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QUINTREX RENEGADE 440 SC REVIEW



08 Mar 2013 | *Stripped to the essentials, Angelo San Giorgio reckons the Quintrex Renegade 440 SC proves beyond doubt that less is indeed more.*

We all love a bit of bling. Big boats crammed to the gunnels with all manner of fish-catching paraphernalia that will do everything but fillet your catch and give you a shiatsu massage as you're heading for the horizon. We love the hardtops, anchor winches, sumptuous upholstery and 274 rod holders to store and deploy your weapons at previously undiscovered angles. Then there's power; everyone knows too much horsepower is nowhere near enough. And don't get me started on colour or wraps...

Well, the Quintrex Renegade 440 SC — in standard guise, at least — won't have a bar of it. And it's all the better for it.

FAMILY TIES

One of a quartet of sportfishing rigs to swell the ranks of Quintrex's budget-busting Renegade range, the 440 SC (side console) joins the 420 TS (tiller steer), 460 SC and 490 Renegade CC (centre console, as reviewed in our December '12 issue #289), and the 520 CC, as the new recruits in the war on high-priced boating.

To its credit, Quintrex hasn't tried to reinvent the wheel with this lot. Instead, the approach is methodical and considered: give the punters what they expect and then chuck in a bit more for good measure. Configurations are interchangeable and prospective buyers can package up their perfect layout from a blank canvas.

The standard Renegade comes out of the delivery room as naked as the day it was born. Not a lick of paint, but still looking cute as a button in its shiny alloy birthday

suit. You could choose to cover it up in solid or two-tone paint, or wrap it up boutique style.

Frankly, I'd suggest leaving it in the buff and treating it to a trick sounder / GPS combo or a bow-mount electric instead. Sure, in time it might take on that slightly dull and weathered look that used aluminium does, but you wouldn't want anyone to think you're just a poser, would you?

EASY ON THE BACK

There is only so much you can expect of any compact aluminium tinnie, no matter who builds it. And since I'd just stepped out of Quintrex's big new 650 Trident (stay tuned for the review in an upcoming issue) I had prepared my long-suffering vertebrae for a pummelling. Given many have the shock-absorbing properties of pudding, small pressed-alloy hulls have a bit of a reputation for turning the human spine into a slinky.

Weighing in at a reasonable 370kg (dry) and sporting a 3mm hull and topsides, I am happy to report the 440 SC's ride was actually quite good.

While no rocketship, performance from the 50hp Evinrude E-TEC (maximum horsepower for this hull) was a pleasant surprise and perfectly suited to inshore venues such as the Broadwater region of Queensland, where we conducted our test. While not the quietest powerplant in the world, it was hardly obtrusive and did nothing to impact the experience. Once up and going, we travelled economically across wind-ruffled chop.

The 440 SC did everything expected of it and rode relatively flat, particularly after I relocated myself to the forward seating position. This kept the nose down and allowed my Quintrex chauffeur the opportunity to dial in more trim, eking out an extra 2kts while I took notes. Yep, that's me — human ballast.

Personally, I wouldn't bother with any less than the maximum horsepower because the hull benefits from a little urgency on the throttle to motivate it from standstill.

Handling in turns was predictable, with moderate hull lean, but we did tend to wash off a reasonable amount of speed during some high-speed figure-eights — though, to be fair, these are rarely called for in an actual fishing situation. Planing in 4.8 seconds, the E-TEC wound out to an ample 31.4kts (58.2kph) and never really threatened to cause us whiplash. Gratefully, I walked away from the experience with my vertebrae intact and wearing a bit of a grin.

INTERIOR DESIGN

Boasting 3mm slab sides, not strictly plate but a pleasant compromise, the Renegade 440 SC features Quintrex's trademark, the much-vaunted Millenium hull. But no flared bow on this puppy.

The trade-off actually results in increased internal storage in the bow area. Wide side-decks are populated by four plastic flush-mounted rod holders; perfectly acceptable on a craft of this nature, but it would worth upgrading to the optional stainless versions if trolling with anything heavier than light spin gear is on your agenda.

Now, it's around about this stage of proceedings that I usually drag out my soapbox and beat my chest about a lack of decent on-board rod storage. However, considering the value this rig represents and the other niceties on offer, such as the decks, storage and livewells, I won't trouble the soapbox this time around. I will rather suggest that any one of a number of vertical rod storage systems from companies such as Berkley or Rapala would do the job, fixed to either the console's leading edge or side pockets.

