



Getting down to fishy business is what the new Quintrex 650 Trident does best. JAMES HILL puts this new offshore cuddy model through its paces on Gold Coast waters.

The Aussie tinnie boat has held up remarkably well considering the state of the national economy. The numbers of tinnies sold might be down from the glory days before the GFC, however, we still see tinnies sold in their thousands each year.

The giant Telwater Group, based on the Gold Coast, holds the lion's share of the tinnie market with its Quintrex, Stacer and Yellowfin brands. And without doubt Telwater's successful formula is concentrating on fishing-friendly boats, and constant research and development of new models.

Today's boat buyer is even less inclined to part with his/her money so Telwater last year went back to the drawing board to create a new range of high-value fishing boats. The result is the much acclaimed Renegade and Trident models. The Renegade concentrates on open/console boats for inshore work, while the Trident is a cuddy range aimed squarely at offshore fishing.

One of the most noticeable cost-cutting features of these new Quintrex models is the deletion of level flotation. The company tried to push this feature through the noughties but the problem was it not only pushed up price but also ate up too much cockpit space.

Having returned to the Basic flotation standard, Quintrex has been able to give bigger side pockets and more space for fishing. And that's what the vast majority of buyers want!



Quintrex 650



I recently had the pleasure of testing all three of the Trident series, but my pick is the middle size 650 Trident because it is nicely sized for offshore work, yet not too big to park at home. This alloy boat is geared for serious, hardcore fishing with roomy, self-draining cockpit, wide side decks and plenty of rod holders. It also sports a decent bait-preparation station and kill tank all standard!

At the same time the 650 Trident can also be a family-friendly cruiser if you add a few options like cabin cushions, cabin backrests, bimini/clears and rear folding lounge. With these additions the 650 Trident becomes a craft you can use for day picnic cruising and weekends away.

There's nothing super fancy about the 650 Trident, yet she is a well

TOW TORQUE

by James Hill

VOLVO XC60 D4



Volvo has made its XC60 soft-roader wagon more appealing than ever in 2013 with a diesel-powered, front-wheel drive version for \$58,490. That's pretty tasty for a prestige European vehicle and gets you just under the Australia's Luxury Car Tax (LCT) of \$59,133.

This is the second front-wheel drive version of XC60 as there's already the T5 with a 2.0 litre turbo-petrol engine under the bonnet. However, the beauty of the new D4 is the extra torque and great fuel economy of the turbo diesel. The D4 has a claimed 6.5-litres/100km, which should make it very thrifty over a year's driving.

Whilst front-wheel drive does have its limitations in some towing situations, this one should still work pretty well in most cases. However, if you are planning to tackle soft sand beaches and really tough ramps you had better opt for the more expensive all-wheel drive XC60.

Power in the D4 is Volvo's new five-cylinder 2.0 litre turbo diesel, delivering 120kW at 3500rpm and 400Nm of torque between 2500 and 4600rpm. It's mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission that's very smooth and a pleasure to use.

Also, for 2013 the whole XC60 range picks up a raft of new optional safety features like active high-beam, automatic headlights and road-sign information display. You also get a lit gearshift and updated camera as part of the collision warning system. Also the 'city safe' collision avoidance system now works at speeds up to 50km/h. It's a great safety option and if you tick this option it can get you a 20 per



cent reduction on your insurance through Insurance Australia Group companies.

New kit on the XC60 also now includes headlights that automatically light as you go through a dark tunnel, plus rain sensor windscreen wipers.

The XC60 is a great looking vehicle, with sophisticated European styling that compares very favourably with more expensive luxury vehicles. The quality of finish is pretty impressive across the vehicle and we like the luggage security options in the rear cargo bay. The XC60 also gives you leather upholstery as standard, multiple airbags plus a powered tailgate. Recommended maximum tow weight for the D4 is 1600kg, which sounds about right. If you want a bit more towing capacity you can go for the D5 model that has a 2000kg towing capacity and a more powerful 2.4-litre turbo diesel.

Further information from your nearest Volvo dealer.

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Trident

finished craft with clean, crisp design and quality paintwork.

With blue water fishing in mind, Trident also combines press and plate alloy construction. This is all based on a deeper, more Vee'd hull than previous Quintrex models. And whilst it's a sizeable beast, the 650 Trident is still within the dollar reach of many hard-working, self-employed tradesmen. Indeed, it's that kind of boat we might see down at the local boat ramps after 4pm on summer work days.

