

# BOAT TEST

Stabicraft 1530 Fish'r



## Editor's note

The images shown in this review are from a much calmer day than the test. Unfortunately camera issues meant we had to re-schedule a second shoot. Many thanks to Kev and Ian's Marine for obliging. We owe you one!

# Hell fire

It's common knowledge that Stabicraft has a reputation for building solid and stable boats designed to handle any conditions. We got to test this reputation on a windy old day on Auckland's Hauraki Gulf.

Story and images by Matthew Jones



## Weather conditions

Average windspeed

20-30 knots SW

Sea state

Moderate turning to rough



Keeping it simple – the classic walk-through windscreen is all about ease of use



**O**ur test subject is the 1530 Fish'r, which is the successor to Stabicraft's most popular model, the 459 (launched in 2002).

There is little change from the well received design; the most notable being the walk-through windscreen and a change in the name – 1530 representing 15.3 feet instead of the previous 4.59m metric measurement. The change has been brought about to standardise the sizing across the Stabicraft range and also fits better with the company's North American export market.

## First impressions

It was hard to miss the bright red Stabicraft when it pulled alongside the *Trade A Boat* photo boat at the rendezvous point in the Hauraki Gulf. At the helm was Andrew from Kev and Ian's Marine, who kindly volunteered to be our test pilot.

"What's that paint colour called?" I asked.

"Hell Red," Andrew replied, with a grin on his face.

"Hell yeah!" I replied. "It looks good!"

Stabicraft boats aren't known for their pageant-winning good looks but this one will certainly silence many critics.

The interior is no-frills and quite spacious for a boat of this size – as the name "Fish'r" suggests, this Stabi is built purely with fishing in mind. All Stabicraft are built to order, and apart from the shiny red paint job, our test boat was fitted out to standard specs. There are loads of optional add-ons available to suit.

## On board

Accessing the anchor is as easy as twisting two catches and folding back the walk-through windscreen. Once up front there is a solid fairlead, complete with a roller to haul the anchor over and straight into the spacious, self-draining anchor locker. The high bow rails provide something solid to grab onto if required and when deployed, the anchor can be tied off to the sturdy cleat.

There is good quality non-skid on the sides and bow section, but there's no need to risk clambering around given the excellent access through the windscreen. The cockpit

floor is tread plate, which provides good grip and is also fully sealed. This facilitates the 950 litres of reserve buoyancy underneath – the trade-off, of course, is no under-floor storage. Tube floor matting is also available for greater comfort.

There is a small section of non-skid on the gunwales for safe on-water boarding, but unfortunately only two rod holders are available as standard. Underneath are large parcel shelves that extend the full length of the hull – capable of storing all but the longest rods. There is a handy compartment up front for stowing your other gear.

At the helm, digital Yamaha gauges providing speed and RPM feature on the dash, and there is space to mount a GPS/fishfinder on the shelf beneath the windscreen. The passenger also gets the equivalent shelf space plus a dash-mounted



Owning this vessel could not be easier. Type "Stabicraft" into the search bar at [www.tradeaboat.co.nz](http://www.tradeaboat.co.nz) to see this actual boat as well as many others listed.

# “This is a great little boat that is capable of much bigger things than its size suggests”

Trade A Boat says...

handrail to grab onto when required. Seating is provided by twin cantilevered seats that swivel 180 degrees and have small storage pockets beneath.

The transom is of the walk-through variety. While we took on some water over the back while fishing due to the day's stormy conditions this was no problem, as the self-draining duck bills quickly cleared any water once we were underway. A bilge pump and well can be optioned in for extra peace of mind, as well as a raised transom. For family fun there is also a solid ski-pole that doubles as a bait-board mount.

At only 5.9m long and 1.95m high on the trailer, this little red demon should squeeze

into a standard garage, keeping the shiny paint job looking good for years to come.

## Fish'rability

It would have been wrong to test a boat with the word "Fish'r" in its name without actually chucking a couple of lines over the side – so we did. Within a few minutes of the lines hitting the water a nice kahawai was landed. Say no more!

