



NOT YOUR NORMAL TINNIE

Quintrex's 610 Freedom Sport, says Warren Steptoe, is a boat that manages the rare feat of combining the attributes of both 6m moulded 'glass and aluminium bowriders — and that's something!

Photos: Warren Steptoe

**WEATHER
CONDITIONS**
Wind: 15-20kts
Sea: Short windchop

Our test boat sported a wakeboarding tower custom-fitted by the Gold Coast's Broadwater Boating Centre. While a wakeboarding tower may or may not appeal, it nicely illustrates the Freedom Sport's remarkable versatility.

Australians really are spoilt for choice when it comes to 6m bowriders. Between a plethora of quality imports and some mighty stiff locally-built competition — boats like CruiseCraft's Resort 6 and Signature's 600BR come to mind — buying yourself a good 6m bowrider is only difficult in the choosing.

No doubt, moulding 6m bowriders from what's commonly (if somewhat erroneously) known as "fibreglass" makes heaps of sense. However, while boat testers like me question some aspects of our national mania for aluminium boats, that doesn't change the logic behind it. Nope — we can argue 'glass boats are better than tinnies in any number of ways but there's no denying that aluminium hulls *are* in other ways more practical for the sometimes rugged boating (and trailering) conditions found all around our wide brown land.

It's also true too that some aluminium boatbuilders *do* offer 6m bowriders.

So at one end of the 6m bowrider spectrum we have nice, soft riding, fine handling 'glass bowriders. And at the other end, we have the simplicity, practicality, and all round toughness of their metal competitors which (to be kind about it) could never be accused of having a soft ride, or the kind of nimble handling useful for towing wake toys — a role family boats like bowriders tend to be used for at some stage.

The two ends of this spectrum are so dissimilar that it's difficult to imagine a boat which draws a line down the middle, yet that's precisely what Quintrex's 610 Freedom Sport does. It's a "tinnie" whichever way you look at it. However, it's a tinnie with ride and handling characteristics approaching the best of its

'glass competitors. And *that* makes it an interesting boat indeed for a lot of Aussie boating families.

This is all because of Quintrex's flared bow variable deadrise Millennium hull. However, after testing the 610 Freedom Sport on open water at the northern end of the Gold Coast (with a solid 15-20kts of afternoon sea breeze stirring a steep wind chop), to be bluntly honest I'd say the Millennium hull wasn't quite up there with the best moulded 6m bowriders I've tested — boats like the aforementioned CruiseCraft Resort 6 and Signature 600 BR, for example. But neither was it too far behind. In terms of roughwater ride and nimble handling the 610 Freedom Sport rates par for the course with its 'glass competitors and well ahead of every aluminium boat of this type I've ever ridden in.

But wait, then there's the Freedom Sports' high sides. It shares its 6m flared bow variable deadrise hull with offshore fishing boats in Quintrex's line and literally stands tall among generally low-sided 6m bowriders. In many favourite



On the plane...

- ✓ Millennium hull's ride and handling comparable to 'glass competitors
- ✓ All the toughness and practicality of a tinnie
- ✓ Nothing else combines both attributes in one boat

Dragging the chain...

- ✗ Finish is still "tinnie" and falls behind the best among 'glass competitors

rotomoulded plastic to avoid the racket of ground tackle banging against the hull.

The anchor hatch is sufficiently spacious to accommodate a fair bit of rope, chain and so on; it has enough room to handle anchoring needs for most

“It's a 'tinnie' whichever way you look at it. However, it's a tinnie with ride and handling characteristics approaching the best of its 'glass competitors.”

Australian boating locations, more freeboard is a good thing.

Whether you're nervously eyeing "snapping handbags" (curious crocs) in the Top End or facing a nasty chop in Port Phillip Bay, the Freedom Sport's ample freeboard adds up to extra peace of mind.

The Freedom Sport line has always been adaptable to fairly serious fishing, but when you add that at 6m this boat *can* be a useful offshore fisher, the total exceeds the sum of its parts and so this boat really is something special — and deserves closer inspection.

UP FRONT

Starting at the pointy end we find a neat looking, low bowrail, integrated with a bowsprit and fairlead feeding a foredeck anchorwell. This is sensibly lined in

situations save for full-on offshore trips.

The bow lounge is as roomy as you'd expect in a 6m boat and is well upholstered with a deep backrest. There's roomy stowage underneath the seat cushions, and our test boat was fitted with an optional table, with sockets to situate it in either the bow lounge or aft in the cockpit.

A tonneau cover for the bow lounge is on the options list, although I note that the removable bow casting deck, which has sold a lot of smaller Freedom Sport boats, is not. That's probably fair enough too; keener fishos won't be looking at a high-sided 6m boat for enclosed-water lure casting.

Quintrex's acrylic windscreens are a far cry from the squarish boxy things of a few years back. This one wraps around nicely, and I'm pleased to report that it features a sturdy grabrail around the



Above: With a stretch-formed, variable deadrise hull, the ride is as soft as many 'glass bowriders — yet this boat still as tough as any tinnie.

Right: Sorting gear before testing out its capabilities as a tow vehicle. The aft lounge folds away to free cockpit space for fishing or skiing. The transom door is another option sure to be popular with boating families.

