



Quicksilver

Quicksilver 645 Cabin

STORY & PHOTOS JOHN FORD



Quicksilver is a name many readers will likely associate with inflatable boats and Mercury products, and maybe with a brand of boats imported from New Zealand for a while. However, while still housed under the giant banner of Europe's Brunswick Corporation, which also encompasses Mercury and many other brands, the Quicksilver 645 we recently tested is an entirely new product for Australian shores.

Imported from Europe by Sydney-based Collins Marine, the boat saw its Australian release at the Melbourne Summer Boat Show in early February, and we got the first local test in Sydney a couple of days later.

Upon researching the boat, information about where it's built and other technical



The Sports Pack option includes stylish grey and white cockpit (above).

details proved elusive because Brunswick has a number of factories across Europe, different parts are made in different places and production is shifted around to suit economic conditions at any given time. In addition, the manufacturer is not especially keen to give away too many details about the hull. For example, the deadrise is a closely guarded secret and thus does not appear in our spec sheet.

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

Seeing the Quicksilver 645 for the first time, my initial impression was of something very different from similarly-sized models in the Brunswick range; a boat with a real European flair and an outboard where most American vessels would employ a sterndrive.

According to Peter Collins from Collins Marine, when Brunswick bought out the European company that originally built the boats, management decided to retain the original design team. It seems like a very good decision.

Our test boat was optioned with a Sports Pack that features contrasting black sides and bright blue trim against the white cockpit, as well as a stereo and a freshwater shower at the transom. Stylish teak-themed steps and walkways further enhance the upmarket appeal.

The boat sits high out of the water at the bow and the deck follows a straight line back past the windscreen, where it rises to a high hip line before flowing down to a fastback look at the transom.

The boat is a little unusual in its side profile, and while the design creates a bigger impression than its 6m length it still retains a sporty appeal.

Much of the boat's sexy look is down to the spunky-looking Mercury four-stroke strapped to the transom. The sensuous curve of the new cowling as it flows out behind the leg is especially appealing and the extended fastback

transom shows the motor off to its best.

Under the hood is what Mercury claims to be the lightest four-stroke on the market and, at only 10kg heavier than the company's two-stroke OptiMax, it demonstrates how convincingly the oil burners are being hunted down in the performance stakes.

CLEVER DESIGN

It was not until I started opening hatches and exploring details that the boat showed how well the designers have used the available space for storage and adaptable features.

The three steps on either side of the engine well provide easy access to the cockpit and can be used as swimming platforms. This design is different in itself, but the innovation is taken further by creating drained storage bins in the steps for fenders, the fold-out boarding ladder and some great extra space for things like snorkelling gear or ski ropes.

The cockpit has a conventional U-shaped lounge at the rear and a pair of bucket seats at the helm, but thoughtful design means the whole thing can also be converted for lounging or dining. Brilliant!

A table is stored under the floor and the helm seats can swivel to squeeze in a dining setting for up to eight people. A bimini folds out from a covered hatch at the transom and incorporates a clear front section to provide cover over the whole cockpit. Alternatively, if lazing in the sun is more your style the tabletop can be lowered to turn the aft portion of the cockpit into a full-width sunlounge. A 12V cooler shares space in the floor hatch and there is more stowage under the lounge seats.

Probably the most outstanding and appealing aspect of the boat, however, is the helm's wide central stairway leading through a split windscreen to a teak-patterned walkway to the bow. This timber-look material gives a unique and more upmarket appeal and is a far more practical alternative

HIGHS

- European style matched to American iron
- Great handling and ride
- Innovative storage space
- Good finish of fibreglass and fittings



Getting to and from the water is a breeze with this smart teak-topped stepped transom design (above), incorporating a portside swimladder. Transom has steps (right) that double as drained storage bins, as well as a portside attachment for the deckwash.

to genuine wood. The real stuff is an option, but be prepared to put in some hard work if you want the rich red colour to last because teak will fade to grey in a very short time in Australia's burning sun.

Pedestal-mounted helm seats feature flip-up bolsters and full swivel action, and there are footrests moulded into the bulkhead for passenger and driver. Passengers also get a grabrail and a side-mounted storage net, as well as a handy glovebox atop the cabin door.

The driver's instruments are concentrated into a non-reflective, carbon-look dash panel and, although compact, it is actually quite comprehensive. Shielded by a dark vinyl brow are readouts for revs, fuel, speed and trim, along with a Lowrance HDS-5 sounder-plotter. In addition, a flat panel is a useful holder for wallets and phones and a nifty fiddle rail keeps things in place.

