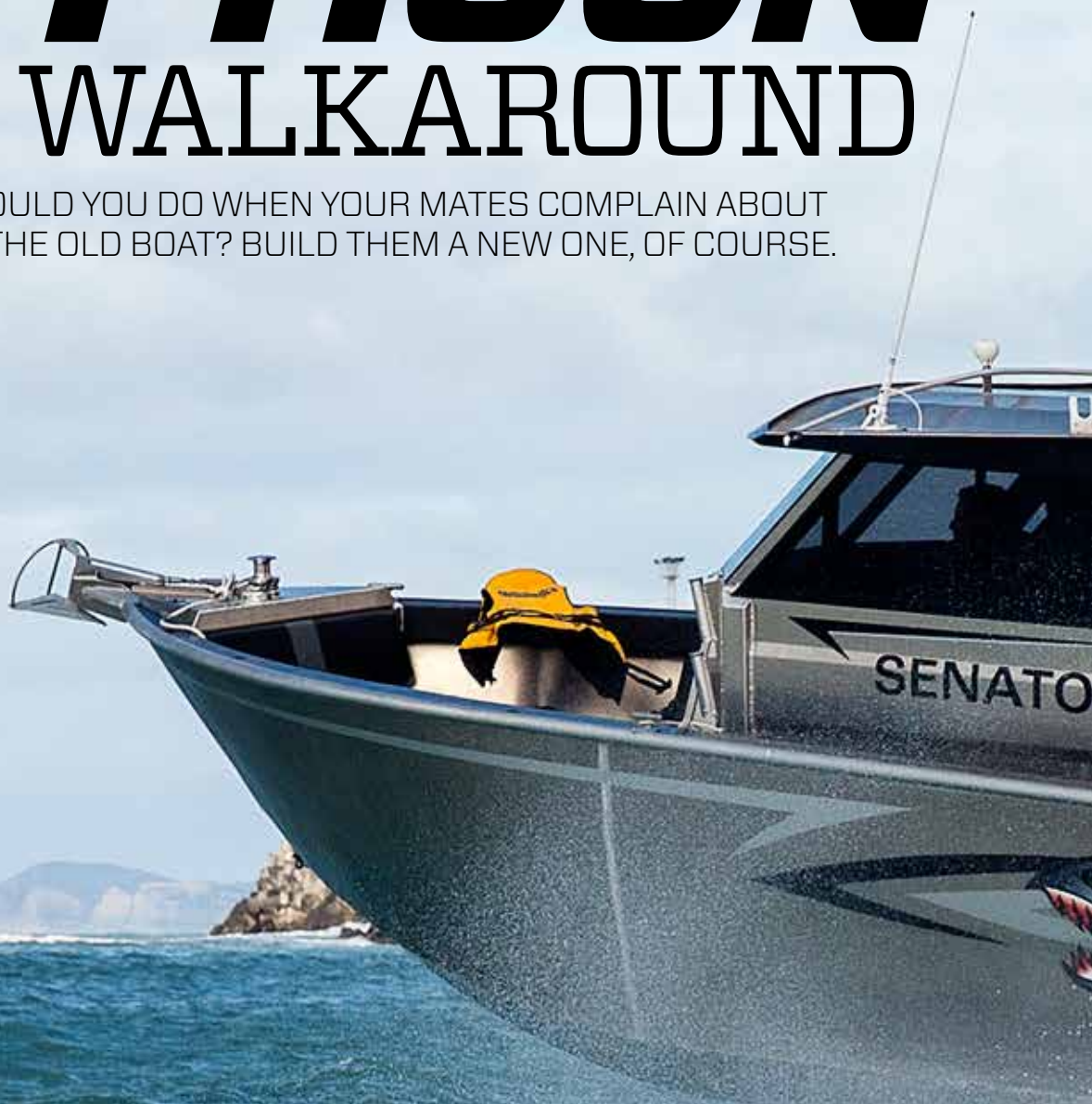


SENATOR ***TYPHOON*** 950 WALKAROUND

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WHEN YOUR MATES COMPLAIN ABOUT SELLING THE OLD BOAT? BUILD THEM A NEW ONE, OF COURSE.





