

Trailerboat Trials



IMAGE: CHRIS CAMERON

Senator Typhoon MH 9400

a beast from the east

During a recent visit to his old east-coast stamping grounds of Hawkes Bay, Sam Mossman investigated a new Napier-based charter boat built on a 9.4m Senator Typhoon hull.

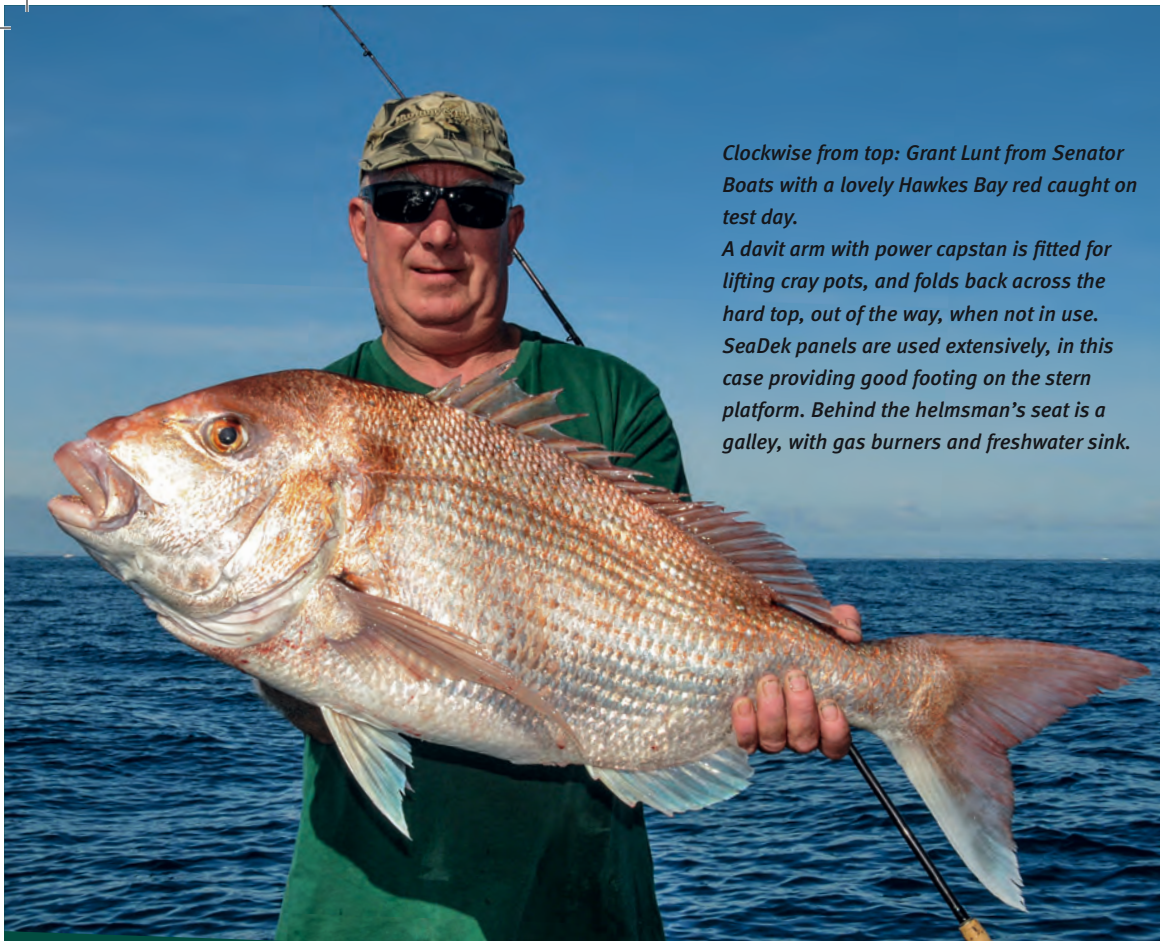
For those unfamiliar with it, Hawkes Bay is a large, wide-open waterway with little bottom structure or sheltered water. The lack of foul sees the open bottom get a lot of attention from trawlers, and recreational boats sometimes need to travel a fair way to find fish. If the wind comes up (and it often does in the afternoons), the lack of sheltered water usually means that boats have little option but to suck it up and beat their way home through a sloppy sea.