The uncluttered cockpit allowed two of us to cast soft-baits and move around each other with ease. This is also where the excellent stability comes into play, as there's no need to worry about both standing on the same side to land your catch – this boat hardly notices you've moved.

Cleaning up after a messy fishing session should be quick and easy due to the tread plate floor and self-draining cockpit. The battery box is also on a raised shelf to stop any fishy bits from hiding out until the

### Performance

RPM	KM	Knots
1000	7	4
1500	9	5
2000	11	6
2500	14	8
3000	23	12
3500	30	16
4000	38	21
4500	44	24
5000	50	27
5600	60	32

neighbours start enquiring where that foul smell is coming from.

## Handling and performance

With the photos done and dusted it was time to get behind the wheel and have a play. Due to the deteriorating conditions the plan was to follow the larger photo boat back into more sheltered waters before giving the Stabicraft a working over – but this was a boat test after all! So I put the throttle down and gave the photo boat a run for its money through the chop, which reached a metre at times.

**TRADE A BOAT**

STABICRAFT 1530 FISH'R

- Fishability ..... ★★★★★
- Ride ..... ★★★★★
- Stability ..... ★★★★★
- Finish ..... ★★★★★
- Versatility ..... ★★★★★
- Ease of towing..... ★★★★★
- Wow factor ..... ★★★★★



A no-nonsense fishing platform – personally I would opt for the tube-mat on the floor

The bow rail shape makes it easy to drop the anchor into the fairlead



With the outboard trimmed in we skipped across the head sea relatively comfortably at speeds up to 35km per hour. We only had to button off a couple of times when the odd bigger one rolled through. When tackling the waves beam on, which would cause a conventional hull to lean over dangerously, the Gill pontoon design kept the boat level with only so much as a small sideways shift on contact.

Given the conditions, I expected to get wet, but the windscreen is at a good height and deflected wind and spray straight overhead so I stayed nice and dry. The helm set-up is at a good level, with the throttle in easy reach, and I felt comfortable driving seated throughout the test, not needing to stand to get a better view of what was ahead.

The 60hp Yamaha is a "big" little engine and delivers performance that belies its size



Once safely back in calmer waters it was hammer down time and the quiet Yamaha four-stroke topped out at 60km per hour with two people on board. This engine is at the top of the recommended range and, as expected, the hole shot performance was very good and there was little transition onto the plane. If you don't need the extra grunt, a downgrade to the recommended 40hp four-stroke would represent very economical boating indeed.

Turns were tight and the boat stayed level throughout thanks to the pontoon design. The hull gripped well even when turning over the wake. Some prop cavitation was evident when giving it too much throttle in the tight turns, but only when giving it a real good nudge. The cable steering system was smooth and responsive and, combined with the receptive throttle, made this boat a lot of fun to throw around.

## The verdict

This is a great little boat that is capable of much bigger things than its size suggests. Delivered at a price and size that's easy to handle, it represents great entry level boating – getting out on the water hassle-free with the peace of mind of knowing that if the conditions take a turn for the worse, it will get you home safely. [h](#)

For more information contact Andrew at Kev and Ian's Marine, ph 09 267 4999 or visit [www.stabicraft.co.nz](http://www.stabicraft.co.nz) to find a dealer near you.

## SPECIFICATIONS

STABICRAFT 1530 FISH'R	
LOA	4.67m
Beam	1.87m
Deadrise	16° (at transom)
Weight	620kg tow weight (380kg dry hull)
Maximum adults	5
Tube thickness	2.5mm
Hull thickness	4mm
Reserve buoyancy	950L
Fuel capacity	23L tote tank
Engine	2011 Yamaha 60hp four-stroke (recommended hp 40, max 60)
Price as tested	\$34,750



Price as reviewed NZ\$34,750

## TO OWN THIS BOAT:

EXAMPLE BASED ON	
Purchase Price of	NZ\$34,750
Deposit	\$7000
Final Balloon Payment	\$7000
Term 60 months	
<b>MONTHLY PAYMENT</b>	<b>\$540*</b>

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[www.getaboat.co.nz](http://www.getaboat.co.nz)

\*Normal Toyota Financial Services lending criteria apply. Interest rates are subject to change at any time.

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