JEFF STRANG

Story and photos by Jeff Strang

So, you've probably heard how a carpenter's house lives in a perpetual state of renovation, with multiple projects started and none ever finished, right? You might think a boat builder's vessel would be a similar work-in-progress. Well, here's a story to make you think again.

The project

At the time of testing, Senator Boats owner Wayne McKinley described the Typhoon 950 as a 'project boat'. But it was patently obvious from the outset that he meant the term as 'experimental' rather than 'ongoing' as there was certainly no hint of unfinished business here.

Apparently the reason he set about building the Typhoon 950 is because his mates complained about him selling his previous boat – they needed something to go fishing on.

At 9.5 metres, this is a big trailer boat. In a different guise it would be a very capable overnighter, making any destination within its fuel range a possible multi-day adventure opportunity for two or three people.

In the tested walk-around configuration, the boat is more the armoured troop carrier, twitching on its trailer, ready to speed the whole platoon to the warzone and back again in a single epic, battle-filled and bloody day. Does this sound over the top? You wouldn't think so if you'd been there. This boat is built with serious fishing in mind. Here's why...



Rod swinging room

With its massive deck space, the Typhoon Walkaround is perfect for large fishing parties.

There's generous room for multiple anglers to work hooked fish around and over each other, as well as through every compass point with no sharp angle or tight corner to constrain the inventive fishing mind.

The usual intrusion of the engine box has been kept to an absolute minimum, with the oversized enclosed aft platform effectively allowing for full clearance of this potential obstruction.

Even the placement of the underfloor deck plate has been optimised for fishing, extending as it does, unobstructed to the hull walls, ensuring a full toe-kick and allowing locked-in anglers the maximum leverage and safety when hauling on stubborn fish against heavy drags.

As we discussed in the factory later, it is Wayne's experience working with

commercial fishing customers, who demand maximum working space and safety, that has helped him perfect this liberal layout.

Arsenal storage

Any reader of *NZ Fishing World* will be aware of the massive range of rods the modern angler needs to completely cover his options. This recent explosion in techniques has left many standard boats hopelessly underdone on the rod holder front, with even a small party of anglers struggling to find space for their easily damaged and expensive arsenals.

The Typhoon Walkaround attempts to address this issue with a good number of holders in the gunnels, an overhead launcher on the cabin entry and another rocket launcher on the transom. Even so, with some creative thinking there could be room to double or potentially triple this number. Wayne's a smart guy and can probably work a solution for any challenge if you outline it for him.

Essential equipment

Finishing off the list of fishing-focused details is an absolute monstrosity of a fish filleting board, a cray pot hauler and a set of rugged tuna poles.

There's more to the fish board than acreage. Designed to be accessed from the rear platform, there's no lip to interfere with the filleter's knife action, while a large well runs the rest of its circumference, ensuring the nasties don't end up inside the boat. Sensible.

The craypot hauler's purpose is pretty obvious and it speaks to Senator's heritage. This business cut its teeth building beach launch-capable commercial crayfishing boats for some of the most challenging working conditions in the country. While usually hydraulically-operated, rather than electric, I've found these units to be useful for all sorts of tasks, including as a backup for a failed anchor winch.

Those more accustomed to the refinements of the traditional





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gamefishing launch might not instantly recognize the purpose of the twin aluminum poles bolted to the roof either. They are indeed tuna poles, a form of commercial fishing outrigger. While not to everyone's taste, rigid tuna poles are both hardwearing and effective.

Out of the weather

Moving inside the cabin, it is clear the troop carrier mentality has been both well thought out and implemented.

With most walk-around vessels, the cabin space is limited and squeezing the maximum numbers of backsides onto seats in such a tight space requires a degree of tangential thought.

The usual twin helm seats occupy the prized front position. No fancy leather bucket seats here, but rather robust

and upholstered chairs welded straight to the hull. Even the roughest sea will be hard pressed to move these.

Just aft, a pair of similarly constructed bench seats are mounted laterally. It's a practical solution to the passenger carrying challenge such a small cabin presents.

