

## Aqualine 595 HT

**Barry Thompson checks out the very latest from Aqualine, while being a clone of the long established Kiwi-Kraft, it's a brand that has plenty of its own unique features to be an established name in its own right.**

I have not been to the Kapiti Coast, Wellington for some time and boating there can be very different to what I am used to on the Hauraki Gulf. On a clear day, you can look across 20nm of some of the most torturous waters in the world to the snow capped peaks on the northernmost tip of the South Island's Southern Alps. When you consider that this is regarded as a day trip for some locals, you get the feeling that the boys in this part of the world take their boating seriously.

Paraparaumu based Boat City have been servicing the wants and needs of local fishermen and boaties for ??? years and the boats they sell reflects the diverse boating needs of the area. Big alloy hardtops for those trips across Cook Strait or small, lightweight cuddies for beach launching off the sandy beaches.

To help cater for the local market, Boat City have taken Kiwi-Kraft's export-orientated Aqualine brand, and transformed it into something better suited for the kiwi market.

Aqualine is a brand that while not regarded as a mainstream name in New Zealand, has its roots with the well-established and popular Kiwi-Kraft marque. When Rodney Harris, the owner of Kiwi Engineering & Marine the builders of Kiwi-Kraft boats decided to get serious about exporting to Australia, he knew that having a boat branded with the Kiwi name would not go down well with the Aussies. The Kiwi-Kraft model range was also given a few tweaks so that the 'new' Aqualine brand would be more accepted in the very competitive Australian market.



Aqualine boats are more than just a name change from Kiwi-Kraft, with significant differences that set them apart. Most noticeable is the higher coaming and transom heights, something that first attracted the principles of BoatCity to the brand.

"We had sold a lot of Kiwi-Kraft over the years but were finding that customers were looking for higher sides and transoms in their pontoon boats. The Aqualine boats offered the solution and demand have been very good since we took on the sole North Island dealership in early 2011", says Ian Couatts, sales manager.

Boat City have also provided their input to the factory, to give the boats better 'fishability' and they are now quite different to the original models. The dashes and walk through screens in some models have been altered and changes to the anchor lockers were made so they could better accommodate free fall drum winches. Aqualine boats are wider than their Kiwi-Kraft counterparts, (up to 100mm internally in the larger models) have the transoms further aft, which along with the extra width offers more internal cockpit space and more freeboard due to the higher coamings.

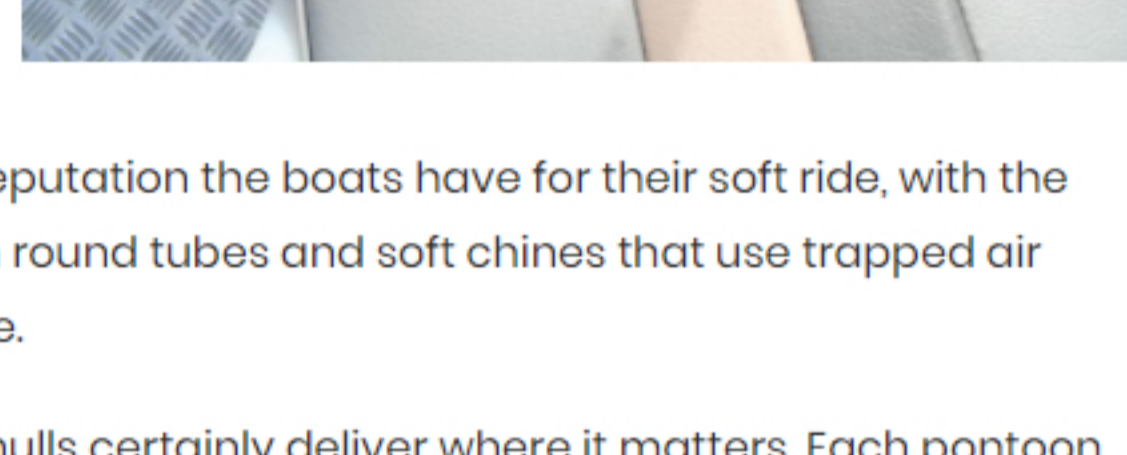
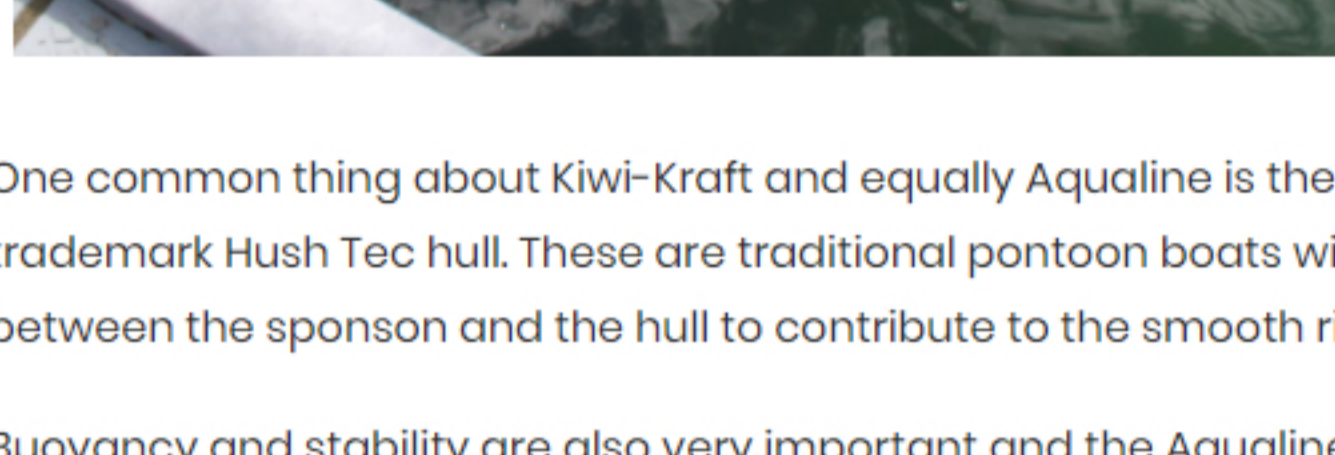
The range is also increased with seven standard models, from 4.35m to 7.05m, in a variety of open, cuddy and hardtop models. Above that there is a range of fully customised boats from 7.5m through to over 10m.



