



# Quintrex 480 Free







# dom Sport

*Rear lounge has folding seat for fishing. Note the thickly padded wrap-around backrest.*

*Bow cockpit is big enough for two adults, but really better suited to kids. It can be converted to a sun lounge, or casting deck.*

*Bow cockpit shows off the well-padded backrest and the easy to access anchor well.*

**Quintrex is celebrating its 60th Anniversary with a number of new boat models like this compact bowrider with a classy, sports-car style interior. Test report by James Hill.**

**Q**uintrex is not just a hugely successful boat brand, but also a great market leader in terms of driving new ideas that is improving the lot of boaties.

Case in point is the high quality injected plastic side pockets introduced to a number of its models this year. Along with level flotation it shows Quintrex's willingness to move ahead of the competition and try new ideas.

You only have to glance over the attractive interior of this compact bowrider to see why folks love this Queensland tinnie brand. It certainly has the finish to win over the ladies and keep the whole family comfortable all day.





Traditionally fibreglass might have had the edge in terms of slickness and style, but no longer. With its new Diamond Anniversary models Quintrex is really winning the market over to alloy boats in a big way.

Of course the practical features of these tinnies is a major drawcard, along with economical performance and ease of towing. This positive view is further reinforced by a brand that enjoys amazingly good resale value.

I'm not sure if all buyers are aware of the safety benefits of Quintrex, but it doesn't hurt that the 480 comes standard with level flotation. Basically that means it will float in a level fashion when swamped because buoyancy is distributed so evenly through the hull.

Not all Aussie boat brands have adopted the above new safety standard, but Quintrex gets top marks for setting the pace on this important safety issue.

Personally I'm not a great fan of bowriders, but if I had young kids it would be a brilliant boat to keep 'em happy and involved in boating. The spread of seating allows you to spread out, fish, sunbake and generally enjoy the craft to the maximum.

The 480 Freedom Sport is the right size for entry-level boaties, particularly if you're driving cars like a Camry, Magna and the like. With those cars you can hook up and go the same day of purchase.

There are quite a few brands copying the Quintrex concept, but frankly none get it right like this Quintrex because of the attention to detail.

**Design:** This is one of the bigger-sized hulls introduced by Quintrex to accommodate the extra buoyancy requirements. The hull measures just on 5.0m with the short bowsprit, however true hull length is 4.89m bow to transom. That's a lot of boat in the water, particularly when matched to a generous beam of 2.22m.

The hull features attractive clinker topsides, small deflection chines to reduce spray and fine bow entry for choppy water operation. However, the real key difference is the unique Millennium hull shape with hollows above and below the bow chines. This double-flare design is the reason why Quintrex boats ride so well in choppy water. It gives them a softer wave-cutting action, plus more level running angle.

Some of the other benefits of the Millennium design include quicker planing, less fuel usage and better for'ard vision for the driver. You also get a slightly softer, drier ride in choppy waters, though not necessarily better in swell conditions.

Structurally these are strongly made tinnies with 3mm bottoms and 2mm topsides. Backing this up is welded internal framing and a protective keel for beaching and trailing.

The Maxi 2 Transom is a clever full-depth pod that gives you rounded corners. The latter makes it easier to reverse the boat up while the pod forms a natural boarding platform. An optional swim ladder fits on the platform to make it easier to get aboard.

The trail weight of 980kg for the test was well within the 1200kg tow limit of a Toyota Camry, or 1350kg limit of a Holden Vectra sedan. It goes without saying the low-profile hull would be easy to tow and should be quite easy to garage once the bimini is folded.

**Performance:** Driving the new 480 Freedom Sport at speed up the quiet waters of Pittwater soon reveals these boats are anything but 'tinnie' sounding.

All that foam buoyancy makes these tinnies superbly quiet under way, so much so they are no different to a fibreglass boat. Even the anchor chain doesn't rattle thanks to Quintrex using a moulded plastic liner in the anchor well. Little details like is the reason this company still rates number one in tinnie sales!

I can't stress enough what a difference sound-insulation makes to the enjoyment of the boat ride. Adding the benefit of a four-stroke motor on the transom only enhances the pleasure of spending a whole day out on the water.

The boat is rated to seat five adults, but there's seating for up to six with the optional rear lounge fitted. Thickly padded backrests around the bow and rear lounges also mean your passengers really feel comfortable as you cruise the waterway.

Admittedly ride quality depends a lot on how well you use the trim button to match the chop, however properly applied trim really makes these Millennium hulls hum in typical estuary and bay waters.



Not that you couldn't use the Freedom Sport for the occasional run out to close coastal reefs, or headlands. However, the for'ard casting deck really suggests they're better suited to lure, or fly fishing on more sheltered waters.

And on that score at-rest stability is surprisingly good for a sub five-metre craft. You certainly can stand-up and cast in confidence knowing the boat is reasonably stable under foot.

The drive position is also very comfortable thanks to the curved windscreen, adjustable seat position and well-designed dash area. It's also good to see a windscreen grab rail being supplied as standard along with drink holders besides the front seats.

