







REVIEW: HAINES SIGNATURE 545F

Classy Glass

The Haines Signature 545F is the latest addition to a reputable line up of fishing and family fibreglass boats.

BY SCOTT THOMAS

aines Signature needs little introduction for most boaties. The Queensland-based boat builder has been around forever and over time has accumulated a long list of classic models. One such model is the 525F, a scaled down version of the widely acclaimed 543 and a best seller for the fishing/family crossover market.

The 525F, according to Derek from Sydney's Good Times Marine, was one of his best sellers because of the functional nature of the boat. For Sydney fishos it offered a great "all rounder" for fishing the estuaries, larger bays and offshore while remaining a popular choice with family boaters.

So how could Signature improve on an already great boat? The idea behind the 545F was to take the popular 525 and increase the overall size. This resulted in an enormous deck and even better offshore credentials, making it a popular choice for fishos.

The first thing you notice stepping on board the 545F is the generous space. It really is roomy for this style of boat. The high gunwales and cabin up front gives the 545F a safe feeling, while the open configuration is a good compromise between an open and cabin boat.

Features

Starting at the transom there's a large livewell and walk-thru door with ladder access. This test boat had a ski pole at the transom, showing the versatility of the Signature as a family/ fishing crossover boat.

For passengers, there's a fold down bench seat at the rear, plenty of rod holders in the gunwales, rocket launchers on the bimini and side pockets with more rod holders and additional storage for tackle.

On the floor there's a large kill tank with enough space to keep a large fish or two or to be used as additional storage. In front of the kill tank there's a recessed footwell up into the cabin which could be used as another kill tank or storage area for lifejackets, etc.

There's additional storage in the seat boxes, a clever use of otherwise wasted space beneath each seat in the cabin. You could use the for tackle storage quite easily.

The helm has space to easily mount a 12-inch sounder and this boat also had a Mercury VesselView 403 installed, The VesselView is Mercury's own display unit which allows users to easily access engine data via a touch screen. This one allows you to data link the information back through an NMEA compatible sounder.

Further forward and the cabin area has ample storage space and a walk-thru door allowing easy access to the bow. This is a standout feature of the 545F. Most cabin boats restrict access to the bow; you either squeeze through the front hatch or walk around the side. This boat opens up the cabin area with so much space you can even walk through and fish from the bow. Derek from Good Times Marine demonstrated this during the boat test and it's a great option to open up even more fishing space. It's also a great feature for anchoring, mooring or launching and retrieving from the trailer.

This walk-thru hatch combined with the larger deck space makes for one spacious boat. Without the front hatch open there's still

ТОР ТО ВОТТОМ: The walk-thru hatch allows easy access to the bow; There's plenty of fishing space out the back.; The Haines Signature handles the sea conditions with ease.







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plenty of space up front with cushions to stretch out or a great place for the kids to take some shelter from the sun.

Performance

The 545F was tested on Sydney's Botany Bay. While it was hardly windy, the remnants of a decent swell offshore made for some great boat testing conditions and photo opportunities.

For its size, the 545F is one of the nicest riding boats around. The 21 degree deadrise offers a soft landing while Haines Signature's variable deadrise design makes for an overall stable platform at rest. The 545F's size makes for a manoeuvrable, fun hull to control in sharp turns and in the chop.

Overall this boat punches above its weight in terms of performance offshore while offering a great platform for fishing.

The test boat was powered with Mercury's 135hp four stroke. The maximum rating for this boat is 150, which would provide equal acceleration but with more top end speed. This boat reached 39 knots and 5300RPM at WOT, which is plenty of its intended purpose as a fishing/family boat.

The Mercury 135hp FourStroke EFI has a 3.0-litre, 4-cylinder in-line configuration. These engines have been around a few years now and have become a popular choice for this mid range size of boat. They're light in weight and have proven to be reliable with, according to Mercury, fewer moving parts, for durability and longevity on the water. They're also economical at the bowser!

Size matters

This size boat is, in my opinion, a great length for someone looking for that true "all rounder". This well designed fibreglass hull with its variable deadrise design and clever layout only adds to its versatility and fishing credentials.

The size also means it fits nicely on a single axle trailer, can still fit in a garage or carport and won't require a truck to tow it to the ramp.

With a "as tested" just under \$63k, the 545F offers real value for a premium Aussie built boat.

More info at goodtimesmarine.com.au and hainessignature.com.au.