

STACER WILD RIDER 539



So called 'cross-over' style boats seem to be grabbing more and more attention these days. Unless you're a true hard-core fisho, getting into something that offers multiple uses makes good sense, particularly if you're trying to convince the good lady that the family really does need a boat! Well set up bowriders, like Stacer's Wild Rider series, are a serious option – probably more so than ever before.

There are five models in the Wild Rider range, all of which have become extremely popular across much of the country. SA isn't recognised as an easy place to sell bowriders, but word is gradually getting around that they really do have a place here, and across-the-board sales are slowly, but surely creeping upward.

On first inspection the Wild Rider 539

looks a bit 'stumpy' (for lack of a better word). With a decent amount of space up forward consumed by the bow seating, the helm is set well back; in fact, it's close to mid-ships, which takes some getting used to. However, once you consider how practical this layout really is, it's easy to get past the unconventional configuration and think about fishing, skiing, tubing or even wake boarding.

I can already imagine hundreds of died-in-the-wool anglers tuning out and looking for the next story, but let's just hang in there for a minute to examine the Wild Rider's good points – and there are many. Apart from convincing the wife about buying a boat, that bowrider section also turns into a useful fishing space. Lure casting from a bowrider isn't a whole different from lure casting in a centre or side console. With the

walk-through windscreen arrangement you still get 360 degree access, which is essentially what most anglers are looking for. And to have comfortable seating up there at the bow on your 'casting platform' has to be a bonus.

The curved four-piece windscreen wraps nicely around the helm area, providing ample protection for driver and passenger. Seating behind the 'screen is extremely comfortable, which is important in any boat that could be used for extended skiing or wake boarding sessions. It's also great up front, providing bow accommodation for three in absolute comfort.

The test boat from Sports Marine had been fitted with an easily removable bimini top, which makes a lot of sense in a climate like ours. It takes just seconds to erect or lower the bimini if there's lure

casting to be done, and I'd definitely rate this as a 'must have' accessory.

Useful bits and pieces from the standard features list include full carpeting throughout, casting platform conversion kit, folding rear lounge with backrest, Fusion stereo system and a rear boarding ladder. Stacer is renowned for its optional extras catalogue, and I reckon hydraulic steering, a transom bait board, electric motor mounting bracket, berley bucket and transom door would all be worth considering – particularly so if fishing was to be the boat's major use.

Stacer recommends outboards of between 90-135hp for the Wild Rider 539, and engine choice naturally depends a lot on what you'll be doing with it. Skiers would obviously opt for maximum power, while fishers and cruisers would likely be happy with a 115. Engines of up to 206kg can be fitted within manufacturer's specifications, so most modern four strokes in that range can be considered.

Stacer uses 4mm on the bottom and transom, with 3mm on the topsides – pretty standard alloy gauge for boats in this category and size range. The Wild Rider hull weighs in at 645kg dry, making it a snack to tow and launch. It's presented on a single axle trailer, ensuring it's very easy to manoeuvre for carport storage.

Sports Marine had put the Stacer package together with a Mercury 115 ProXS four stroke, which is indeed a sweet choice. It's an 8-valve, single overhead cam engine that weighs a respectable 163 kilos and has a displacement of 2.1 litres. Like all Mercury four strokes these days, fuel economy is exceptionally good.

I tested the Wild Rider on the Gold Coast last year with a 90hp engine on the back, and recall being suitably impressed, so I was naturally keen to see how the rig would perform with 25 extra horses. As mentioned, this hull is not particularly heavy, and I had a fair idea it



Seating and helm position are very comfortable



That Revolution hull works nicely in all conditions



There's ample room up front for three

would be pretty quick with the 115.

And quick it most certainly was. Acceleration from rest was exactly what the water skier/wake boarder will be looking for, and it took very little time to achieve top speed of 66kph. The Stacer Revolution hull is extremely efficient at climbing onto the plane, and far increased buoyancy up forward will be appreciated by all who sit up in the bow. This quite unique hull design offers several obvious benefits, particularly in terms of ride and general handling. Most experts agree it's the most significant hull design improvement from Stacer in over a decade.

Throwing the hull from lock to lock at speed induces no cavitation whatsoever, and you always feel that you're in control. It's an extremely predictable rig to drive, and extremely responsive to trim adjustment. At rest it's exceptionally stable, despite being relatively light in weight.

There's no doubt that Stacer's Wild Rider 539 fits neatly into the multi-purpose category, making it a very attractive family boating option. It will be available for inspection on the Sports Marine stand at this year's Adelaide Boat Show.



HOW MUCH?

As tested \$52,950

GENERAL INFO'

Length: 5.40m

Beam: 2.36m

Length On Trailer: 6.80m

Dry Weight: 645kg

Aluminium guage: 4mm bottom,
3mm topsides

CAPACITIES

Fuel: 95 litres

HP Range: 90 - 135

SUPPLIED BY

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