Quintrex's optional bow-mount thruster plates are as good as you'll find, and the inclusion of a roto-moulded anchor well will please the bait-bashing brigade.

A BIT ON THE SIDE

The side console is simple yet elegantly functional. Offering no more than a fisho needs, it considerably sports a compact glovebox with tinted Perspex lid, which is a nice touch. Speaking of nice touches, the standard cup holders within easy reach of the helmsman are a small but very welcome feature.

Open fronted and relatively shallow, the console top would be a good home for a decent head unit or two, and a marine radio can be bracket mounted below the

gauges. Tackle storage systems or a smaller cooler will reside under the arch created by the cut-away console face.

To cater for those who wish to indulge their fishing urges in more turbulent conditions, or who like to venture out a little wider, Quintrex actually provides an alternate transom design with an integrated engine well in lieu of the splash well. While ticking this box precludes owners of the option of having a rear casting deck, it illustrates Quintrex's commitment to its market and empathy for fishermen who demand versatility.

Vampires and others with an aversion to the sun might like to invest in the fold-down bimini, which can be deployed or stowed as required.

THE WRAP

Nowadays, when we've become accustomed to a certain level of convenience and instant gratification, the luxury of having all the dirty work done can be alluring. It's quite refreshing, then, to be shoehorned into a boat that proudly wears its simplicity as a badge of honour. While not quite the humble tinnie many of us grew up with, it's what most of us tried to turn them into — with varying degrees of success.

A simple console, forward steering, flat-carpeted floor, casting decks and abundant storage; it's an uncomplicated yet functional recipe that will keep sportfishers all over the country amused. Best of all, the really fiddly stuff has been done for you and you can just add extra gear as your significant other's credit card allows.

Just big enough to entertain the occasional offshore jaunt to nearby reefs but small enough to sneak into shallow creeks and lagoons, this rig is tailor made for the mobile angler. While the lack of war paint and bling might seem a tad severe to some, you're getting your money's worth in the Renegade 440 SC. Maybe even a bit more.

FISHERMAN'S FRIEND

Since this little beauty was born to fish, I was curious to see if it lived up to the promise. As stated earlier, the boat comes fitted with two standard livewells — an 80L competition-style job and a little one abutting the port transom wall, which is probably more suited to the tiddlers I normally drag across the gunnels.

With two on board, my Quintrex chaperone and I were free to cast like demons without getting in each other's way. While the hull was a bit more sensitive than the hefty 650 Trident I'd been on earlier, it was perfectly acceptable, even with both of us on the port side. A third angler could be accommodated, but I'd suggest everyone learn to duck.

I liked the open dance floor, particularly the forward casting deck, which was a good height without sacrificing internal freeboard. While I'm all for an elevated casting position, I'm a bit of a clutz and always fear falling off my perch while fishing in low light conditions. And even though the interior layout has been optimised for tossers of the lure variety, worm drowners and pilchard soakers could also make themselves at quite at home.

If baitfishing is your bag, go for the optional transom configuration because the wide decks surrounding the engine well will easily accommodate a baitboard and provide additional freeboard, since more weight will be biased towards the boat's rump.

An uncluttered interior ensures cleaning up at day's end can be tackled with minimal effort and the boat can be towed behind just about anything.

I reckon the Quintrex 440 SC will definitely hit the spot for many anglers this summer.

ON THE PLANE...

Fishing at its simple best

Could handle a small family

Great-value sportfisher

Easily towed behind a push bike (almost)

Interior customisable to suit angler's needs

DRAGGING THE CHAIN...

No winner in the 'sexiest boat' stakes

Needs the 50hp maximum to shine

Need to experiment with mass distribution at full running weight

Specifications: **Quintrex 440 SC**

HOW MUCH?

Price as tested: \$22, 437 (BMT)

Options fitted: Bow mount thruster plate

Priced from: \$22,235 (BMT) with 50hp Evinrude E-TEC engine and Quintrex trailer, safety, reg and on water costs

GENERAL

Type: Side-console fishing boat

Material: Aluminium, 3mm hull and topsides

Length: 4.60m

Beam: 2.10m

Weight: 370kg (boat only)

CAPACITIES

People: 4

Max. HP: 50hp

Min. HP: 40hp

Fuel: 50L

ENGINE

Make/model: Evinrude 50 E-TEC

Type: 50HP, direct-injection, two-stroke in-line twin-cylinder

Weight: 109kg

Displacement: 864cc

Gear ratio: 2.67:1

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