

# All-round winner

**DARRYL HITCHEN** gets back to his roots by testing out a 5m aluminium that offers an all-round option without breaking the bank, the Quintrex Renegade 520.



*The Renegade 520 performs well on the water.*

I'D better start this boat review by admitting that I've got a soft spot for good boats around the five-metre mark. The classic '17-footer' in the old language, they've got to be one of the best 'all-rounders' going around from a fishing and boating perspective. Light enough to easily tow and launch on your own, yet big and safe enough to venture offshore when conditions are right. Small enough to sneak up a narrow mangrove creek up north or a shallow estuary system down south, yet still capable of tangling with some serious pelagics out from Perth or Exmouth.

My first boat was a tough-as-nails original 5m Westerberg ali that took me on some epic sportfishing adventures up and down the west coast in the early days. Many years later a 5m Quintrex Cruiseabout found a home at my place and I spent many hours fishing from it out around Rottnest, Jurien Bay and points farther north.

Now I was looking forward to stepping aboard one of the latest offerings in this size aluminium boat, the Quintrex 5.2m Renegade, and seeing how it shaped up against some pretty stiff opposition from days gone by!

## FIRST THOUGHTS

As Paul Denboer from Estuary Marine pulled into the boat ramp at the Mandurah Marina, I could immediately see that the Renegade 520 was a 'no-frills' aluminium boat designed with fishermen in mind. The unpainted boat looked like a more than capable workhorse that was well short on the 'bling' factor of some of the recent boats that I'd sea-trialled. In fact, exactly what I'd be looking for in a boat of this size as a fishing rig.

While I've tested some magnificent boats recently, the reality is that many people (myself included) can't afford the hefty price tags that go with some of these state-of-the-art sportfishing rigs. The Renegade range of boats from Quintrex targets the more

budget-conscious angler by offering many great features at a more affordable price.

## LAYOUT

The Renegade 520 is a classical centre console configuration that is so popular with many fishermen and divers. The total length of the boat is 5.48 metres, with a hull length of 5.23 metres and a maximum beam of 2.21 metres. Both the bottom and sides of the boat are made



*The Renegade 520 is a terrific hull that can be customised to suit.*



*Step-up casting platform is a feature of the boat.*



*Plenty of deck space on the Renegade 520.*

from pressed 3mm aluminium plate, with the solidly built hull coming with a standard three-year factory warranty.

Unlike many other boats from the Quintrex stable, the Renegades don't have an outboard pod or 'maxi transom' set-up at the stern. Instead, the outboard is mounted directly onto the transom of the boat with a small conventional outboard well preventing waves and wash from entering the boat. The outboard well itself is small enough not to intrude on your deck space much at all, while beneath the well at the bottom of the hull sits the automatic bilge pump.

On each side of the well is a flat work area, which Paul explained to me can be converted into a live bait well and/or storage area as an optional extra. Centrally located at the front of the outboard well is a reinforced spigot that can be used to house either the optional bait board or ski pole depending on what you're doing. On the port side of

the transom is a small boarding platform and associated grab rail, while on the starboard side is an aluminium bracket for mounting your sounder's transducer.

The console itself is a sturdy, functional unit with handy grab rails on the side for passengers to hang on to. Unlike some consoles that are simply screwed into the deck, Quintrex makes sure everything is rock solid by attaching the console to the boat using an ali plate that's welded directly to the hull of the boat. There's plenty of room at the top of the console to mount your sounder and GPS, together with enough space for a few instruments and gauges as well. There's also a couple of spacious storage shelves in the console with large front rails to keep your gear safely out of the way. Above the console on the test boat was a large foldable Bimini cover that offered plenty of sun protection, but which may impede the fishing action somewhat during a hot bite.

## CLEAR THE DECKS

The Renegade 520 certainly has a large amount of usable deck space for a boat of this size. The deck itself is fully carpeted and features an elevated casting platform at the bow of the boat, perfect for throwing lures around into likely-looking reef washes and coral bommies.

Built into this raised deck area is a large storage area accessible via two hatches in the floor. With the addition of a couple of sealed plastic tubs, it would be the ideal spot to store your life jackets and other safety gear, as well as anything else you want to keep out of the elements. Beneath the main deck there's what Quintrex describes as 'basic' flotation, which Paul assured me was enough to keep your "head above water" should the unthinkable ever happen.

