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# Off the Shelf

Scott Thomas checks out a new and roomy cat from Sailfish, ideal for offshore fishos who value a stable, soft riding fishing platform.

**B** OAT FISHING RECENTLY tested two new boats from Aussie catamaran manufacturer, Sailfish – the Reefrunner and Shelfrunner. I first saw these boats at last year's Sydney International Boat Show where local boat dealership Webbe Marine was displaying them amongst a few of the other Sailfish models. At first glance these both looked to be big, spacious boat. However, looks can be deceiving. These aren't particularly big boats – the Reefrunner is 5.8m and the Shelfrunner measures 6.3m – it's just that they look and feel a lot bigger. Some months after the boat show *Boat Fishing* colleague Mick Fletoridis and I tested both boats on Sydney's Botany Bay. Mick's review of the smaller Reefrunner was published in the October 2011 issue of *Boat Fishing*. You can check out a video Mick produced at [www.fishingworld.com.au](http://www.fishingworld.com.au).

While the two boats were designed in similar ways, I'll recap what Sailfish offers with its new Shelfrunner. The Sailfish company started in 1993 and is based in northern NSW. The family-run business is no stranger to catamaran lovers with its tough aluminium boats building a solid reputation amongst recreational fishing circles, along with a number of commercial and government agencies also using the boats.

As the name suggests, the Shelfrunner is a

serious offshore fishing boat – not a “family/fishing” boat. There are no compromises with this boat when it comes to overall fishability. As stated before, it packs a lot into a fairly compact package. Sailfish intentionally left the boat's measurement off the signage for this reason. While the Shelfrunner measures “only” 6.3m, it gives the impression of a much larger boat. This is inherent in the square design of a cat and the way Sailfish cleverly designed the boat to maximise effective use of space. For example, there's a platform which extends over the transom between the twin outboards. This platform allows extra fishing space and is a convenient platform for boarding. It's also handy when fighting fish around the outboards or dragging big fish on board through the removable door at the rear.

Sailfish incorporated some of the characteristics of its larger boats in the Reefrunner/Shelfrunner range, but in a smaller, easier to manage package.

The Shelfrunner's transom features a average size cutting board placed over on the starboard side out of harm's way. There are plenty of grab rails, stainless steel rod holders, and pretty good storage below the gunwales in the sidepockets. Like most anglers, I appreciate a decent height gunwale in rough water and Sailfish has ticked all the boxes in this area. There's also

a saltwater deckwash included as standard.

Towards the bow, the cabin is positioned further forward than the average boat to create ample cockpit space. Another smart space saving idea is the livewell beneath the passenger seat. The large livewell can be easily accessed by flipping the seat. The helm featured a Garmin 750S combination GPS/chartplotter/sounder, Fusion stereo (with optional iPod system), VHF radio, compass, and all the necessary gauges and switches. The steering was hydraulic. There's also heaps of space for a larger 12 inch screen, which given this boat's offshore capability would be a nice addition. Looking through the sliding lockable door into the cabin reveals nothing more than a storage area for fishing or safety gear – no wasted bunk area or pointless frippery. The cabin also boasted decent clears, which come as standard on the Shelfrunner, and a stainless rocket launcher style rod rack.

## ON THE WATER

It's not difficult to understand the obsession some fishos have with catamarans. They're soft riding and stable at rest. The Shelfrunner is no exception. A good cruising speed of about 22 knots saw us travel outside Botany Bay to test the Shelfrunner and smaller Reefrunner in some messier



**1** Offshore fishos will appreciate the excellent ride, stability and overall fishability of the Shelfrunner.

**2** The twin 75hp Hondas provide plenty of power and fuel efficiency.

**3** Plenty of space for fishing at the cockpit.



water. While under way, I found the boat rides nice and soft through the chop. Stability was excellent. Even with three people on board standing or fishing from one side, the Shelfrunner barely moved. This is thanks to pod being an extension of the keel, which acts to keep the each corner of the transom very buoyant. The Shelfrunner as tested was fitted with twin 75hp

four-stroke Hondas; maximum horsepower is twin 90hps. In my opinion, the 75hp Hondas provided plenty of grunt while maintaining good fuel economy. It seems quite odd having such small outboards bolted to a seemingly large offshore boat. As mentioned above, this is one of the advantages of the clever design of this boat. The Shelfrunner seems a lot bigger than it

## Sailfish Shelfrunner

**LENGTH: (LOA) 6.3m**

**BEAM: 2.45**

**FUEL: 2 x 140 litre tanks**

**BOTTOMS: 5mm**

**SIDES AND CABIN: 3mm**

**PRICE ON WATER: \$94,990**

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actually is. There's simply no need for larger and heavier outboards. The Shelfrunner had top speed of about 33 knots and an ideal cruising speed of 23 knots through a moderate sea.

### PEACE OF MIND

Being a cat means this boat features pretty much two of everything. This offers peace of mind for those venturing offshore. Besides the extra assurance that comes with twin outboards, the boat also features twin fuel systems, twin battery systems, and twin electrical systems. There's always a back-up in the unlikely event that something goes wrong.

If you're interested in cats but don't want the expense of big, thirsty outboards, then Shelfrunner or smaller Reefrunner are well worth considering. ■

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