As a result, recreational boats tend to be of a decent size down in the Bay so they can travel long distances comfortably in less-than-ideal conditions. This is particularly so for the handful of charter operators, who need to be able to fish and travel comfortably in scruffy seas to be successful.

One such operator is Paul 'Woolly' Woolhouse, who owns the



The engine box is used to mount a large bait station with added rod holders.



Clockwise from top: Grant Lunt from Senator Boats with a lovely Hawkes Bay red caught on test day. A davit arm with power capstan is fitted for lifting cray pots, and folds back across the hard top, out of the way, when not in use. SeaDek panels are used extensively, in this case providing good footing on the stern platform. Behind the helmsman's seat is a galley, with gas burners and freshwater sink.



Napier Hunting & Fishing franchise store Guns and Tackle, along with the charter-fishing operation attached to it.

Upon deciding to upgrade his previous Senator, he went back to the Napier manufacturer for a new one – a 9.4m Typhoon this time – which was launched five months ago. I was in Hawkes Bay over the Christmas break and spent a day on the water with boat owner Woolly and Grant Lunt of Senator, who did much of the hull's finishing.

Big beast

The aluminium open-back hardtop has a length of 9.4 metres and a beam of 2.9 metres. The bottom is substantial 6mm plate, with 5mm sides and 4mm topsides. The deadrise at the transom is a

decent 18 degrees, running to a fine entry of 26 degrees at the bow. The 'screens are 6mm toughened glass. The gunwales are foam-filled above the waterline and the excess of buoyancy over rig weight is approximately 280kg.

The Typhoon MH 9400 is carried on a braked E Z Loader triple-axle trailer. With large banks of wobble rollers (96 individual rollers), the big boat is an easy drive-on, drive-off proposition, without requiring an electric winch. Submersible LED trailer lights, dual-ratio manual winch, and a substantial wind-down jockey wheel are fitted.

The power plant is a 4.2-litre, 350hp Mercruiser/Cummins QSD – a turbocharged in-line six-cylinder four-stroke diesel with common-rail fuel system. It is mated with a Bravo Two XR Diesel leg which



The helm bench seat is comfortable, with all instruments and controls close to hand.

Performance

Mer cruiser QSD 4.2 litre 350hp/Bravo Two XR Diesel leg

RPM	Speed (knots)	Fuel use (l/hr)
1000	6	2.9
2000	10	18.2
3000	22.4	41.0
3850	31.0	75.0

produces a top-end speed of just over 30 knots. Fuel capacity is 500 litres in an underfloor tank, giving a range of about 270nm at cruising speed.

With hydraulic steering and a classy Schmitt wheel, the big rig travels comfortably even in a sloppy sea, with the crew well sheltered inside the wheelhouse, and handles much more like a launch than a trailer boat.

Outside in

First impressions, as you would expect of a charter boat, are of a serious, hard-core fishing machine, a concept reinforced by the stunningly-detailed, gamefish-themed hull wrap applied by Auckland's Brave Signage and Design.

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Plenty of sheltered space under the hardtop.



The big bait station showed its worth as the boys filleted the catch on the way home.

Out on the bow, a Maxwell RC8 capstan is fitted, and the substantial rails include a fold-down ladder that allows boarding over the bow – useful on steep-to beaches. A large hatch into the fore-cabin, substantial rails, fender racks, a heavy bollard, and SeaDek panels on the bow and along the gunwales, complete the foredeck furnishings.

