

Trailerboat Trials

A tale of two Surtees



Sam Mossman checks out the result of a fusion involving two of Surtees Boats' most popular hulls, producing the new 610 Game Fisher.

Based in Te Teko (it's near Whakatane), Surtees Boats is one of New Zealand's front-rank manufacturers of recreational aluminium trailerboats. In recent times their best-selling hull has been the 5.8 Game Fisher, but feedback from fishing customers suggested that more room in the cockpit might be a desirable thing.

Also taking the opportunity to more precisely align their model ratings with true overall lengths, Surtees has produced the new 610 Game Fisher. (Historically Surtees boats have been longer than their model number suggested). This new hull combines the finer entry and lines of the 5.8 Game Fisher with the greater cockpit fishing space of the now superseded 6.1 Game Fisher.

Putting it together

Surtees hulls are known for their robust construction. In the 610 model, six fully-welded stringers run along the hull under a full-length, fully-welded treadplate deck. (Any water drains from the deck to a sump under the transom wall, where it is removed by a 2000gph bilge pump – or it can be bung-drained.)

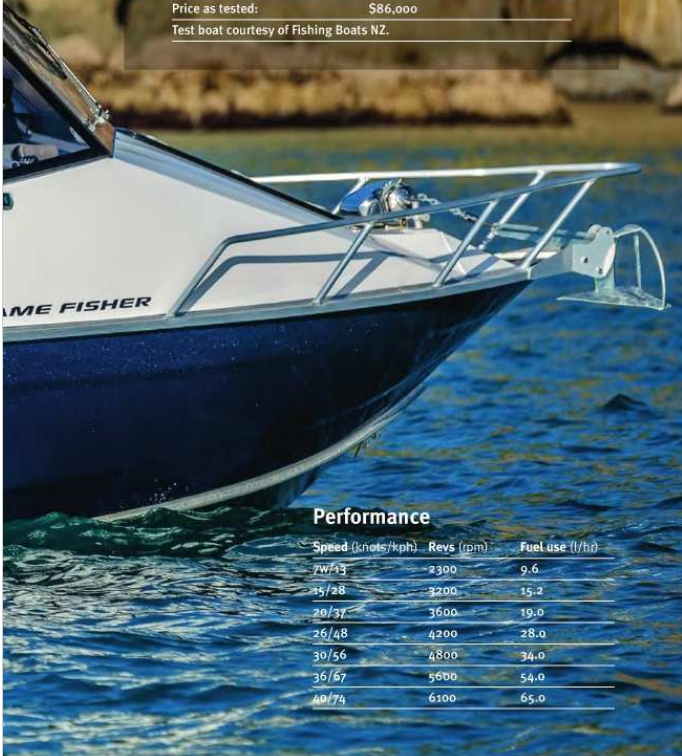
Along the keel-line is Surtees' iconic triangular ballast tank, which helps strengthen the hull and stabilise it at rest. This has a 340-litre (around 340kg) capacity, with a gate at the transom giving the option of retaining this ballast when travelling or dumping it as the boat climbs onto the plane.

Centrally there is a 150-litre under-floor fuel tank (with filling port flush-mounted in the deck) and a bung-drained wet stowage hold at the stern.

Large under-floor pressure-tested air-buoyancy chambers each side provide most of the 782 litres of reserve buoyancy.

Specifications

Material:	aluminium
Configuration:	open hardtop
LOA:	6.1m
Beam:	2.26m
Bottom:	5mm
Sides:	4mm
Topsides:	3mm
Deadrise:	19 degrees
Ballast tank:	340 litres (approx. 340kg)
Fuel:	150-litre underfloor
Reserve buoyancy:	782 litres
Recommended outboard rating:	115hp-150hp
Test outboard:	Yamaha 150hp Four Stroke
Prop:	Reliance 17-inch pitch
Tow weight:	1300kg approx
Base price:	\$62,000 (Honda 115hp four stroke)
Price as tested:	\$86,000
Test boat courtesy of Fishing Boats NZ.	



Performance

Speed (knots/kph)	Revs (rpm)	Fuel use (l/hr)
17/33	2300	9.6
15/28	3200	15.2
20/37	3600	19.0
26/48	4200	28.0
30/56	4800	34.0
36/67	5600	54.0
40/74	6100	65.0



Built to the strict CE (European) Safety Standards, recognised by over 75 countries, these boats come with a six-year hull warranty.

The features supplied with a standard fit-up are many: a helm-controlled Lewmar Pro-Fish warp and chain winch with auto free-fall sits on the bow, with a permanently-fitted Sarca anchor on the fairlead. The warp and chain are fed through the deck into the anchor well and can be accessed through a hatch in the forward bulkhead. Deck Tread panels prevent chain-flogging on the bow.

Other foredeck furniture includes bow-rails and two mooring cleats, one on each side of the bow. The forward hatch is still large, but the old-style alloy version has been replaced by a polycarbonate model, allowing much more light into the fore-cabin, where a tread-plate platform provides good footing and a bit more height for anyone standing in the hatchway to work the bowlines.

The fore-cabin is half-lined and features storage space in large side shelves (which double as backrests) and under the two berths

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- 1 Toughened glass 'screens give good all-round visibility.
- 2 The previous large aluminium hatch has been replaced with a polycarbonate model of similar size.
- 3 Instruments are neatly flush-mounted in the dash.
- 4 A fold-down rear bench seat gives access to the batteries in the transom wall.
- 5 Flat gunwale faces and toe space make the large cockpit good to fish from.



(not sealed). There is plenty of room for the kids to take a nap, and squab in-fills can be added to provide more sleeping space. LED lights are fitted, as is a fire extinguisher, along with port access to wiring and fuses in the console.