Below: This table, which fits into sockets near both aft and bow lounges, is an option that's sure to be popular among those using Freedom Sports for social boating.



TRAILERBOAT RATES THE QUINTREX 610 FREEDOM SPORT	
1 Fun factor	👍👍👍👍👍
2 Innovation	👍👍👍👍👍
3 Design and layout	👍👍👍👍👍
4 Quality of finish	👍👍👍👍👍
5 Handling and ride	👍👍👍👍👍
6 Stability at rest	👍👍👍👍👍
7 Ergonomics	👍👍👍👍👍
8 Standard equipment	👍👍👍👍👍
9 Value for money	👍👍👍👍👍
10 X-Factor	👍👍👍👍👍
OVERALL	👍👍👍👍👍

top. That doesn't mean you can stand comfortably at the helm to run a 610 Freedom Sport in offshore conditions; it's clearly meant to be driven while seated. Both the helm and passenger seats are shallow buckets, with a swing-over back, so either seat can be used facing forward or aft.

The aft lounge folds out of the way if serious fishing's on the agenda. There's a stowage locker below decks in the cockpit, with limited stowage each side in pockets incorporated into enclosed cockpit sides that hold flotation. Significantly, this boat is rated to the Australian Standard for level flotation with six people aboard, something few competitors can match.

At the blunt end, the transom area is a work of art. Quintrex has been beavering away at various manifestations of its extended transom for some years now and it's fair to say that the current version has everything down pat.

A central reinforced socket can be optioned with a skipole or a fishing workbench and bait-tank. Another livewell is optional for the bulkhead beside it. Each side of the outboard, there's a small boarding deck with a soft non-slip surface. A telescopic boarding ladder comes standard, while the transom door in our test boat is an option.

Standard inclusions for the 610 Freedom Sport include a carpeted deck, drinkholders, cockpit lighting, compass, sounder, VHF radio, two rodholders and a 120lt underfloor fuel tank. An extra 42lt

fuel tank is optional, as are the following:

- Variously configured travel covers.
- Bimini shade tops.
- Plusher bucket seats.
- Berley bucket.
- Stereo system.
- Movable table.
- Stripes and/or two-tone paint.
- Skipole or fishing workbench.
- Twin-battery setup.

No-feedback mechanical steering is standard and hydraulic steering is optional. Given that the Freedom Sport hull is rated up to a 175hp outboard, I'd suggest that hydraulic steering is the better choice; it certainly tamed the torque of the 150hp Yamaha four-stroke on our test boat.

Swinging a 17in pitch Yamaha stainless steel prop, the Freedom Sport's performance was lively enough to satisfy all bar hardcore ski and wakeboard nuts, who would probably go for the 175hp maximum power setup. Top speed was around 40kts (74k.0mh) — 39.2kts (72.5kmh) into the sea breeze and 40.6kts (75.1kmh) running with, at 6000 rpm. However, that wasn't as impressive to me as the mid-range performance.

Cruising speeds around 20-25kts (37.0-46.3kmh) were maintained effortlessly with the tach showing 3000-4000rpm, and while we don't have fuel consumption figures for you, I'm happy to comment from past experience and say that 150 Yammies drink at miserly rates at these revs. ⚓



Being higher-sided than 6m bowriders, the Freedom Sport is particularly attractive for any location where conditions include wide open water. The 610 hull shares this with other 6m Quintrex models, including offshore fishing boats, so it's more than capable of coping with these conditions.

**QUINTREX
610 FREEDOM
SPORT**



HOW MUCH?

Price as tested:\$65,825
Options fitted: Livebait tank, fold-down drinkholders, table, seat upgrade, twin-batteries, transom door, bimini top, tonneau, wake-tower, iPod stereo, safety pack, hydraulic steering
Priced from:\$59,957
(with Yamaha 150hp four-stroke)

GENERAL

Type:..... Bowrider sports/family boat
Material:.....Aluminium
Length:.....6.08 m
Beam:.....2.4m
Weight (hull only):.....747kg
Deadrise:..... Variable

CAPACITIES

People:..... 6 (level flotation)
Rec. HP:..... 135-150
Max. HP:..... 175
Fuel:..... 120lt

ENGINE

Make/model:..... Yamaha F150A
Type:..... DOHC, 16-valve, four-cylinder, in-line
Weight:..... 225kg
Displacement:..... 2670cc
Propeller:..... Yamaha s/s 17in pitch

MANUFACTURED BY

Telwater
Web: www.quintrex.com.au

SUPPLIED BY

Broadwater Boating Centre
45 Brisbane Rd
Labrador, Qld, 4215
Tel: (07) 5529 1777
Web: www.broadwaterboating.com.au

TO OWN THIS BOAT

Price as tested:\$68,285
Weekly Repayment TAP:\$200.29
Deposit:\$17,071.25
Final Repayment (%=\$):\$17,071.25
Term (months): 60

* Customer rate is 9.60% comparison rate is 9.93% for all of the above payments. See rear of magazine for conditions



CALL NOW 1300 003 003
www.financeezi.com.au