



Southwind's 'Stealth' Side Console

Buoyed by the success they have enjoyed with their Longboats, Southwind has just released three more dedicated fishing boats that cut straight to the chase – they make no pretensions of being anything other than pure, 100% fishing boats. As such, they represent quite an astonishing turnaround for a major fibreglass manufacturer, and pose an interesting dilemma for fishermen looking for the best value for money in the 5.0m range.

There is probably no more hotly contested area of the market than sportfishing boats in the 4.75-5.2 m range. Just about every boat manufacturer in Australia makes something of this size, ranging in fishing application from 10% to 100%.

This latter qualification ie, their application to fishing, is going to become extremely important in the evaluation of the new Southwind range of fibreglass fishing boats headed up by this month's test boat: the 5.0m Stealth side console.

What makes this development so

interesting is that Southwind make no bones about what they are doing - they are deliberately taking the fight back up to the aluminium boat sector. They are saying "Here is a range of fibreglass boats with the durability, economy and aptitude of the latest aluminium boats. But we have the soft-ride qualities of a deep vee fibreglass boat, with equal or better stability, and the same level of commitment to the sportfishing philosophy".

Interesting, isn't it? Mind you, it's not the first time this has happened.

Story and pics by Peter Webster

Back in F&B #41 (1998) we had the cover story on the Haines Signature 460SF, one of the most highly refined small fishing craft ever built, and a real joy to use. Then Cruise Craft responded with the Lure, (F&B #43, 1999) a beautifully built 4.70m fibreglass sportfishing platform. Although the boats were quite different in a specific sense, they were nevertheless pursuing a similar target audience. Significantly, neither boat remains in production.

Now, Southwind have stepped into this fiercely competitive ring with a larger model, drawn from their very



popular 500 model, and 'cut down' to present the low profile sought after by keen sportsfishermen.

Design

The new "Stealth" version of this 3-boat series is a side console model as you can see in the pics. There is also a very interesting centre console model. This has more application to the general fisherman who is just as likely to go and do a bit of bottom bouncing as he is lure casting or fly fishing. The centre console is clearly more oriented to the middle ground than either the dory or this side console.

The dory is pretty much a set of mouldings for a 5.0m open boat that many people reckon is a long time overdue. Southwind again make no bones about it – it's designed to get fishermen into a soft riding, stable 5.0m hull for the least amount of money.

Sure, it isn't fitted with the Jacuzzi or the helipad, but by crikey, there's an awful lot of boat here for not much money. And that's the whole idea – they wanted to get as many fishermen into a boat like this as possible, so they've left all the toys out of it.

Southwind recognised that many fishermen are more than happy to put in their own toys, such as rod holders, rod racks, T-tops, fish boxes, live bait tanks, etc., to suit their particular fishery and needs.

So in looking at this side console model, we're actually looking at

'STEALTH' Specifications

Length	.....	5.00m
Beam	.....	2.29m
Deadrise at transom	.....	19°
Max HP 2-stroke	.....	90
Max HP 4-stroke	.....	100
Max engine weight	.....	178kg
Transom height	.....	20 or 25"
Weight hull only	.....	610kg
Weight BMT	.....	1,100kg
LOA on trailer	.....	6.00m
Height on trailer	.....	1.90m

Standard Inclusions

- Gel coat moulded deck with non slip
- Flow coat and fleck interior
- Bow roller
- Stern cleats
- Self draining anchor locker and hatch
- Moulded aft seats
- Bow eye
- Tow eyes x 2
- Under-floor storage
- Custom striping
- Foam flotation
- Transom locker for battery, fuel tank, oil bottle
- SS recessed grab handle x 2
- Floor drain scupper x 2
- Forward casting platform with under platform bins
- Side console
- 115 litre under-floor fuel tank
- Live bait tank forward
- Teleflex steering
- Driver's pedestal seat with swivel and slide
- Bilge pump and float
- Navigation lights

potentially three different boats – the el-basico dory, the middle ground centre console and this dedicated sportfishing platform.

In a design sense, the Stealth, or side console model, is the top of the line.

This is a fully featured sportfishing rig that is ready to run in either bass or bream tournaments as the mood inclines.

There's very little to spend here.

It's fitted with a fully plumbed live boat tank (not with your cruddy little 12 volt pump either - but with a fair dinkum 12v Shurflo pump), masses of storage up under the forward casting platform, the side console itself and stern lockers under the rear quarter seats.

Think of this boat as a casting platform with a 5.0m fibreglass hull underneath it. It can even be fitted with a stern platform if required.

As you can see in the pics, the Stealth was set up with the new Minn Kota electric Saltwater series outboard, now in its white livery instead of the original black.

It was nicely positioned on the Southwind, and worked beautifully – once again showing just how effective these Minn Kota electric outboards can be in a saltwater environment, even with a big boat like this. With commonsense engine management (that is, making sure that you use the big engine to get the boat positioned in the river or drain first), there's no doubt you'd get several hours of running out of a regular 100 amp/hr battery.

Specifications

The Southwind Stealth model is 5.0m overall with a maximum beam of