Internally, the fore-cabin and wheelhouse are fully lined with marine carpet. The lockable fore-cabin can sleep four with the berth infill fitted. There is under-berth stowage, two levels of side

shelving, and a toilet fitted under the central berth.

Back in the wheelhouse is a large, compartmentalised dash and a glovebox, along with bench seats either side of a table that also has a swing-out seat on the table pedestal so it can seat five. The table can be lowered to form another berth and has more stowage space, along with a Waeco fridge, beneath.

The helm seat consists of a comfortable bench, with all instruments and controls close to hand. These include a Furuno Navnet TZ2 TL12F Multi Function Display (MFD) with sounder

Specifications

Material:	aluminium
Configuration:	open-back hardtop
LOA:	9.4 metres
Beam:	2.9 metres
Bottoms:	6mm
Sides:	5mm
Topsides:	4mm
Deadrise:	18 deg at transom, variable to 26 deg forward
Screens:	6mm toughened glass
Reserve buoyancy:	approx. 278kg
Test engine:	MerCruiser/Cumins QSD 4.2-litre 350hp
Leg:	Bravo Two XR diesel
Fuel capacity:	500 litres
Trailer:	E Z Loader triple-axle braked
Basic key-turn rig:	\$195,000
Price as tested:	\$285,000.



IMAGE: CHRIS CAMERON



The fore-cabin will sleep four with a berth infill.

(two and three kilowatt through-hull transducers are fitted), GPS, radar, AIS and autopilot, plus live weather, SST, wind and weather forecasting. In addition, there is a Lowrance Link 8 VHF, a Fusion MSUD 750 sound system, USB and cigarette-lighter charging outlets, and a KVH TV1 TracVision tracking TV Ariel system so you can keep track of the footie or cricket scores while out on the water – or keep the kids amused if the fishing is slow. In short, all the big boys' toys are there.

Behind the helmsman's seat is a galley with gas hobs and a freshwater sink. Stowage is in drawers beneath and racks on the cabin sides. A further storage hold is built in under the sole, and LED strip- and task-lighting is plentiful. A pair of grab rails run along under the hard top, and there are more on the hardtop's trailing edge. Drop clears are fitted to the rear of the hardtop for when more shelter is required.

Fishin' mission

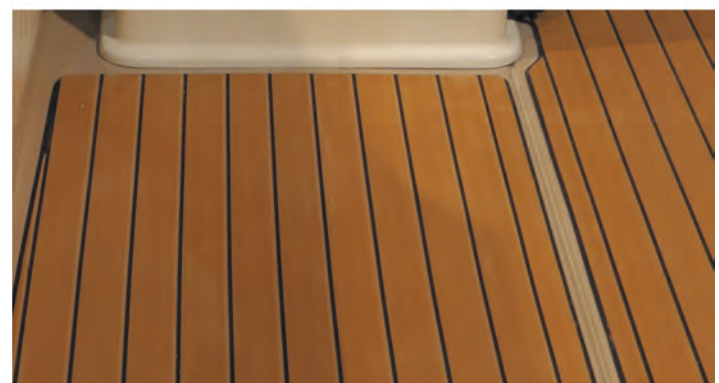
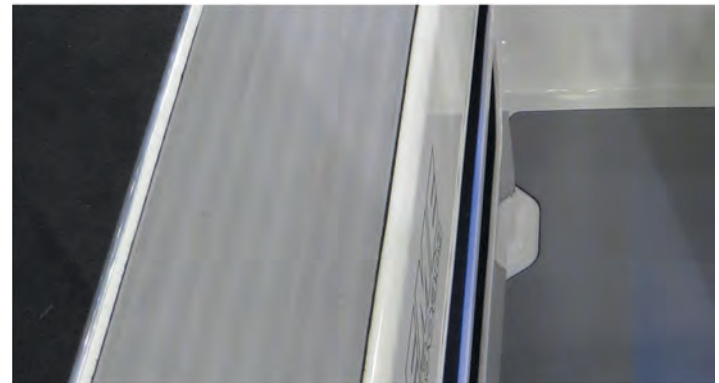
At 9.4m long, the Guns & Tackle Charter's Senator is large for a trailerboat, so despite the large engine box, there is still a heap of fishing room out in the cockpit, along with plenty of shelter for the crew in the cabin. Woolly ideally likes to fish charter crews of six people.

