

# The Premier Boat Test



## The White Pointer 8m Hardtop Custom

*The name white pointer has been synonymous with top-quality custom alloy boats for 25 years. There have been more than 400 of them launched across that time...*

**I** doesn't matter which brand of NZ boat is chosen, drive around the country and I guarantee you will find pockets where one brand seems to own the place. Turn up at Waihou Bay during the game season, for example, and I know we will find an over-abundance of White Pointers. Some of them will be owned by friends of mine or writers from this magazine. There probably wouldn't be a serious marlin tournament in the country where White Pointer wasn't the prominent custom alloy boat on view. That's a very high recommendation.

Our boat test was a little bit special this time. I was joined by Warren Willmot, our motoring connection in the magazine and we drove down to Wellington for a serious boat test that was to include some even more serious fishing. There was a further motoring connection because the boat we were to test is owned by Daniel Cook, Head of Sales and Marketing Strategy for Mitsubishi Motors in NZ. There was some tow testing and photography for us to do for Willmot's 'Cargo Magazine' as well.

Cook is a young man clearly of immense ability and absolute clarity. I met him the day before the test in his corporate environment and we planned a day of testing and proper slaying.

#### PRELIMINARY

The forecast was a shocker although there was a window of hope. The evening was a good reminder of the sort of conditions those at the bottom of the island treat as normal. The afternoon was calm and even warm for late winter. Just before dark I left the apartment to walk downtown. As fast as a snap of the fingers the weather turned; it blew, it rained and then for twenty minutes we hid from a hail storm under an annex at Parliament. I remember making a run for it to the 'Backbenchers' bar; we looked like we were covered in snow when we entered the door...

With such weather and the South Coast out plus other places looking unlikely, the pin was pulled on the test. So it was a surprise when the call came the next morning - get to Mana, there's a gap, it's all back on...

In the rush to get there and reorganise gear I hadn't even had time to turn the radio on or listen to the news. It was a shock on arrival to be told that the Big One had hit Christchurch...

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

With the furthest to travel I was last to get to Mana Marina and the boat was already launched when I arrived. I was very pleased to see that we were to be joined for the day by Chris Wong, owner of BCS, the distributors of Gamkatsu and Zest, amongst many other great products, as well as being one of the nicest guys in the tackle trade.

'Cookie' is a fine-looking craft, traditional in aspect but with good lines and proportions that please. There is no doubt that 300 Bombardier horses hanging off the back makes an impression. Not that the 300hp Evinrude is unbalanced or overpowering, rather it just makes a statement. Considering we are used to a diet of inboard or four-stroke options on boats of this size and style it was nice to see the injected E-Tec being used on such a vessel.

Incredibly, considering the weather just hours before, the conditions were perfect, no wind and a clear, sun-filled sky. While we set up for an initial photo shoot I had a chance to spot the key external features of the boat. Even from the outside it's hard to miss, the huge cockpit volume. There are big advantages in fitting new technology outboards instead of the traditional sterndrive to boats of this style and it calculates out into more fishing room. The Raymarine digital radar dome dominated the cabin roof while the wide sidedecks are conspicuous and well prepared for safe movement around the



**BOTH PAGES:** The White Pointer is a fine-looking craft and was easily towed by the Mltsi.

foredeck. Just to starboard of the bow a boarding ladder is mounted to the rail.

The other obvious element was the rake of the bow. The boat looks the business. Cook had the craft built to run regular passages to the Sounds, something it has already proved well capable of in less than conducive conditions.

#### THE RIG

White Pointer prides themselves on their construction and lack of warranty claims from customers. To produce that outcome means a thorough understanding of alloy boatbuilding principals and a commitment to backing that with quality procedures and manufacturing techniques. At its most basic that starts with quality welding. A look at the finish and arguably more importantly, the welding away from the visible areas, shows why the craft are so widely regarded.

The hull runs an eighteen degree deadrise at the stern through to that beautiful rake at the bow. The hull is 8m long plus a little more for the appendages. The beam is 2.5m. Hull construction is 6mm as is the transom, while the topsides are from 4mm and the cabin 3mm. There is plenty of alloy under the floor with two full-length girders, the keel bar and stringers locked together by cross members at centres of 750mm.

At the stern the chines are wide and well turned down. They continue to the stem. The hull sides have a good return to assist further with keeping the water clear of the topsides.

