

Quintrex 490 Fishabout Review - BoatAdvice



by Shane Mensforth

May 17, 2016

Quintrex boats are about as Aussie as Vegemite sandwiches. Not only is the company the largest manufacturer of trailer boats in this country, it's also a major player on the world stage. The brand has been around since the 1970s, and in that time the products have maintained clear market leadership.

Quintrex's range of runabouts has long been its strong suit, and the 490 Fishabout is among the most popular models. It's a beamy, spacious boat that fits countless situations, from inshore/estuary to river/lake and also a bit further offshore when conditions are half reasonable. If versatility is a significant criterion in your future boat purchase plans, the 490 is definitely worth considering.

Its "Fishabout" designation seems quite apt, as it comes with most of the bits and pieces casual anglers will be looking for on a regular basis. The package is also quite affordable for the average family – something that the Aussie boat-building scene has certainly embraced over the past few years.

WHAT YOU GET

The 490 Fishabout comes from a long line of [Quintrex](#) runabouts. The model name has been around for decades, and it has been interesting to watch it evolve and improve in line with market trends. The volume of fishing space this boat offers becomes obvious as soon as you step aboard. With a beam of 2.25m and helm position well forward, there's plenty of room to fish three quite comfortably; in fact, you could throw in a reasonable size icebox without creating a space issue.

Like most Quintrex runabouts, this one comes with a stylish, curved, three-piece windscreen. The centre panel opens outward and there's a small foredeck hatch that makes it easy to move forward to work the anchor rope if required. The anchor well isn't huge, but then I guess most who buy this boat won't need long ropes and chunky chain.

Due to the walk-through section up forward, the dash is split into two fibreglass modules; there's a storage compartment to port that's ideal for mobile phones and keys, and the helm module is neat, compact and operator friendly. There is mounting space for a compact GPS/sounder unit and dual gauges on the upper tier of the helm, and more room below for radio and toggle switches adjacent to the steering wheel. It's all easy to access from both the seated and standing position.

Out in the cockpit you'll find full all-weather carpeting, side pockets that stretch from immediately aft of the seats to the transom, and a rear bench seat that folds up in ten seconds to form a comfortable 'lean-against' area for fishing. There are dual boarding platforms for when the kids hop in for a dip, and the outboard well is about as unobtrusive as you'll find in any runabout.

The Fishabout is available in unpainted form, with the traditional paint and striping, or with a stylish vinyl wrap for a few bucks extra. I'm a big fan of wraps, particularly personalised ones, as they tend to be a tad more stone chip resistant than standard paint on aluminium, and certainly make any boat look more distinctive.

The list of standard features with the 490 Fishabout package is quite comprehensive, although you might like to add a couple of items from the optional extras list if you're a serious fisho. Non-return mechanical steering comes standard, but this is upgradeable to hydraulic if the budget will stretch. A bimini top and clears would also be worth adding, as would a berley bucket, live bait tank and some cockpit lights.

The standard fuel tank holds 70 litres, which seems about right for a boat of this size and recommended horsepower.

POWER

Quintrex quotes a horsepower range of between 40-90 for the 490 hull, and the test boat from Pitmans Marine in Adelaide had been fitted with a [Yamaha F70LA](#). This engine weighs around 120kg, making it the lightest four-stroke in its class and well under the Fishabout's maximum transom weight of 181kg.

I have also ridden in a [490 Cruiseabout](#) (the Fishabout's sister model built on the same hull) fitted with a Yam' 90 and can tell you it's a flying machine with the 20 extra horses on the back. Whether or not you need the added power depends largely on application and regular load.

ON THE WATER

After four days of late autumn gales we finally jugged a decent morning for taking the 490 Fishabout out onto St Vincent's Gulf. Only half of the North Haven boat ramp's launching lanes were open due to storm damage and mountains of dead seaweed waiting to be removed, and the water outside the marina was still turbid. However, at least the seas had abated from the 3-4m nightmare we'd experienced earlier in the week.

With two on board, the Quinnie gets onto the plane easily with the 70 Yamaha. As with most Quintrex boats these days, the Millennium Hull concept works nicely, providing a nice solid feel at the helm and above average cornering. The subtle, but effective keel makes straight line tracking quite easy; in fact, over calm water you can take your hands off the wheel and expect the boat to run straight and true – every time.

With an average load and reasonable water to travel on, we managed 32 knots (60km/h) at wide open throttle and 5900rpm. Pulling back to 24 knots (45km/h) at cruise and 4200rpm, the hull planed effortlessly, and there's no doubt this is where you would enjoy optimum fuel economy. Courtesy of Quintrex's very effective Flared Bow feature, water is thrown well clear, even in tight turns, and once again that Millennium Hull comes into play when it's asked to turn sharply at speed.

Due to the generous beam, relatively low centre of gravity and broad outer chines, the 490 Fishabout offers above average stability. Whether at anchor or on the drift, it's easy to move around in a normal fishing situation. Naturally, in any rig that weighs just 430kg you've got to be mindful of weight distribution, but this hull definitely displays better stability than many others of similar size. The test boat had been fitted with a blue bimini top, which is fine while you are sitting down in the helm or passenger's seat, but a bit of a pain when you're trying to stand. I much prefer taller canopy systems, which may alter a boat's low profile lines, but are definitely more practical to work with. These are available from local marine trimmers and would definitely be my choice in any runabout situation.

ON THE TRAILER

The 490 Fishabout I tested was supplied on a single axle [Quintrex](#) custom aluminium trailer. It features a combination of Teflon-coated skids and wobble rollers, which make it a breeze to drive on or off. Naturally, you could launch or retrieve manually if so desired, and the aluminium construction makes chassis maintenance a whole lot easier.

Highway towing requires a medium-size family sedan or SUV, although a small 4WD would certainly opening up more remote launching options.

OVERVIEW

The 490 Fishabout is indeed a neat and versatile package that's within reach of the average wage earner and economical to operate. I was impressed by many of its attributes, and have no doubts about recommending it to either inshore sportfishers or the young boating family.

It can be taken a reasonable distance offshore too, provided the weather forecast is friendly enough. Like all Quintrex boats, it is precision built and the brand name should ensure excellent resale value if and when the time comes to trade up.

Test boat supplied by Yamaha Pitmans in Adelaide.

POSITIVES

Excellent interior room
Positive, solid feel at the helm
Runs nicely with moderate power

NEGATIVES

The standard low profile bimini top

NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Price: (as tested) \$37,540

Construction: Aluminium (3mm bottom and transom, 2mm topsides)

Overall Length: 5.13m

Beam: 2.25m

HP range: 40-90

Hull weight: (dry) 430kg

Engine fitted: Yamaha F70LA