

# A STEP further

*Smuggler Marine's all new Strata 750 Cabin, provides a new perspective on cabin RIBs.*

Text & Images by Barry Thompson





DAVE PRINGLE, MD of Smuggler Marine has to be one of the most innovative and progressive boat builders of RIBs in the country. He continually breaks with tradition or at the very least improves on it. Firstly it was his ultra luxury superyacht tenders, then adapting the Sealegs technology to his larger RIBs, introducing a very inventive walk around mid cabin and his latest a full cabin RIB. Cabin RIBs from Kiwi manufacturers are not new. Lancer had one years ago, Aquapro released their Raider in 2003 (the moulds were later brought by Rayglass and discontinued) and of course, the most successful of all has been Rayglass with their Protector series, first launched in 1997 and now with over 1000 boats sold. Family Boats offer the Assault range which have a kiwi design and manufactured top base on a South African hull.

So what's different about the Smuggler Strata 750m Cabin? Firstly it is currently one of the few full cabin RIB manufactured in New Zealand. While the Rayglass Protectors have an open forward section, access via a large bulkhead door, the Strata 750 cabin and deck continue right through to the bow. Only Assault offer a similar full deck styling on some of their models.

The deck line and cabin top have been adapted from the Smuggler Stealth 695 and it uses the same hull as found under

the Strata 750 Mid Cabin and Centre Console models. If you are at the helm looking forward, you don't see anything to indicate you are in a RIB. It's not till you look aft and see the big 600mm Hypalon tubes either side of the cockpit that it is obvious.

"We were continually being asked for a full cabin boat as while we had people that liked the Strata 750 mid cabin model they were looking for something that offered overnight accommodation and more all weather protection", says David.

The result is the Strata 750 Cabin, which brings together the RIB technology already well proven with the 750 Mid Cabin and the fibreglass cabin top of the Smuggler Stealth 695. While Smuggler also wanted to produce a boat that didn't need a seriously big rig to tow it - all up on trailer weight is around 2100 kgs, which is in fact 250 kgs lighter than the Smuggler Stealth 720 - they didn't want to make it so light it wouldn't handle the rougher water.

#### Export Earner

The first Strata 750 Cabin has gone to a Perth based client, where it will be used extensively along the West Coast for

*The Strata 750 Cabin is available with a soft top canopy or full grp hardtop.*

fishing, cruising and as transport to out of the way paddle boarding areas. Hence, the paddle board racks. A pot hauler was to be installed when the boat arrived in Perth to retrieve crab and crayfish pots. The layout is the same as the Smuggler Stealth 720 but is longer by 300mm in the cockpit. The cabin comes with the standard V-berth accommodation with an infill, toilet under the centre squab and plenty of standing headroom. The bulkhead means you can have a solid door fitted if required or a privacy curtain. With no dedicated access around the outside, Smuggler has installed an extra large deck hatch should you need to go forward and on the deck for any reason. The grp bowsprit carries on well past the front of the tubes and all the anchoring is done from the helm, courtesy of a Lewmar auto winch.

Just like the Smuggler Stealth 670 and 720, the dash features a split-level display with instruments mounted above a Raymarine Hybrid Touch 127 and all necessary controls, switches and displays alongside and below. A Cobra VHF keeps you in touch with your mates, the weather or Coast Guard, while the Fusion 650 provides the good sounds. The Isotta custom soft grip wheel gives the boat a classy look, plus I liked the fact that Smuggler has provided

a couple of dedicated recesses for your cellphone and keys.

The driving position is good, either standing or seated and there is good visibility through the screen or the clears. The soft top bimini and clears can be replaced with a fixed grp hardtop and windows, which as expected is precisely the same as found on the Smuggler Stealth 670 and 720.

Seating is again as you would find in either the Smuggler Stealth 670 or 720 and there are plenty of options. The owner had opted for a single fully adjustable helm seat mounted on a 12 & 240-volt fridge, with a king/queen back to back opposite with a massive storage bin base.

Storage is also provided in two under floor lockers, a dry one forward of the 330-litre fuel tank and a wet one aft, plus forward side shelves. Missing from the Smuggler Stealth 670/720 layout are rear side shelves, which have obviously been replaced with the tubes.

There is a trio of lockers in the transom, housing the batteries and access to some engineering and electrical systems. Jump seats either side provide some extra seating and the boat comes with a large central mounted Manta combo bait board and rod rack. There's also provision for six-

rod holders above on the rocket launcher. This can be folded down should you have a height issue when storing the boat. The second Strata 750 Cabin was also well underway when I visited the factory in early June. The difference is it will be a twin outboard version, which has required some alterations to the transom. The transom is moved back further and the two seats are replaced with removable bin seats and the stern ladder is replaced with one over the side of the tubes.

#### Proven Performer

Auckland Harbour in winter can be so unpredictable, that half an hour can make a difference between whether you are going to get sunshine, rain or a howling gale. When we arrived at Hobsonville, the weather was flicking between rain and drizzle, so as for getting great photos, it was not so good.