The Evinrude E-Tec 300 is a beautiful motor that is compact and quiet. At around 240kg it has a big weight advantage over four-strokes of equivalent horsepower. It displaces around 3.4 litres and has plenty of alternator output to run the electrical and electronic systems.

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I was particularly impressed with the White Pointer alloy trailer. It's a beast, made better by the extra heavy-duty axles and tyres Cook organised to be fitted (we would hope he knows his stuff being in the motoring business!) The trailer uses pads instead of rollers and proved to be very easy in use. Cook reports that it tows superbly too.

## THE CABIN AREA

This is a vessel with a couple of mission statements; one is regular trips across Cook Strait to the Sounds, staying away for several days with up to four aboard. The second is some serious gamefishing – expect to see this White Pointer at Waihou Bay as well.

With the former in mind the forward cabin has been created for comfortable sleeping. There's plenty of headroom and the electric head is well covered and not in the way. Storage is well catered for, and I must point out again the quality of the welding in places mostly out of sight.

The big point of difference in this cabin is the installation of a pull-out hammock bed. It is great and according to Warren, very comfortable. Personally, stuck in a cabin of that size with two other snorers isn't my idea of fun, but it's a great set up for a short boys trip away or neat accommodation for the family. I can see the kids debating who gets the hammock!

The main cabin is a beauty. The table and seating dominates the area. The table also drops down and forms another berth, with a fold out extension from the seat to accommodate the tall Daniel Cook. This is a very comfortable place to sit while both travelling and entertaining. The huge drop down window through to the cockpit makes the space open, airy and very pleasant in use. There are a couple of draws below the stern seat that Cook has used for tackle storage as they are accessible from the cockpit without putting wet feet in the cabin.

To starboard is the galley unit containing a two-burner cooker with a glass cover. The sink is in the cockpit. Underneath the cooker are four drawers. Generally this is an area with lots more development left in it, particularly above the cooker. Elsewhere there are narrow pockets for gear storage.

Below the carpet there is a huge, cavernous storage compartment. You won't struggle to find places to put gear in this boat. The cabin door is a folding unit that opens into the middle of the rear bulkhead so that visibility isn't restricted too badly from the helm.

## THE DASH

This is an area that has been only lightly developed on this boat. First, it's nicely finished with a stitched leather covering. Fitted is a Raymarine C120 to port while a couple of the Evinrude I-Command gauges are to starboard. Below the gauges are switches for the capstan and also the Minn Kota trimtabs, a brand I haven't seen in regular use in the NZ market. They are of composite construction and have electric actuators. To the left of the wheel are two switch panels. The layout of the whole area is practical if not exciting.

The driving position is set uniquely for the owner. A beautifully finished leather seat, complete with boat name, and sitting on an Easyrider pedestal, dominates the area. It's designed for a seated driving position. Not my cup of tea, I want to stand in difficult conditions or when light is low, but exactly what the owner asked for. That's why people buy a custom boat. There is no problem driving while seated and the footrest is fine, however it was very much Daniel's position. The throttle was mounted outside the side pocket and fell into place well.

Overhead there was a box for the radios and two well-placed full-

**LEFT FROM TOP:** Warren tests out the hammock! The shower and sink are to starboard beside the cabin door. The boarding ladder is mounted unobtrusively against the rail. Good handholds and seating make the cockpit work.



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**ABOVE FROM LEFT:** Yes we did catch fish! The two-burner cooker has a glass cover. There are drawers below. Owner Daniel Cook preparing the lunch. A simple dash layout with room for further development.

length handrails along the ceiling. Wipers aren't fitted to the boat; instead the screen has been treated with Rain-X.

Behind the dash, an access panel but, like so many, it has been fixed with screws.

## THE COCKPIT

We would expect such a boat to be well thought out in the cockpit given both its pedigree, the space available and the owner's end uses and we were not disappointed. It's a simple layout that works. Rather than seating to port behind the cabin bulkhead there is a chillybin with an upholstered top. On the other side of the door is the sink module. It has an upholstered top as well. There is a shower unit and mixer beside it and the gas califont is installed below.