As there is no required allowance for an access door for'ard, the dash area offers quite an expanse of space. Wayne has opted for twin Raymarine Hybrid touch units but a prospective new boat commissioner would have a world of options at his or her disposal.

Volvo power

As the images hereabouts amply demonstrate, the Senator Typhoon 950 Walkaround's certainly no slouch.

Having photographed and witnessed the boat perform before I got a chance to climb on board, I was not surprised to find the Volvo D6 370 sterndrive in place. I've reviewed a number of similar sized vessels with this exact power-plant and they have all performed impressively.

At 3500kg it's not a particularly heavy boat for its size, so I wouldn't expect a marked reduction in performance with the boat fully loaded, as it should still be well inside its specifications.

The unit itself sits well protected under its engine hatch aft and offers pretty good access to most of the important stuff, such as filters and belts.

Other important stuff

A last-minute guided tour revealed a number of other features worth mentioning. You might snigger, but to me the quality of a boat's head is of utmost importance. With more than



60,000 hours spent at sea I can say with experience that a poorly designed boat toilet is a pain in the backside. A man needs space in that room to relax and let the worries of the world drain away.

To this end the Typhoon Walkaround excels with a bow-mounted, open air throne room. Your privacy is maintained by its forward-facing aspect, provided the crew has the dignity to leave you in peace. The essential knee space has been provided so you can kick back in comfort and enjoy the best views on the planet.

I was equally impressed with the stern leg access. You don't come across many boats that allow viable access to the props while still keeping your feet dry. A sturdy boarding ladder is also in place for divers, as well as if more drastic action is required near the running gear.

A last note is saved for the boat's storage. It's always a problem on centre console or walk-around configurations and at first glance it looks as if this one suffers from the issue as well.

Not so, as it turns out. Wayne's place cleverly hidden storage compartments,

complete with lift-out bins, in strategic places around the hull. As you would expect, oversized gutters ensure water doesn't make it from the deck to the inside of the hull via these hatches.

The Verdict

It's obvious from the very first glance that Senator's Typhoon 950 Walkaround is one hell of a boat. It's a fine example of the company's famous build quality perfectly matched with a blend of intelligent design and practicality.





Stand out features are its performance and fully optimised fishing layout. The ability to get to the grounds quickly while maintaining a relative degree of comfort should be the first tick on any trailerboat's resume. And, as for term "complete walk-around" (a benefit often promised but seldom delivered), the Typhoon 950 makes good on this promise as well.

It was an eye opener for me to spend some time with Wayne at his yard. When working on the water, time is precious and it can be difficult to get an in-depth read on a business when everyone is pushing for a result in the camera's lens.

Once back at his factory, I could see enthusiasm for boat building pours from this bloke. It is clear he takes every new commission as an opportunity to do things better than ever before. I am happy to say the Senator Typhoon 950 Walkaround is the best example of this configuration I have ever had the pleasure of testing. 🍷

▲ Planned access to the sterndrive (above) speaks of long experience actually on the water, dealing with the issues that come up.



» SPECIFICATIONS

Senator 950 Typhoon 950 Walkaround

LOA 9.5m	LIKED
BEAM 2.88m	📌 Assault craft-like performance
HULL PLATES 8mm	📌 First rate build quality
SIDE PLATES 5mm	📌 Fully optimised fishing platform and space
TREAD PLATE 4mm	📌 Practically designed cabin for passenger shelter
TOUGHENED GLASS 6mm	📌 Massive filleting board
WEIGHT ON TRAILER 3500kg	📌 Practical head
MAXIMUM SPEED 38knots	📌 Passion of the boat builder
CRUISE 30knots	NOT SO MUCH
NEW BOAT PRICE AS TESTED \$220,000.00	📌 Could benefit from a few more rod holders
PLUS TRAILER \$27,500.00	FOR MORE INFORMATION
DEMO BOAT PRICE ON TRAILER (AS TESTED) \$220,000.00	Senator Boats 21 Hamilton Place, Onekawa, Napier 4110, New Zealand. Phone 0800 736 286 Web Senatorboats.com