His 'n' hers

Quicksilver's 605 Open and 645 Cabin share genes, but target two very different markets.

By Mark Rothfield

Life is many things to many people, but unquestionably life is 'now'. It's there to be lived to the full.

The caravanning crowd has grasped this point, their chirpy little signs proclaiming 'Adventure before Dementia'. And much as we loathe their inability to maintain highway speeds, we admire their carefree spirit.

Boaties, however, are more timid. They are convinced their '72 Pride with brown-band Merc

is good for another year, which makes dealers equally cautious.

EURO ORIGINS

It's something Peter Collins, from Collins Marine, wrestled with when offered the importation rights for US-styled, Euro-built Quicksilver Boats, from Belgium-based Brunswick Marine. While they complement the diesel shaft-drive Arvors Collins also handles for Brunswick, it took courage to introduce yet another runabout range.

"they're designed to deliver fun, wherever and whenever that may be"

The 19 models look well-suited to Australian conditions and, above all, they're designed to deliver fun. For this test we looked at the 645 Cabin and 605 Open. Both had the newly released Mercury 150hp four-stroke, but there the similarities ended. Indeed, if you've ever

Above: A deep, beamy boat, the 605 Open boasts twin strakes for improved manoeuvrability.

Below right: There is voluminious storage beneath the centre console.

Below: Aft of the centre console is seating for both the skipper and a passenger.

wondered what men want versus what women want, here's the answer.

For blokes, it's a breezy centre-console day boat – the nautical incarnation of a convertible sportscar. For wives and girlfriends, it's a people-mover with a bed and a head.

Both represented a fair task for the 150 Mercury, respectively weighing around a tonne when dry. In the 605's case it's the maximum rated horsepower, whereas the 645 can run to 200hp. Both had ample planing punch, however.

605 OPEN

The 605 Open accelerated smartly to 38 knots (70.4km/h) and 5600rpm and displayed

tame handling. Twin strakes assist with lift and manoeuvrability, allowing a nice degree of controllable slide through fast turns.

When the 605's bow caught a breaking wake beam-on, it just nonchalantly brushed the wake aside and continued. That's an important attribute, for this is a deep, beamy boat in a similar vein to a sundeck bowrider, not a fishing centre console.

There are no side storage bins or fish wells in the cockpit and rod holders are scarce on the coaming. It's a fair reach over the three-seater lounge at the transom and you'd need longish arms to reach water level.

STORAGE BELOW

That said, there's class-leading storage where wanted – lifting the seat lid reveals a voluminous area beneath the console, which also takes a small cockpit table when not in use.

The bow seating converts to a full sun lounge and the helm seats can swivel aft. Good-sized swim platforms and a pivoting lounge backrest help skiers come aboard and the walkways are wide.

There's extra space in the 605's dash for electronics, if required.

There's ample space for electronics on the dash, but why bother? Despite the flamboyant Euro curves this is a safe and simple pleasure boat, for harbour day trips, camping trips and recreational skiing and fishing.

645 CABIN

The 645 Cabin doesn't actually appear to have a cabin, but so intelligently utilised is its internal volume that you, indeed, get one beneath that flat foredeck, with a double berth and either a plumbed or portable toilet.

Add a teak table and the cockpit becomes an alfresco alcove, with horseshoe seating for four and forward seats that swivel aft. What you lose in length from the outboard well you gain in having no engine box intruding on leg space.

A bimini folds up from a moulded recess or you can create a sunbed by lowering the table and fitting a cushion. The table stows in an underfloor locker along with a small 12V icebox. The latter is handy, as there are no galley facilities.

The 645's cockpit becomes an alfresco alcove with the addition of a teak table.

Teak flooring extends to the steps leading to the foredeck and right to the bow roller. A foredeck hatch gives an alternate route forward, while providing ventilation and lighting below.

The conservative dash arrangement had an optional Lowrance HDS-5 plotter and bolstered seats provided reasonable comfort and support.

It's easy to drive, quick off the mark and viceless through tight turns. There was a slight heeling tendency at moderate speed in crosswinds, but this lessened if driven more aggressively. The hull enjoys being pushed.

Mercury's performance figures show the 150 delivering 34.7 knots (64.3km/h) at 5600rpm and a cruise of 27 knots (50km/h) for 4300rpm. A Verado 200 will break 40 knots (74km/h), but drain almost 80lt/h from the 160lt tank in the process.

I'd be reluctant to go any smaller than a 150, and certainly not to the 115 OptiMax that's offered as a package deal – life's too short.

PRICING

The 605 Open is priced from $44,415 with 115 OptiMax, but excluding options. As tested it came in at under $52,000, excluding a trailer … good value, courtesy of a lethargic Euro.

Above: The 645 Cabin's Euro lines exude style and opulence.

Below right: Beneath the flat foredeck lies a double-berth cabin.

Below: The skipper is cosseted behind a relatively conservative but classy helm.

The 645 Cabin starts at $58,200, but nudges $69,000 as tested with the teak floors, bimini, and several other options. Add $10,950 for the trailer.

To the great grey nomads, that's a pittance. "It's only money," they'd chuckle, "can't take it with you …"

In a sense these two Quicksilvers show how far the international runabout world has come while buyers were getting their safari suits dry-cleaned. They are built for the moment, to be enjoyed now and forever more. CM

SPECIFICATIONS: QUICKSILVER 605 OPEN	
LOA:	6.12m
Beam:	2.4m
Weight:	950kg (dry)
Power as tested:	150hp, 3lt, four-cylinder four-stroke Mercury
Maximum horsepower:	150hp
Performance at WOT:	38 knots (70.4km/h) at 5600rpm
Fuel capacity:	110lt
Berths/capacity:	0/7
Priced from:	$44,415 (excl trailer)
Price as tested:	$52,000 (excl trailer)

SPECIFICATIONS: QUICKSILVER 645 CABIN	
LOA:	6.33m
Beam:	2.39m
Weight:	1060kg (dry)
Power as tested:	150hp, 3lt, four-cylinder four-stroke Mercury
Maximum horsepower:	200hp
Performance at WOT:	34.7 knots (64.3km/h) at 5600rpm
Fuel capacity:	160lt
Berths/capacity:	2/7
Priced from:	$58,200 (excl trailer)
Price as tested:	$69,000 (plus $10,950 for trailer)
For more information contact Collins Marine, tel: (02) 9319 5222, or go to: collinsmarine.com.au.	

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