There is another big cavern in the cockpit floor that will hold a lot of fish, dive equipment or fenders. The usual side pockets are fitted. Below are gaff racks. One photo here shows the attention to detail evident in this boat; there is a tube welded in the pocket for the washdown hose gun to be located in. Simple and effective. Check the welding in that same photo.

The standard baitboard/rod holder unit is fitted to the back coaming. Below that the batteries and switches are well protected behind hatches. The wiring was tidy with the major fuses and breakers all cable tied to the front near the switches where they are easily accessed in a hurry. There is a livebait tank set in the now traditional position in the walk-through step. Beyond this is a single pole dive-style ladder. Back to port, through the coaming is a pair of tuna tubes. These are beautifully done, recessed with drains and with a lid over the top that hides them completely.

The cleats have been welded on top of the coamings in the corners. For any serious game boat these should be recessed. Worse is the remote oil filler. It sits proud of the deck and will be a nuisance. It would have been simple to have it flush mounted. Still, those are the only faults in the area.

Over the back is one of, if not the, best finished transoms I've seen. There is a cupboard fitted for the gas bottle. Yes, it's subject to saltwater



contact but to be fair it's an alloy bottle, a replacement regulator is cheap as chips and I'd rather have gas going over the sides than filling the cabin... All the cables run into a welded cover made for the job giving a very tidy finish. There is a very neat arrangement using a duckbill for the self draining floor too which is accessible from the duckboard, an important convenience and safety point. Below the duckboard the bilge pumps used to run the tubes and bait tank are beautifully fitted and protected by alloy covers. Welded alloy tubes pass through the hull for their outlets.

## PERFORMANCE

With the initial photos complete I had a dilemma; Warren had an early evening plane to catch and we weren't sure the length of the weather window. I elected to forgo the speed photos and instead get on the water so we could get the testing proper underway. Sorry for the lack of photos underway.

Daniel manoeuvred his boat away from the ramp and we headed in search of groper. Clear of the protection of the headland we were greeted by a surprisingly benign sea; after all it had been blowing in excess of 40 knots just hours earlier. There was some slop but it was a very comfortable ride offshore. We didn't wear one bash or crash all the way out. Surprisingly there was only one splash of water on the screen for the whole journey.

I had the chance to quiz the owner on his reasons for specifically choosing White Pointer. Previously he'd owned a pontoon hull but his view was that a hull of 8m shouldn't need help with stability and

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he wanted the maximum volume in the boat. He was impressed by the service from White Pointer's sales manager, Tony Bourke, and the finished product was everything he's asked for.

We spent the morning drifting a patch of bottom where it was expected the groper would be visiting. If I had any doubts (not that I did) they were negated when I recognised one of the boats working in the area, our writer and charter operator Neil Palfreyman from Westcoast Charters. Five of us fished in the cockpit comfortably and without any problem. Actually it was mostly four fishing as Daniel kindly cooked us a great feed. Stability from the hull was good, without being exceptional, the trade off with the lighter outboard on the back as opposed to the heavier sterndrive down low. The boat holds 350l of fuel and around 80l of water. With the three sub-floor holds filled with gear for a trip away things would undoubtedly firm

up even more. Clearly additional weight is not a problem for this hull.

After a couple of false starts and near misses we finally nailed a groper which took the pressure off. Between times we were treated to a demonstration of metal jigging from NZ's foremost practitioner, Chris Wong. The fish weren't biting but that didn't matter; we all got a valuable lesson.

We drifted the rest of the morning and following our big feed, started to fish our way inshore, looking for tarakihi and other things. It didn't really happen, perhaps not surprising considering the strong winds and the earthquake. With time short and Warren's flight time approaching, it was time for my drive.

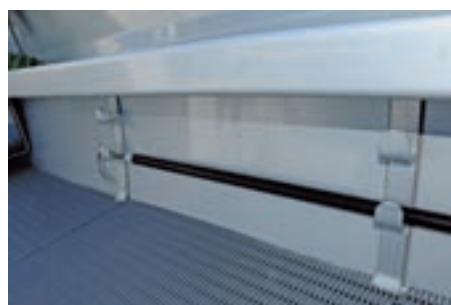
There were no surprises. The hull was responsive and the kick from the Evinrude got things planning and running very quickly.

There is no question that an injected two-stroke can boogie from the start. That said, it is a big boat and running through 'Michael's simulated bar crossing test' where I accelerate and then change direction quickly, showed that. It's going to take a second or three to get something of this size moving but it's very nimble in doing so.