The windows are all 4mm toughened glass, with one wiper fitted and the option of a second. The large dash is lined with grey marine carpet, cutting internal reflection and contributing to good all-round vision. The dash also features a rear lip, grab rail and raised section for mounting electronics (in this case a Garmin GPSmap 7410xsv). Steering is hydraulic and the Yamaha gauges, switching, power take-off, capstan control, Icom VHF and Fusion sound system, are flush-mounted in the dash. Pre-fabricated wiring looms make the fit-out easy.

Helm seating is provided by two upholstered plastic bucket seats on Softrider pedestals, made pretty comfortable by the addition of pipe footrests.

There are two side pockets in the open-backed hard-top, LED lighting and plenty of grab rails. A removable sun cover provides more shelter in the cockpit if required.

Out in the big, open cockpit (200mm longer than in the old 5.8 model), two levels of large side shelves run the full length, and wide gunwales with Deck Tread panels are good to sit on while fishing. This covering is a necessity, as raw aluminium has the capacity to burn you on a hot summer's day, but will suck the heat out of your butt in winter. Deck Tread insulates against both

scenarios, as well as providing non-skid properties.

Fuel and batteries are the source of most problems at sea. To counter this, a sight-glass fuel filter has been added to the usual in-line one, and the two-thirds transom wall houses a twin-battery system, set behind a fold-down bench seat. The final third of the transom is used by a step-through with hinged door. Over the transom is a decent tread-plate boarding platform with fold-down 'T' ladder, grab rails and stern cleats.

The final finish looks smart with paint on the sides and cabin, along with new graphics and a Nyalic finish on the remainder of the exposed alloy.

On the water

The 610 is rated for between 115 and 150hp outboards, and in this case a 150hp Yamaha four-stroke was hanging on the back, spinning a stainless Reliance 17-inch pitch prop.

It was initially a flat-calm winter's day on the Waitemata Harbour with only the wakes of larger vessels to try the hull's performance against. A bit 'Jafa-ish' I know, but fortunately, such is the marine traffic in this area, there were plenty of them!

This is a particularly soft-riding hull. Even quartering the bow chines into wakes at speed could not elicit a bang, and the fine entry sliced easily into the sea head-on. And that was without closing the stern gate on the ballast tank so that the ballast water

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is held along the keel when on plane. This sits the hull down a little more and makes it feel rock-solid; I would liken the ride produced to swinging an axe head through the water.

The spray guards on the chines are added to the gull-wing shape which, along with a clever little guard over the sounder's transducer, help to make this a 'dry' hull as well.

Tapped right out, the rig turned out 40 knots, but the engine was slightly over-revving at 6100rpm (6000 is the maximum 'book' figure). This is not an issue as nobody travels flat-stick everywhere – the sea seldom allows it in safety and comfort, it's a bit tough on the engine, and you double your fuel use from a more reasonable cruising speed (see the table of performance figures). If you had a decent load, say a boat full of divers and their gear, you would settle things down, or the option is there to go to a coarser-pitch prop – a 19-inch pitch would be about right.

Putting the 'trailer' in trailerboat

The importance of a well-built trailer should not be underestimated. After all, your boat is of little value if you cannot get it to (and back from) the water reliably. Trailer design has considerable influence on the level of stress generated on the skipper and crew when launching and retrieving, too.

The trailers for Surtees boats are made by allied company Surtees Trailers, originally started by Alan Surtees (father of Surtees Boats founder Neil Surtees) and now owned by Gary and Glennis Wilson.

The 610 is carried on a tandem-axle, cradle A-frame design with leaf-spring suspension. It has five pairs of wobble rollers per side, as well as a keel roller in the entry bay and skid bars on the cross frames (the hull does not rest on these last, when fully loaded).

Additional fittings include: submersible LED lights; spare tyre; wind-down jockey wheel; dual coupling; galvanized-steel wheel arches; dual-ratio manual winch; and the clever Surtees quick-hitch trailer catch, which allows easy drive-on, drive-off launch and retrieve.

Tow weight for the rig is around 1300kg.

Fisherman's friend


Although obviously usable for a wide range of boating applications, fishing and diving is really what Surtees boats are all about, and the basics are all there. The enlarged cockpit adds to the workspace; the tread-plate deck provides good footing; and the keel-line ballast tank gives a stable fishing platform. Flat gunwale faces and all-around toe space provide anglers with comfortable mid-thigh support and allow them to stand upright, on balance, when leaning on the sides while playing fish.

Fishing fittings are many. Three alloy rod holders are fitted along each side for a total of six, four of them accompanied by cup/sinker holders. In addition, there is a six-position rocket launcher on the hard top, and a further three rod holders across the back of the transom-mounted bait station. This last is removable (a ski-pole can be substituted), and features a branded cutting board, knife slots and overboard drains.

A plumbed live-bait tank under the transom step-through looks capable of supporting 20-30 jack mackerel-sized baits. It is fitted with a viewing window which helps keep the baitfish oriented, allows you to make easy checks on their health, and keeps the kids amused.

Divers have not been forgotten either, with a decent tread-plate boarding platform, ergonomically angled 'T' boarding ladder, grab rails, and the transom step-through all making life easier for those climbing aboard from the water.

Catch stowage can be in the under-floor hold towards the rear of the cockpit, or in an aftermarket ice-box. The latter is the most favoured method these days, as the insulation is better and the box can be easily removed to process the catch and clean the boat.

SURTEES HAS certainly remembered the basics, the heritage of their company, and where the bulk of their market is with this new hull. The 610 model sees a successful fusion of the superior sea-keeping of their most popular 5.8 model with the extra cockpit space from the slightly-larger 6.1m. Should be a winner! 



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