One common thing about Kiwi-Kraft and equally Aqualine is the reputation the boats have for their soft ride, with the trademark Hush Tec hull. These are traditional pontoon boats with round tubes and soft chines that use trapped air between the sponson and the hull to contribute to the smooth ride.

Buoyancy and stability are also very important and the Aqualine hulls certainly deliver where it matters. Each pontoon section is sealed providing massive buoyancy and in effect makes the boats virtually unsinkable. In the Aqualine 595 HT Sports, for example, there are over 20 individual sealed buoyancy chambers throughout the pontoons and under the sole. This is something that is not offered as a standard feature by all pontoon manufacturers.

The boats are also built to an extremely high standard and in some areas probably over-built, but that's something the factory will not compromise on. They have that solid, sturdy feel about them and there's no rattling or shimmering when underway.



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The designer and builder of the Kiwi-Kraft and Aqualine ranges, Rodney Harris, has the reputation of being something of a perfectionist and that is certainly very evident in the boats he produces.



### HEAVY DUTY HARDTOP

My day on the water around Mana Island gave me the opportunity to review not one, but three Aqualine models, the 595 Sport HT Sports, 545 Sports and the 495 Fisherman. While we will be featuring the entire trio in the next issue of Alloy Boat (Feb 2015 release date), it's the 595 HT Sports that we feature in this issue of PPB.

The 595 HT Sports is one of the smallest hardtop models in the Aqualine range (only preceded by the 565 HT Sports) and is packed full of features that are unashamedly pitched towards the fishing boat market.

With this in mind the boat comes standard with a large fillet board, four-rod holders cheque-plate cockpit sole (tube matt option) and underfloor storage/kill tank. This can also be fully plumbed, or you have the option of a separate plumbed live bait tank in the transom. When you have the family aboard, you can drop in a ski pole to tow the water toys.

An open port side walkthrough has a drop in splashboard and provides ease of access to the twin boarding platforms. The transom styling is quite different from Kiwi-Kraft and takes advantage of the full length of the boat with the Portofino style transom removed. Divers will love the big raised boarding rail that makes getting back aboard so easy and the size of the platforms to sit on before they jump in.

Wide side trays that run uninterrupted the full length of the cockpit provide a place for even the longest boat rods, or you could go for a rocket launcher option. As a fisherman, I appreciated the open, uncluttered space available and the high coamings. Stability at rest is exceptionally good, so no problem when you have to get alongside your mate with the net out to help with a larger than normal fish. Twin lockers give access to the batteries, wash down pump and extra dry storage.

### HEIGHT ADVANTAGE

It's often difficult to make a hardtop on a boat this size look attractive and in keeping with the flow of the design, but in the case of the 595HT Sports, it's not too bad. There is 2m headroom under the alloy hardtop, which extends just far enough into the cockpit as to not interfere with your fishing. Standard features include sliding side windows, a driver's side windscreen wiper, overhead grab rails, LED lighting and full fabric lining.