A quick check of the gauge, which was set in kilometres, (that's what you'd expect from someone working for Mitsubishi...), showed a flow of 16 litres an hour at lure trolling speed. Top speed on the day was almost 70 kph which is around 35 knots. We showed a return of 0.9km per litre. At a cruising speed closer to 20 knots and at just under 3700rpm we showed the same return per litre. Time ran out before I had a chance to prove if that was correct and experiment further.

The final run in gave me a chance to use the remaining small roll to try to push the boat off line or find vices. It didn't show either. I did get to drive hard off one wave and into another (sorry guys, I should have told you what I was up to first) and while that rearranged the crew, the boat leaned into the wave but didn't vary its line.

**ABOVE:** The gas bottle is on the duckboard with a door covering it. The under floor holds are expansive. The livebait tank is in the traditional place at the step-thru. **BELOW:** Clockwise from left - The bait pump is very well protected. Gaff racks are mounted each side. Arguably the best tuna tube set up I've seen. The oil filler is in the way... Another huge hold under the floor. LED lights are standard and there's a spot mounted under the arch.



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Back in the marina the boat was beautifully manoeuvrable, the Seastar helm did its job well and I put the boat back on the dock without damage or needing a second attempt.

## SUMMARY

I've fished aboard smaller White Pointers in the past but this is the first of the bigger hulls I've driven. In real terms it was faultless. In practical terms it benefits from plenty of weight aboard and the more of it placed low in the hull the better I feel it will go. There are three big wells that can be filled up! Owner Daniel Cook has already run 'Cookie' across the Strait in less than perfect conditions and reported that the performance was superb.

I liked the practicality of the cabins for Daniels use and wouldn't change anything there if it was mine. The driving position didn't suit me but the point was the owner got just what he requested. Everywhere I looked the attention to detail was exemplary. The cockpit is an example of things well done, oil filler excluded, and again there would be very little I would change for my own use. The welding was as good as I've seen.

The Evinrude matched the hull well and anyone thinking that a four-stroke is the only game in town would do well to experience one of these motors in action. (The new ICON electronic controls now available also add to the experience and simplify multiple stations making it easy to put a second set of controls in the cockpit).

There was little to criticise and much to applaud on this boat. Rex Briant and his team should rightly be proud of the product they are producing which is right there amongst the leading elite group of alloy boatbuilders in the country.

Daniel Cook has a boat he too can be proud of and that will serve him for the next couple of decades.



## IF IT WAS MINE...

### I'D CHANGE –

- Obstructions on the rear deck, no filler or cleats
- The driving position – too inflexible
- Access to the dash. A hinged panel would be better.

### I'D ADD –

- A glass front to the bait tank
- Wipers. No such thing as a dry alloy boat. Rain-X is good to a point but wipers are essential when it turns to custard
- More rod holders in the side decks specifically for gamefishing
- More fuel capacity – the boat will appreciate the weight and it's nice to be able to gamefish for several days without refuelling

### I WOULDN'T TOUCH –

- The great cabin layout
- The tuna tube set up – the best I've seen
- The arrangements at the stern particularly for the cable and water entries.

## SUPERIOR SHAPE FOR SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE



**\$104800-00** Inc Gst  
Boat Motor And Trailer

### 7.30M SPORTS HARD TOP

- 7.40m LOA
- 6.9m Hull length
- 2.45m Beam
- 750mm Deck to Gunwale
- 900mm Free Board
- Custom alloy trailer
- 6mm Hull Plate {minimum}
- 4mm Sides
- 3 mm Superstructure
- Marine Grade Plate
- 200 Hp Yamaha 4 stroke out board



**\$129260-00** Inc Gst  
Boat Motor And Trailer

### 8.0M SPORTS HARD TOP

- 8.20m LOA
- 7.6m Hull length
- 2.50m Beam
- 750mm Deck to Gunwale
- 900mm Free Board
- Custom alloy trailer
- 6mm Hull Plate {minimum}
- 4mm Sides
- 3 mm Superstructure
- Marine Grade Plate
- 250 Hp Yamaha 4 stroke out board



**WHITE POINTER  
BOATS**

Unbeatable Value  
Unbeatable Reputation  
Unbeatable Performance

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