The moderately calm water was no match for the Strata 750, with the hull as predictable as I would have expected. I didn't need to go and prove its ability in rough sea conditions, as I already know that this ultra deep vee 27 deg Smuggler Marine hull is unsurpassed in rough seas. It may date back to the late 70s, but the hull has been tweaked and lengthened by



*The grp bow sprit hangs well forward of the tubes.*

*Left: Seating layouts are optional. Our boat had a fridge under the helm seat.*

*Below: The split level helm means you can position everything at the right height.*



*Left: The cabin can be fitted with a lockable door or privacy curtain.*



Above: Storage lockers under the aft deck also keep the twin batteries tucked away. Note the scuppers either side.

Left: Wet locker storage under the cockpit sole.

Smuggler Boats in recent years and it's unquestionably even better than it was 40 years ago.

Top speed with the single Suzuki 250 DFA was 45.5 knots @ 5500 rpm with a fuel consumption of 82 lph. Drop that back to a more sedate cruise speed of 33.5 knots @ 4000 rpm and the fuel usage drops to a very acceptable 47 lph. The engine is backed up by electronic fly by wire shift and power steering, so driving is an effortless task.

#### Even Bigger

If you are looking at the RIB version of the Smuggler Stealth 720, then expect to pay a little more as the Strata 750 Cabin is higher



spec'd. The tubes alone are around \$NZ22,000. But David says that if you look after them, they should last you 25 years plus.

The Strata 750 Cabin certainly brings a whole new perspective to big RIBs and it isn't about to stop there. Smuggler is well underway with their first Strata 11m Full Cabin, powered by twin Volvo Penta D4 sterndrives. ☀



Power options are single or twin outboards.

| SMUGGLER STRATA 750 CABIN   |                  |     |  |
|---|------------------|-----|--|
| <b>MAKE &amp; MODEL:</b>  |                  |     | Smuggler Strata 750 Cabin                |
| <b>MANUFACTURER:</b>  |                  |     | Smuggler Marine                          |
| <b>PRICED FROM:</b>   |                  |     | \$NZ139,000                              |
| <b>PRICE AS TESTED:</b>   |                  |     | \$NZ190,000                              |
| <b>TYPE:</b>  |                  |     | Cabin RIB                                |
| <b>CONSTRUCTION:</b>  |                  |     | Hypalon & GRP                            |
| <b>LOA:</b>   |                  |     | 7.50m                                    |
| <b>BEAM:</b>  |                  |     | 2.80m (Inflated)                         |
| <b>DEADRIDE:</b>  |                  |     | 27 deg                                   |
| <b>HEIGHT ON TRAILER:</b>   |                  |     | 2.95m (Bimini Up)<br>2.50m (Bimini Down) |
| <b>TRAILERABLE WGT:</b>   |                  |     | 2180 kgs (Dry)                           |
| <b>TEST POWER:</b>  |                  |     | Suzuki 250 DFA APX                       |
| <b>PROPELLER:</b>   |                  |     | 21" SS                                   |
| <b>POWER OPTIONS:</b>   |                  |     | Outboard.                                |
| <b>HP RANGE:</b>  |                  |     | 200-400 hp                               |
| <b>FUEL CAPACITY:</b>   |                  |     | 330 litres                               |
| <b>FRESH WATER:</b>   |                  |     | 80 litres                                |
| <b>MANUFACTURER:</b>  |                  |     | Smuggler Marine                          |
| <b>CONTACT:</b> Smuggler Marine, Ph +64 9 8389024<br><a href="http://www.smuggler.co.nz">www.smuggler.co.nz</a> |                  |     |  |
| <b>NOTABLE OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT:</b><br>Raymarine RAY E127 Touch, Fusion 650, Cobra VHF, Lewmar winch           |                  |     |  |
| <b>PERFORMANCE &amp; FUEL FIGURES</b>   |                  |     |  |
| Engine  | Speed<br>(Knots) | LPH | Range<br>(NM)                            |
| 1000  | 6.0              | 4   | 400                                      |
| 1500  | 8.0              | 8   | 270                                      |
| 2000  | 10.0             | 11  | 240                                      |
| 2500  | 15.0             | 17  | 220                                      |
| 3000  | 22.0             | 30  | 190                                      |
| 3500  | 27.0             | 37  | 190                                      |
| 4000  | 33.0             | 47  | 180                                      |
| 4500  | 38.0             | 55  | 180                                      |
| 5000  | 43.0             | 70  | 150                                      |
| 5500  | 45.0             | 82  | 140                                      |

*L/NM is calculated to two significant figures and rounded up. Range is calculated to two significant figures and rounded down. To allow for adverse conditions, range is calculated on 90% of the fuel capacity.*



Deck supports secure the deck to the hull. Note the deep toe kicks and hard wearing surface on the tubes.