Interestingly, the Trident is strongly influenced by Telwater's Yellowfin range. It has the same tough, checkerplate floors, plate alloy sides and self-draining floor. However, the Trident retains a distinctly Quintrex look with her clinker pattern topsides and the full-pod transom.

This boat also features the unique Quintrex Millennium bow hollows, though in truth is a new design than what went before.

Testing this boat on Gold Coast offshore waters took me back many years to when I was the first to test Quintrex's Millennium concept on the same waters.

The Millennium was obviously a big step forward for Quintrex and enabled them to move into bigger, offshore boats. A good decade later, Quintrex is making an equally significant step with the Trident Offshore series.

The base price starts at around \$56,000. However, a better indication of price is the package currently offered by Hunts Marine in Sydney. It included a Lowrance colour sounder/GPS chartplotter, VHF radio, bimini/clears, rego and Evinrude 175hp E-TEC for \$62,810. If you are heading offshore you'll also need to add another thousand or more for safety gear like life jackets, flares, fire extinguisher, Vee sheet, fire extinguisher and EPIRB.

Design: The Trident is an all-new Quintrex series incorporating a modern, variable-Vee bottom that combines more deadrise depth and the longer, sleeker Blade bow.

This model measures 6.3m overall and has a beam of 2.4m so it falls comfortably within the highway trail limit for day, or night driving.

It's interesting to see how the transom deadrise has been increased

and the bottom now features 5mm gauge plating. Topsides are 3mm, so combined with internal framing and 'egg-crate' chassis, the 650 Trident is a pretty strong, sturdy craft.

On the trailer the Trident looks very impressive in standard white with additional vinyl wrap graphics in aqua blue. Solid topside colours are also available but if you're saving money the boat looks good enough in standard white without any extra graphics.

Looking closer you notice the sharper Blade bow and spray deflectors around the bow area plus a downturn in the chines aft for further spray deflection.

Access aboard is facilitated by a folding alloy transom ladder and rear landing platform. From here, it's an easy walk into the cockpit via a transom door into the cockpit.

The 650 Trident also features a full-depth pod so achieves maximum buoyancy to support big V6 motors and good stability for offshore fishing. Another benefit of the full pod is that the 650 Trident is quite quick to get on the plane.

Once aboard you find a roomy, self-draining cockpit with a checkerplate alloy floor and high freeboard to



keep you safely within the boat when fishing. Up front is a curved windscreen providing plenty of weather protection for skipper and crew.

The cuddy cabin area is surprisingly roomy and comes standard with carpeted topped berth/seats.

The boat weighs about 975kg ex-factory so trailing weight is about

1780kg loaded with fuel. With some extra personal gear aboard the tow weight is around 1800kg so she comes standard with a dual-axle, braked trailer. This package will suit the towing capacity of popular SUVs like the Kia Sorento (2500kg) Mazda CX-9 (2000kg) and Nissan Pathfinder (3000kg).

At home you'll need a clear 7.5m area to park the boat and about 2.7m trailer clearance, unless you fold the targa/rod rack down.

Overall build quality is impressive and the 650 Trident is covered by a limited, three-year warranty.

Performance: It was a delightful, quiet summer afternoon as we zoomed out of the Gold Coast Seaway to test the 650 Trident in open waters.

When the weather is good on the Gold Coast it's one of the best places to be in a boat. As long as the weather pattern is stable you enjoy relatively smooth waters offshore with just a lazy metre swell.

In these conditions we were able to trim up for maximum speed and the Trident skimmed along the iconic Gold Coast beach front with its palms and tall towers. With the temperature hovering around 27 degrees on a quiet, mid-week day this was a magic place to be driving a fast, comfortable trailer boat!

The new Blade hull rode nicely in these conditions and we took the opportunity to do a bit of wave-jumping close inshore on the surf back break. This is not something we recommend for readers, but our aerial lift-offs did confirm the Trident is a pretty taut ship!

Also, when putting the tinnie through a series of turns and different angle runs to the prevailing seaway, we came away pleased with the general handling.

I switched between all three Tridents, the smaller 610, 650 and big 690 and they all seemed to have almost identical handling qualities.