**Power:** Quintrex sets definite limits on the power and motor weight of all its boats. In this case they suggest a motor between 40hp – 80hp and a maximum motor weight of 120kg on the transom.

Fortunately our test Yamaha 60hp four-stroke fell within those limits and certainly matches the boat nicely, getting us out of the hole reasonably quickly and without fuss. Performance speeds weren't overly quick and you'd probably go for a two-stroke 60hp or 70hp if you wanted more top end speed.

GPS speeds were as follows:

3500 rpm	15 knots
4500 rpm	21 knots
5500 rpm	27 knots



Quintrex also offers a factory package version of the 480 that currently includes a Johnson 70hp four-stroke. That changes to a Mercury package later this year, but the concept is still the same – providing a ready-to-go package that reduces the overall cost and delivery times. Yet another incentive on the instant package is a fixed three-year warranty on the whole package.

I had no problems with the Yamaha 60hp four-stroke combo even though it wasn't particularly fast at top end speed. It is a very quiet performer and should stretch out the range of the in-floor 70-litre fuel tank.

My guess is the performance 'sweet spot' is about 3500-4000rpm where you're not over-loading the engine, but achieving a good all round speed.

**Interior:** The bow cockpit provides a wrap-around backrest, thick padded lounge and a carpeted floor area. From here it's very easy to handle the anchor, and set it via the bowrail and anchor roller.

A drop in floor panel enables you to turn this bow cockpit into a raised casting deck for serious fishing.

An opening windscreen panel provides easy access to the rear cockpit and you get a door as well to close off the front on cold days.

The dash area provides attractive moulded plastic consoles on both sides of the boat. The driver's one incorporates a raised instrument binnacle and a top-mounted Lowrance sounder plus GME stereo sound system. A compass, switch panel and smart sports steering wheel are also part of the package.

The passenger side of the console incorporates a large hinged glovebox plus side drink holder. However, there's extra stowage in the large floor locker and in under the forward bow seats. This helps to make up for the lack of stowage in the new side panels.

Moving further aft you find a comfortable lounge with side drink holders and wrap-around backrest. The backrest automatically becomes a very comfortable leaning post for fishing when the seat is folded.

The 480 also comes with short side rails, a pair of plastic rod holders and deck filler point for the in-floor 70-litre fuel tank. This gives you the ingredients of a practical

fishing rig. Other factory options like a slot-in live cutting board, fully plumbed live bait tank and berley bucket all contribute to a top fishing rig.

**Summary:** Quintrex has really set the pace in the aluminium bowrider market and there's no doubt it continues to do so with this latest Freedom Sport model. It's not just the smart colour schemes, or optional coloured topsides, but the really practical features like the level-flotation that makes these Quinnies so tasty for family boating.

It finishes up with the best of the tinnies and about the only blemish is the old-fashioned exposed weld

beads on the side decks. Quintrex is constantly improving its boats and what you get now is a pretty leading-edge product that has a top reputation and excellent resale value. No wonder Quintrex remains such a popular brand!

*Left: Stylish helm dash provides moulded console with stereo sound system and sounder.*

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## BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

### 480 Freedom Sport/Yamaha 60hp

Boat supplied with a Yamaha 60hp four-stroke, single-axle Dunbier trailer, tie-downs, mechanical steering, floor carpet, Deluxe rear lounge, navigation lights, bimini canopy, Lowrance sounder, GME stereo sound system, rear swim ladder, compass, inshore safety equipment pack, tonneau cover and under-floor stowage compartment. Price as tested \$27,315 from Enterprise Marine, Sydney NSW ph (02) 9913 7586. Further information from Quintrex Boats, Coomera Qld ph (07) 5585 9898.

#### SPECIFICATION CHART

Model	480 Freedom Sport	Bermuda SeaOdyssey	AllyCraft 475	Trailcraft475 CrossSport	Stacer480 EasyRider
Construction	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy
Configuration	bowrider	bowrider	bowrider	bowrider	bowrider
Length overall	4.8m	5.1m	4.85m	4.75m	4.8m
Max. beam	2.2m	2.2m	2.2m	2.2m	2.2m
Depth	114cm	122cm	123cm	n/a	115cm
Gauge-bottom	3mm	3mm	3mm	4mm	3mm
Gauge-sides	2mm	2mm	2mm	3mm	1.6mm
Rated max. power	80hp	90hp	75hp	80hp	80hp
Power as tested	Yamaha60	Mercury90	Yamaha60	Mercury75	Mariner90
Hull weight	468kg	375kg	406kg	545kg	430kg

#### STAR RATING

Finish	★★★★★	Helm Set-up	★★★★★
Fitout	★★★★★	Fishability	★★★★☆
Ride	★★★★☆	Safety Features	★★★★★
Dryness	★★★★★	Value for Money	★★★★☆
Handling	★★★★☆		

\*Data ESTIMATED by the TBF team when accurate information is unavailable. Maximum star rating 5 stars.