

HAINES SIGNATURE 680F



The transom door is a handy option

You know when you climb aboard any of the Haines Signature 'F' models, you're standing in a dedicated fishing machine. Signature designers have always known what serious anglers want, and in no other model is this more obvious than the magnificent 680F. It's built to cater for those who enjoy chasing tuna out on the blue water, jigging for samsons off the bottom of Yorke Peninsula, or maybe running down to Kangaroo Island when conditions are favourable.

Highly indicative of the amount of thought that's gone into the 680F's design is a modular transom set-up. It's possible to order one of these boats with three different transom layouts to suit individual requirements and maximise

fishing space. I can't think of another Aussie manufacturer who offers a choice like this.

In its standard form the 680F comes with the traditional windscreen with bimini top and clears, but it's also available with a very neat and functional hard top. Pacific Marine's test boat had been fitted with the hard top option, which is up there with the best I've ever seen. It's built like the proverbial brick outhouse, with heavy duty stainless steel supports, curved screen and sliders port and starboard. For those who fish out wide and often cop a bit of weather, Signature's hard top variant is definitely worth considering.

As you'd expect in a dedicated offshore fishing rig, the 680F comes



with a heap of factory-fitted features. The deck is self draining, an auto bilge pump is included, there's a dual battery system with isolator, a VHF radio, a Simrad G07 XSR sounder/GPS unit, lockable sliding cabin door, live bait tank, transom door, hydraulic steering and long range fuel tank. You'll have to look hard to find a more comprehensive standard fittings inventory than this one.

The same applies to the list of optional extras, which will naturally increase the purchase price, but will also elevate the boat to an even higher level. Signature's fold-up bait prep station is

as good as you'll see, Lectrotab trim tabs are definitely worth considering, and you can opt for a factory-fitted Simrad auto pilot system to take a lot of the hassle out of long runs offshore. There are literally dozens of useful items on the options list to think about – if you have a generous budget to play with!

There's a heap of room up forward in the 680F's cabin; in fact, the inclusion of an in-fill cushion makes this area almost double bed size and a very comfortable proposition for overnighting. And that lockable sliding door provides excellent cabin security when the boat is parked



The Signature hard top really is first class

in a caravan park, camp ground or other vulnerable location. The helm station is spot on for even taller than average operators, and I really like the hinged helm panel that can be tilted outward in the blink of an eye to reveal all the wiring and switch connectors. Although it's not something the everyday boater would use on a regular basis, I'm sure marine mechanics would love it as they fit electronics and gauges.

As you'd expect in a big offshore boat, the Signature's cockpit is spacious and easy to work with. Twin flush-mounted lockers are provided to keep the catch cool and secure, the cockpit floor drains via concealed aft scuppers, and there are full-length side storage pockets for gaffs, paddles and tag poles. As already mentioned, you have three choices when it comes to transom configuration, each of which will appeal to different users.

This is a bulky boat that will require a decent tow vehicle for safe, legal highway work. It weighs around 2.6 tonnes (fully fuelled), so it's definitely not a proposition for the family sedan. With today's modern drive-on trailers, however, even bigger boats like the Signature are a snack to launch or retrieve.

Signature recommends plenty of power for the 680F. I've driven this hull

with a 200hp four stroke and can tell you it goes well, but there's no doubt a 250 will provide the ultimate in performance. Pacific Marine had fitted the test boat with a new Yamaha F250, which is up there with the best V6s you can buy. It's a 4.2 litre, V6 engine that weighs in at 254kg, which is 26 kilos under Signature's maximum transom weight.

The weather had abated overnight prior to our test run out of North Haven Marina, dropping from 25 knots down to 15 or so. There was still a bit of roll about, but I was a little disappointed that we would have no white water left

to play with. Test pilot was Tim Hearse, who loves nothing more than pushing a big, capable offshore boat hard on a choppy day!

That big V6 Yammie really gets the deep vee hull up and running quickly. We were on the plane in the blink of an eye, rocketing southward on a metre of sea and enjoying every second. The Signature's unique 21-33 degree variable deadrise really softens the ride, and the pronounced running strakes up forward ensure spray ends up where it belongs. It's obvious that thousands of hours of R&D over many years have gone into the

Signature hull design!

Top speed in these conditions was close to 40 knots, which was pretty damn quick, I can tell you. Throttling back to 28 knots (3900rpm), the boat settled nicely, and this is where the big V6 Yamaha would be at its economical best. With such a massive fuel capacity, you could expect to fish out wide and still have plenty in reserve, particularly at more sedate cruise and trolling revs.

Signature offers many combinations of hull, striping and upholstery colours, and I really liked the basic white with contrasting royal blue. Some would opt

for a solid hull colour, but I think white always looks more appealing.

In summary, the Haines Signature 680F is among the best blue water boats ever built in Australia. It's by no means cheap, but you really do get what you pay for in any Signature package.



The bait table folds up neatly when not in use



The helm is neat and tidy



There's plenty of room in that cockpit

HOW MUCH?

Packages start at around \$120,000
As tested \$147,850

GENERAL INFO'

Length - 6.77m
Beam - 2.50m
Deadrise - 21-33 degrees
Dry weight - 1442kg

CAPACITIES

HP range - 200-250
Fuel - 377 litres
Water (optional) - 38 litres

SUPPLIED BY

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Yamaha's F250 is a superb engine



The 680 goes nicely with the big V6

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