However, this particular boat is a very nice combination especially with the 175hp outboard.

While these were fairly mild conditions you could see the Trident handles well in open water. The bow shoulders are carried well forward so this should ensure she will run well in a following sea and be less inclined to broach.

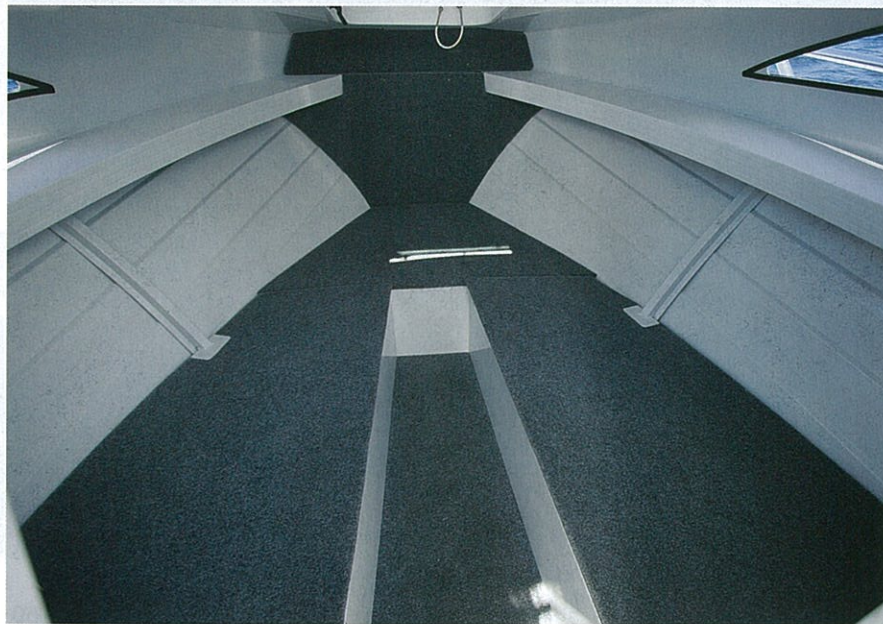
What about trim tabs? From what we saw, Trident didn't seem to need them. Perhaps there will be times when they're a help but my gut feeling is Trident has enough stability to get away without them.

Certainly, the Trident is a nice boat to drive. I love the helm/passenger pedestal seat. Both driver and



passenger seats are deeply padded and have comfortable arms rest. But the best feature is a flip-up seat cushion, which makes it really comfy to steer standing up.

The quality of the seat upholster is automotive class and lifts the Trident



well above the ordinary tinnie. You also get good gear like hydraulic steering, flush-mount throttle and curved Perspex windscreen without 'blind spots.' Our test boat didn't seem to have footrest fitted, but they are included in the specifications!

Other handsome features around the driving station include a very attractive three-spoke stainless steel steering wheel, drink holders for driver/passenger, white-fascia motor gauges and a waterproof switch panel.

At-rest stability was also impressive as we did some lure casting at the Sea Way, though without luck. However, this little fishing session gave me the chance to test the excellent toe-under recess you get around the sides and back of the cockpit.

Power: The Quintrex 650 Trident is rated for single outboards 150-200hp.

Our test was set up with a 175hp Evinrude E-TEC V6 that certainly got the boat up and moving fast.

The performance kicked in early as the Trident slipped on the plane by 3000rpm. She was doing an impressive 23 knots at just 3500rpm, which is also going to be a very economical level for running offshore.

I'd expect most buyers will go for the 175hp because it's such a nice match for this big boat. The 175hp certainly delivers that added grunt you need when you have to push back against wind and tide on a return trip offshore.

I wasn't able to get reliable speed figures across the board since we spend most time offshore. However, the top recorded speed for the Evinrude was about 37 knots, while the comfortable cruise speed was about 23-30 knots in these conditions.

The boat comes standard with a 160-litre under-floor fuel tank. The Trident also comes well-equipped for offshore work with twin batteries, master switch and a 12-volt power outlet at the helm for accessories. She also has an electric bilge pump as standard besides the self-draining floor.

