style could also be accommodated. Aft seating was on either side of the transom, and while this boat didn't have squab seating fitted, it is available as an option. Additional storage space is available via full-length side pockets that would be able to house a number of fishing rods, while down underneath the transom there is storage space and brackets to keep tote tanks in place.

Access in and out of the boat is great, but adding a folding ladder to the boarding platform would improve things for swimmers and divers.

Launching and retrieving, as you would expect, was a breeze, and we found the 535 could be launched and retrieved



Boat
Test

Top: The bimini cover provides great cover and protection.

A sizeable cockpit makes the 535 a great little fishing boat.

easily by one person if you found yourself in such a situation.

A bimini cover was fitted to our test boat. We kept it folded down most of the time, but put it up and found it was relatively simple to erect and then fold down again.

Driving the 535 was great; the seating kept me snug down below the top of the windscreen and the throttle control was within a good easy reach. The dash was plain but tidy, with enough room for gauges and controls. Mounted on top was a Navman fishfinder and mounted into the alloy dash was a VHF. Passenger comfort was reasonable, with the placement of a grab rail on top of the cabin entrance.

The 535 is an easy and fun boat to drive, not requiring too much trim to get it running nicely. The 90hp Mercury two-stroke was an ideal motor, with enough horsepower to get up onto the plane quickly and smoothly, topping out at 37mph, which was good for such a boat/motor combination.

A spray deflection plate has also been added into the design, which does make the boat look like it is riding relatively flat, even though we were running with a good amount of trim. The plate helps in giving the boat a dry ride; with the water running up from the keel and then being deflected downwards and away from the boat itself.

Handling was great for a smaller boat; I was able to throw it into some tight turns and put the power down and was not able to get any prop ventilation. Although I didn't get to test the boat in any rough water, I'm quite confident that the boat would perform well. It's obviously not a boat that you're going to take out when it's blowing 20 knots, but if the weather turned unkind for your return trip home, it's sure to bring you back safely.

Stability at rest for a boat of its size was quite reasonable, with two of us managing to move around the boat surely and safely, and as far as fishability goes there would be enough room for two adults to fish comfortably with a couple of kids.

The sheer simplicity of the 535 is also another great attribute, a tread plate floor means it's easy to maintain and clean, after a days fishing, simply remove the seat upholstery, take the bung out and give the inside a good house out, no wet carpet or upholstery to worry about here.

SportcraftBoats, the retailer/manufacturer of the Scorpion brand as well as sister brand Bluefin, has always had the philosophy of making it more affordable for a wide spectrum of kiwi buyers to get out on the water. Certainly the new 535 is no different – look at the prices as tested; \$30,750. Pretty good really



Top: Storage space is available underneath the helm and passenger seating.

Middle: Extra seating is available in the aft corners, with storage underneath for tote tanks.

Left: A small boarding platform and ladder is fixed in the port corner.

Boat
Test

Scorpion 535

Model: Scorpion 535
Price as Tested: \$30,750
Designer: Sportcraft Boats
Material: Aluminium
Type: Cabin
LOA: 5.35m
Beam: 2.2m
Deadrise: 16 degrees
Hull Configuration: medium V
Trailerable Weight: 890kg
Height on Trailer: 2.2m
Engine Capacity: 75-90hp
Power Options: Outboard only
Fuel Capacity: Tote tanks.

Performance

750 rpm	1.0 mph
1000 rpm	2.5 mph
1500 rpm	4.0 mph
2000 rpm	6.0 mph
2500 rpm	8.5 mph
3000 rpm	16.5 mph
3500rpm	22.0mph
4000rpm	25.5mph
4500rpm	30.0mph
5000rpm	33.5mph
5400rpm	37.0mph

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

Notable Standard Equipment

Boarding ladder, grab rails, twin pedestal seats.

Notable Options on test Boat

Depth sounder, VHF, bimini, helm upholstery, bait board, seat upholstery.

Engine

Make: Mercury
Model: 90 two-stroke
Horsepower: 90
Cyl. Config.: in-line 3
Max rpm: 5400
Propeller: Laser II, 20" pitch
Retail Price: \$11,228

Trailer:

Make: Sportline
Model: Multi Roller
Braked: No
Rollers: Yes
Std Equipment: Jockey wheel, submersible lights

Manufacturer:

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Morrinsville, NZ, Ph 07 889 7193
Tauranga, NZ, Ph 07 928 7193
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Boat Supplied By:
Sportcraft Boats



when you consider that you're getting roughly 5.5m of aluminium cabin boat with a trailer; 90hp 90two-stroke Mercury outboard; a VHF; Navman fishfinder; not to mention the bilge pump; navigation lights switch panels etc.

Obviously if you want to spec the boat up a touch, painted hull options and cabin carpet is available as an option, but you will be getting away from the

whole concept of the package and of course the retail price will start to creep up.

Overall I found the 535 to be a great little boat, in expensive, practical easy to manage; a towing weight of 890kg means you can tow it with pretty much anything. Now with the 5mm hull, I can see it appealing to an even wider market. 🦋

Top: A small hatch in the foredeck provides access to the anchor locker forward.

Above: The helm is tidy and uncluttered. The VHF is a great feature.

Boat
Test