Immediately in front of the casting platform sits an anchor well and bow roller that would certainly be adequate for



*Transom configuration is simple but effective.*



*Anchoring/bow set-up of the Renegade works well.*

most people's needs. The 520 Renegade also features reasonably sized gunwales that each contain two built-in rod holders, and underneath the gunwales are larger-than-average side pockets that are so handy for storing gaffs, gloves, release weights and the like.

## PERFORMANCE

The test boat was powered with one of the relative newcomers in the Yamaha four-stroke stable, the 70hp model released only 18 months ago. Sitting in the middle of the 520's recommended horsepower range (60-90hp), the Yammie proved to be an ideal match for the hull, providing plenty of power, acceleration and economy. One of the remarkable things about this new Yamaha is that it's nearly 50 kilos lighter than the next model up, the 80hp, which is quite a significant weight saving on a boat this size.

As we moved out from Hall's Head into the bay, the 15-knot south-easterly provided ideal test conditions. Paul eased the throttle forward gently and the boat lifted easily onto the plane at 3500rpm at a speed of 12 knots. Cruising speed of 18 knots was obtained at 4200rpm and when we opened her right up top speed was a very respectable 26.5 knots at 6300 revs. Another feature I liked with the boat was the quick 'hole shot' we

achieved, which hasn't always been the case with other boats powered with four-strokes I've tested.

We didn't have the required equipment to get exact fuel consumption figures for the test boat, but Paul reckons a customer with a similar set-up uses around eight litres per hour at cruising speeds, giving you an incredible range from the standard 95-litre fuel tank.

Having fished out of and ridden in several Quintrex boats featuring their patented Millennium Hull design, I shouldn't have been surprised with how well the little Renegade centre console handled the choppy offshore conditions. The boat ran truly and safely heading both with and across the sea, giving me that comfortable feeling that I love when driving a responsive, seaworthy boat. When I turned the Renegade into the chop and put the hammer down, the ride was also exceptionally good as the unique hull design came into its own and cut through the waves with ease.

The ride was both very comfortable and surprisingly dry and we didn't get any spray thrown up at us at all even when Paul put the boat into a series of tight turns and figure eights. The response, handling and manoeuvrability were all extra good, obviously helped by the hydraulic steering fitted to the test boat.

## CONCLUSION

The Quintrex Renegade 520 is an affordable, easy-to-use boat that could easily be towed behind the average family sedan, especially as it sits on a lightweight, single-axle Quintrex I-Beam aluminium trailer. One person launching and retrieval wouldn't be a problem, or you could add a mid-range four-wheel-drive and it would be a very viable beach launching proposition at places like Port Gregory and Lancelin.

The Renegade certainly offers a great blank canvas that you could add to and modify into an excellent sportfishing rig. All the basics are there without breaking the bank, most importantly a proven hull from a reputable manufacturer with excellent sea-keeping qualities.

If it was me I'd opt for a smaller targa bar and Bimini set-up coming off the console itself, and maybe a Perspex windscreen and set of clears for added protection. Add a padded seat cum icebox behind the console and the optional bait board and you'd be ready to roll ... then again I wonder how she'd perform with a 90hp E-Tec on the back!



## FACTS AND FIGURES

**Length:** 5.48m  
**Hull length:** 5.23m  
**Beam:** 2.25m  
**Depth:** 1.05m  
**Length on trailer:** 6.85m  
**Hull material:** 3mm  
**HP range:** 60-90hp  
**Fuel capacity:** 95 litres  
**Dry hull weight:** 475kg  
**Max. load:** 570kg  
**Pricing:** \$33,556 as tested

### PROS

- Good value for money
- Excellent performing Millennium Hull
- Plenty of fishing room
- Can add optional extras
- Economical to run
- Easy to tow

### CONS

- Limited amount of protection
- Lack of rod storage
- A little tender at rest

*Review boat supplied by Estuary Marine; 12 Pantown Road, Mandurah; (08) 9581 8444; [www.estuarymarine.com.au](http://www.estuarymarine.com.au)*



*The shallow draft of the boat is suited to estuary and inshore work.*