Deck layout: Typical of Quintrex, the Trident is set up for coastal boating with an anchor bowsprit with roller. You also get a Tee bollard and a split bowrail that feeds the anchor line to the roller. Up front there's also a roto-moulded plastic liner inside the open-topped anchor well. And yes, it does stop the anchor gear from rattling!

Behind this is a long fore-hatch and centre windscreen panel so you can easily walk from the helm to the anchor point via the cabin. This is an excellent feature for any fishing boat and I'm glad to see it across the Trident range.



Conversely, the Trident's cabin sides go virtually out to the sides so crew are not encouraged to walk around the sides, but instead use the fore-hatch for anchor work.

This also makes the cabin quite roomy below and Trident has excellent headroom in the cabin and space to seat four adults comfortably.

The two Vee berth could be used for sleeping once you added the optional cushions and in-fill cushion/centre-piece.

At the helm you get a modern dash panel with enough room to fit a modern large-screen sounder/GPS chartplotter like the Lowrance on our test boat. Hereabouts are fold-out drink holders and a Perspex glovebox on the passenger side.

There's plenty of room on the top of the dash to mount extra electronics, or lay out paper charts. OK I know a lot of you don't bother with paper charts these days but I always like to carry them just in case of electronic failure!

Behind the helm is a roomy cockpit with raised side pockets with huge stowage capacity for fishing gear. Above is flat, wide decks with two stainless steel rod holders aside. The side decks make it easy to sit, or to mount extra rod holders. And back aft are side rails, which could be used to hold keeper nets.

Across the back of the cockpit is a raised battery/oil bottle stowage area with carpeted cover. It's a neat installation and still allows you to add an optional rear, folding passenger lounge at a later date.

In the photos you'll see the excellent alloy bait-preparation station with extra rod stowage. Off to the side is a 65-litre plumbed live bait tank and a Berley bucket on the stern deck.

With Tee bollards, transom door, outrigger plates and non-return cockpit drain scuppers this is a pretty decent offshore package.

Stowage is also excellent on the 650 Trident with roto-moulded stowage bins under the bunks, under-seat storage boxes and large side pockets in the cockpit. The pedestal seat boxes have separate recesses to take an EPIRB and a fire-extinguisher.

Verdict: Quintrex is out to capture a big slice of the coastal/offshore fishing market with this new Trident range. At first glance the 650 Trident might seem like any other nice-looking

tinnie, however, on closer inspection you realise the excellent value that's incorporated into the standard package. No one quite does this as well as Quintrex, and that's why they're still number one.

The 650 Trident is likely to win over a lot of buyers who might have otherwise gone for a much more expensive, custom plate boat. It's certainly more affordable and still able to deliver a good service life.

The 650 Trident also fits nicely between the needs of inshore bay fishing and offshore trips. And that's a good thing given the rather ordinary summer we just had, with little opportunity to get offshore between East Coast lows. At least with the 650 Trident you could still get good value fishing the estuaries and bays.

The cuddy configuration and optional clears/bimini would also make the 650 Trident a comfortable boat to be aboard on the not-so-nice days.

There's a lot to like with the Trident package. My only criticism is they didn't go for a glass windscreen, or a covered anchor hatch. However, it certainly delivers on fishing value and this is going to propel good sales for Quintrex dealers this coming summer.

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BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

Boat supplied with Evinrude V6 175hp ETEC outboard, stainless steel propeller, dual-axle braked alloy Quintrex trailer, bimini, 2-tone paint work, VHF radio, cabin cushions, Lowrance sounder/GPS chartplotter, raised cutting board, inshore safety pack, rego. Price \$62,810 from Hunts Marine NSW ph 02 9546 1324.

SPECIFICATION CHART

Brand	Quintrex	Stacer 645	Surtees	BarCrusher	Seatamer
Model	650 Trident	OceanRanger	6.7Sportfisher	620C	580Horizon
Material	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy
Style	cuddy	cuddy	hardtop	cuddy	centre cab
Length	6.4m	6.4m	6.7m	6.7m	6.5m
Beam	2.4m	2.4m	2.3m	2.3m	2.5m
Rated power	200hp	175hp	200hp	175hp	150hp
Power as tested	Evinrude175	150	Honda175	Evinrude150	Suzuki140
Hull weight	975kg	902kg	1000kg	1043kg	750kg
Fuel capacity	160L	160L	240L	200L	200L

STAR RATING

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

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