Additional cockpit space is created by the large boarding platform, which is made into a decent fishing spot by transom cut-outs at each end (with drop-in doors), custom SeaDek panels (which provide good footing), heavy railing and a fold-down 'H' boarding ladder in the centre. Live-bait tanks are built-in under the platform and into the transom wall.

A large worktop is built over the engine box, with access available from three sides. It can be used to cut bait and fillet large fish, and incorporates drink holders on each corner, stowage gutters along three sides for knives, iki spikes etc, and has five upright rod holders along the back edge. Another three holders are fitted along the front of the engine box, handy for rod stowage when underway.

An ice box fits under the work top, with another in front of the engine box, and there is space for two more under the rear-facing bench seats under the shade of the hard top (a useful spot to watch lures from when trolling), ensuring you don't have to mix your bait, food, drinks and catch.

Other cockpit features include a treadplate deck, under-deck hold, wash-down hose, power outlets for electric reels, and eight



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Bench seats are built on either side of a table that also has a swing-out seat on the table pedestal.



The substantial bow rails include a fold-down ladder that allows boarding over the bow.

through-gunwale rod holders. A davit arm with power capstan is fitted for lifting cray pots, and folds back across the hardtop out the way when not in use. Cockpit flood, under-gunwale, and OceanLED X-Eight underwater lights are fitted, as are outriggers and an eleven-position rocket launcher on the hard top.

This boat is ready for virtually any fishing task, with flat cockpit faces and the central island formed by the engine box giving good support to anglers.

Woolly was keen to demonstrate what the big Senator was designed for, so took Grant Lunt from Senator Boats (who had been his 'case officer' for the build) and me out for a fishing session

wide of Napier. We ran out to about 60m depth (well offshore in Hawkes Bay) and anchored over some scattered bottom sign.

Ledger rigs are standard here, and I had grown up fishing this way in these waters. The action was consistent, with a steady stream of fish coming aboard, including: three snapper (with the best, a lovely specimen of 8.7kg, falling to Grant Lunt); about twenty gurnard; a heap of kahawai; a couple of 85cm kings (which were returned); sundry vermin, including red cod, 'couta and ground sharks; and half-a-dozen jumps from a mako, which grabbed a gurnard rig!

The big bait station and wash-down hose showed their worth as

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A whole lot of rollers on the E Z Loader trailer – nearly 100 – make for easy launching and retrieving.

the boys filleted the catch on the way home and a basic clean-up was completed, so there was not too much mucking around when we got back to Napier. As the guest, I got to helm the boat.

We had enjoyed some good fishing, and with the company of dolphins and seabirds, it was an entertaining day. Woolly cooked us a steak-sandwich lunch (demonstrating the capabilities of the galley) and we had plenty of fillets to take home. An excellent day on the Bay, made all-the-more enjoyable by this large, comfortable, well-designed and built boat.

Great flagship


The Typhoon MH 9400 is the first vessel of this length that Napier company Senator Boats has built and is custom-fitted for its charter-fishing role, primarily in Hawkes Bay's wide-open waters. It looks great, with a high level of finish topped off by its impressive custom wrap.


The Typhoon also proved very comfortable to travel in and fish from, and is extremely well equipped for stay-away trips and most forms of fishing, whether lifting a cray pot, standard bottom fishing, making deep-water drops with electric reels or blue-water offshore game fishing. It's a great flagship for Senator Boats, Guns & Tackle and Hunting & Fishing. 

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