



649

Serious about offshore fishing?
So is this new offering from Stacer

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY PAUL BOURKE

OCEANRANGER

Stacer have finally gone out to produce a quality offshore fishing boat that will stack up against the rest. For years the fibreglass market has dominated the blue water scene for both ride and performance. There are only a hand full of other plate manufacturers in Australia that can produce a plate boat suitable for these conditions. When you are 60 or 80km from land you know you need a well built boat.

Six and a half metres is the perfect all round size for trailerability and open water fishing. This is not a family-oriented design but one suited to the serious fisherman.

This completely new model takes its shape from the ground up with a deeper vee supporting a 19 degree dead rise, a sharper entry point to water and a turned down cabin shape for aerodynamics. It even looks the business.

All of the bigger Stacer boats are made with

the Evo hull or Gull wing design and that is one of the things that make these boats more stable at rest and underway than most other boats. This feature alone makes them worth buying.

The hull structure consists of sub frame ribs welded below the self-draining deck forming a massive grid pattern for strength and durability. This is so strong that Stacer are possibly the first to design what I call a structured floating floor. The hull is actually constructed to flex slightly with the plate sides but the floor is separated from the hull by approximately 20mm all the way around.

This prevents the pressure from the floor pressing through the plate sides. An awesome concept, as it also allows some of the water to drain off the floor and out the rear scuppers and some to drain below for the huge bilge pump to bail out. This is a very effective way to get the water out of the boat by the gallon instead of it sloshing around the floor trying to drain itself by

↳ The walk-through cabin aids in ventilation and manoeuvrability



The self-draining deck is a huge selling point

A built-in transom door makes boating gamefish a reality



SPECIFICATIONS

- Length overall 6.65m
- Beam 2.40m
- Depth 1.20m
- Length on Trailer 7.00m
- Height on Trailer 2.60m
- Bottom sides 5mm
- Topsides 4mm
- Weight 1000kg boat only
- Max 175hp
- Max people 6

↳ The 649 Ocean Ranger comes fully equipped for serious fishing

gravity through the transom. More often than not more comes in than out, but Stacer have fixed that problem a while ago with one way scuppers mounted in to the transom.

The whole floor is checker plate for durability and makes it easy to clean out after a trip on the water. The bottom is 5mm plate and the sides are 4mm so it is built tough. It comes with a built in underfloor 160L fuel tank and foam floatation throughout the hull and enclosed in the sides. This provides level floatation for up to six people.

The Ocean Ranger has a larger cabin that is 300mm longer enabling the internal bunks to be 200mm longer as well. All told, a six-foot six person can lie down on these bunks but they need to have mattresses fitted. There is heaps of storage space beneath and shelving around the sides as a back rest.

The bigger cabin provides more protection from the elements and greater storage in the side

pockets. The dash has plenty of room even with the depth sounder and GPS/chart plotter flush mounted as part of the package. It comes with navigation and anchor lights but needs a VHF and 27 meg radio.

It is best to carry two batteries; one crank battery for the motor and one for the boat electronics, lighting etc. I like the new framed seats with arm rests and grab handles behind for more places to hold on to because with this monster you may need them. The seats are mounted on pedestals and storage boxes ready to attach a fire extinguisher and EPIRB. It even has foot rests for added comfort. Above the bimini is the rocket-launcher rod holder to keep the fishing rods up off the floor.

A walk-through cabin is a great idea for ventilation and anchoring. I would prefer an electric winch rather than hauling metre after metre of anchor rope in particularly when moving fishing spots in deep water. The barrel style electric winch

↳ The Ocean Ranger's spray skirts are an effective part of its hull design



TEST » STACER 649 OCEAN RANGER

High bow rails are a major safety feature and a definite plus in the design of this boat



The two bunks are large enough for two 6'6" blokes to lie down fully stretched out

with braided cord is the best way to go. It has a galvanised bow roller but painted anchor tubes, and these will just get scratched to pieces so they shouldn't be painted. The high bow rails are good along with the full-length aft side rails.

Some of the standard features in this excellent fishing boat are the burley bucket mounted outside the transom, rear boarding ladder, transom door, alloy cutting board mounted with rod holders, 65L plumbed live bait tank, 135L live catch tank but a must have is the deck wash which needs to be fitted as well. Then you will have a fishing weapon.

The rear pod is 200mm smaller in size, which obviously gives you more room inside the boat and less outside. This is now consistent across the Stacer range of boat models and sizes.

The 649 Ocean Ranger I water tested was fitted up with a 150hp Evinrude E-tec and it

performed really well in the Broadwater. We put it through some tight turns, wide-open throttle runs and some figure eight manoeuvres, trying to whip up some chop. It cut through it like nobody's business with two people on board.

These E-tecs have more punch than the same horse power of a four stroke engine and the boat can take up to 175hp. Although the boat responded well under testing I personally feel the 175hp E-tec would be the minimum horsepower I would consider for offshore fishing. By the time you get two, three or even four big fellas on board with all their fishing gear and supplies, then fill her up with fuel, water and with all those fish to be caught and brought home the 150hp would be just inadequate.


With the distances you could travel and the places you could get to it needs to be more

powerful under load. But that leads me to the problem of fitting a four stroke engine because 175 is the maximum horsepower rating for the boat. That would be alright for an Optimax or E-tec but the boat really needs to be modified and rerated to accommodate a 200hp fourstroke. I have always run a 250hp to 300hp on a 680 to 700 fibreglass boat and 225hp on the 650s, so this 650 alloy boat would need this 200hp four stroke to be a good all-purpose performer. After all boats are bought to perform not just sit around.

The hydraulic steering makes handling the boat extremely easy along with the hull design and boat lift, it is a great model to consider. It comes standard with trim tabs which is good to see because a boat over six metres does benefit from having them fitted in the factory.

The high cabin and windscreen provides enough protection from the wind, rain and spray so you could get away without having to use front and side clears. For overnight trips and camping on board these would be great items to have along with a rear travel cover to totally enclose the cockpit and cabin.

The drive-on alloy trailer is a good set-up for launching and retrieving the boat with two people. The trailer is quality built with ample rollers on the tandem axles and brake assisted to 2000kg. A six or eight cylinder sedan would tow it, but a four-wheel drive would be an advantage with the extra ground clearance and tow weight. Stacer offers a three-year warranty on the Boat and Trailer and Evinrude also offer a three-year warranty on the motor.

All said and tested, Stacer are definitely on the right track with the 649 Ocean Rangers, and the set-up and design are far superior to most others out there. You would certainly be happy with the amount of boat you can get for your money with this one. I look forward to seeing some slight improvements and lots more on the water.  For more information please visit www.stacer.com.au