Standard seating is a Softrider pedestal on the driver's side and a fixed pedestal opposite with bucket seats from Hi Tech Plastics. Our boat had the upgraded seat package with the port side king/queen option with an extra storage bin beneath. As the seat simply clips into place, it can be lifted off and stowed back into the original seat base out of the way. There was also an extra single seat on the back of the helm, which can be swung in-between the two front seats to form a three seat option. Very neat and very clever.

While the split-level dash offers plenty of real estate for 12"-14" MFD screens, in our case we had a smaller Garmin 750, with twin Smartcraft engine management gauges above. The Sav winch control and GME VHF are conveniently positioned alongside the helm.

The fully lined cabin in the 595 HT Sports is a great area to stow gear, and the berths are certainly long enough to use for overnighting. Three adults can sit in here quite comfortably and with the lack of a full bulkhead there's a natural flow from the cabin right through to the rear of the cockpit. There is storage under the squabs as well as in narrow side trays and a dry storage locker in either pontoon.

### HIDDEN ANCHORING

Our 595 HT Sports came with the optional free-fall Sav drum winch that has been very neatly hidden from view in the open anchor locker. The aesthetics of the bow are not disturbed if you install the big drum and anchor tackle on deck.

"We have had a lot of issues, especially in smaller alloy boats with the lack of fall for conventional free-fall windlasses and the drum winch we find sorts out all the problems and at a comparable cost", says Ian.

He adds that especially in the boating areas around Wellington, you need 120-140m of anchor tackle and with a windlass, the most the anchor locker would take is around 60-70m before it 'bunches-up'. Certainly not a problem of the winch but more the design of the anchor locker. With the drum winch, you also can use a much small diameter warp so you can get a lot more on. While modifications had to be made to the standard open locker both for visual and installation reasons, the result is outstanding, with a system that works well.

"In our 595 HT Sports we can get 120m of warp and 20m of chain and the 545 Sport 110m of warp and 12m of chain, which is a lot more than if it was in an open locker", says Ian.

### POWER PLUS

Power options for the 595 HT Sports are outboard only, 115hp to 150hp and all fed from a generous size 205 litre underfloor fuel tank. Our test boat was set up with a Mercury 150 4-S, with a 17" Vengeance three-blade stainless prop. Top speed is 40 knots @ 5800 rpm, with a fuel consumption of 53 lph. The sweet spot is around 4500 rpm @ 30.5 knots, with a fuel consumption of 36 lph and a range of over 150nm. That's a few trips across Cook Strait!

While I didn't have the time to cruise across the Strait to The Brothers for a quick fish for Blue Cod, I did get the opportunity to try the boat in a variety of water around Mana Island. First thing I really liked was the driving position, with great visibility all round, with a very comfortable driving position when seated and plenty of space between the helm and the seat base when standing.

With the Mercury 150, the boat was very quick to plane and reach top speed. In the short choppy and wind-swept seas, the 595 HT Sports accounted for itself extremely well. There is a certain stiffness about the boat and the ride reflects that. Knowing just how mean the sea can get off the Kapiti Coast, it's a boat that is well suited for the adverse conditions boaties around these shores encounter.

So would I take it across Cook Strait? Maybe, but you have to remember it's still only 6m long, although it's a boat that for its size punches well above its weight!

### SPECIFICATIONS

- **Make & Model:** Aqualine 595 HT Sports
- **Manufacturer:** Kiwi Kraft
- **Price from:** SNZ68995
- **Price as tested:** SNZ85500
- **Type:** Hardtop
- **Construction:** 4mm/3mm
- **LOA:** 5.90m
- **Beam:** 2.40m
- **Deadrise:** 20 deg
- **Trailerable Wgt:** 1350kgs
- **Test Power:** Mercury 150 4S
- **Propeller:** Vengeance 19"
- **Maximum RPM:** 5800
- **Top Speed:** 40.0 Knots
- **Power Options:** Outboard
- **HP Range:** 115-150hp
- **Fuel Capacity:** 205 litres
- **Trailer:** Mudgway

FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA				
AQUALINE 595 HT SPORTS / MERCURY 150 4S				
Fuel capacity:		205	litres	
RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range (NM)
1000	0.7	3.6	5.2	35
1500	2.0	5.6	2.8	65
2000	4.5	8.4	1.9	97
2500	8.0	10.3	1.3	140
3000	18.5	14.1	0.8	230
3500	22.5	18.9	0.8	210
4000	27.0	28.5	1.1	160
4500	30.5	36.3	1.2	150
5000	33.5	42.5	1.3	140
5500	36.0	52.5	1.5	120
5800	40.0	53.2	1.4	130

### NOTABLE STANDARD ITEMS ON TEST BOAT

Washdown pump, Roca windscreen wiper, painted sides, LED lighting.

### NOTABLE OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Garmin 750, Sav winch, GME VHF, Seat upgrade, hydraulic steering.