Below decks the clever cabin design has good head height for seating on the vee-berth, which also converts to a full-width bed, and there is a chemical toilet located under the lounge in the bow.

I found the bi-fold doors a little narrow, restricted as they are by the space needed



for the bow access, but although there are no side windows there is plenty of light and air flowing through an overhead hatch.

There is easy access to the bow through the folding windscreen, which also leads to a deep anchor locker and a small stainless steel bowroller and side cleats. A low rail rises at the bow to create grabrails and, along with the uncluttered foredeck, helps safe passage for boarding or anchoring.

WELL ORDERED

Settling in behind the sporty wheel I found the seating position well matched to the side-mount controls and the high windscreen

QUICKSILVER 645 CABIN

GENERAL

MATERIAL Fibreglass
TYPE Planing monohull
LENGTH OVERALL 6.33m
BEAM 2.39m
WEIGHT 1060kg

CAPACITIES

PEOPLE 7
REC. HP 150
REC. MAX HP 200
FUEL 160lt
WATER 45lt

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL 150hp
Mercury
TYPE Inline four-cylinder
four-stroke
WEIGHT 206kg
DISPLACEMENT 3000cc
GEAR RATIO 1.92:1
PROPELLER 15 x 15in
three-blade

SUPPLIED BY

Collins Marine,
17-21 Bowden Street,
Alexandria, NSW, 2015,
Phone: 0418 203 534
Website: quicksilver-boats.
com/quicksilver



trailerboat says...
Much of the boat's sexy look is down to the spunky-looking Mercury four-stroke strapped to the transom

allows unfettered vision.

The 150hp Mercury engine had the easily-driven hull planing at 2500rpm, and by 3000rpm the boat was well on its way at around 14kts. By the time we reached 4000rpm the boat was in cruising mode with a speed of 23kts and happily slicing across the slight harbour slop with no noise from the hull.

Planting the throttle the motor took on a pleasant four-stroke howl as we quickly accelerated to 5200rpm and about 32kts. From there it was a more sedate increase to nearly 38kts at 5800rpm.

The boat felt solid all the way through the rev range and there were no vibrations detected from anywhere, nor any nasty resonance from the hull. Handling in the calmer waters was smooth and precise, for a confidence that inspired a willingness to be pushed ever harder into turns. The 645 hangs on without wallowing or wanting to dig the bow and with no sign of cavitation. The high sides would give a good feeling of security to passengers in the back, even in more spirited manoeuvres, although drivers would need to be mindful that passengers on the lengthways lounges might have trouble hanging on.

That said, this boat's not a hoon machine. It's a cruiser for a family or refined gentlefolk, rather than a yobbo boat tester trying to wring the last ounce of performance out of the poor thing.

ONE LAST TEST

By the time we had finished our speed runs and photography in the sheltered waters of Sydney's Athol Bight, a stiff 18kts breeze was kicking up the sort of chop that can often be found blowing straight down the harbour. Even the most genteel of boaties will find themselves caught out on the harbour on a day when the wind does nasty things to the

water, so we headed out into the gathering tempest.

To be fair it was only 18kts but the added wake from ferries and cruise ships made the harbour pretty sloppy.

We started off at around 15kts straight into the wind and chop, and when the Quicksilver lapped it up in style I increased the revs. We were fine at 20kts and when I looked at my passenger I was buoyed by the fact Peter looked happy enough, so I eased the boat to 25kts at which point it skipped from wave to wave with no banging or distress.

"Okay," I thought, "let's see what this thing can do." I opened it up a little more and the 645 kept accelerating until we were heading into a sea at 30kts, which would likely have been the undoing of many so-called offshore fishing boats. Needless to say, I was impressed.

Turning back, we held similar speeds and although there were some jolts as we were slowed down over the back of some of the bigger waves, the boat handled superbly in the following sea.

Spray from a few of the deeper waves was sent well clear as we travelled in both directions and we managed to remain nice and dry.

THE VERDICT

Style and innovation were the things that immediately impressed me when I first laid eyes on the Quicksilver 645, but the lasting impression is how well the boat operated out on the water.

Practical inclusions and a versatile nature will make this vessel easy to live with, but its pedigree of seaworthiness will be what endears it to owners. ○

For video content and to see the full report visit tradeboats.com.au