

BULLET-PROOF COASTAL RANGER

This tough custom-built plate-alloy adventurer has been made to survive the remote regions of northern Australia, where its owner will live aboard and chase everything from coastal sailfish and baby black marlin to mackerel and barramundi. Our tester didn't want to hand it back!



It's not very often that I'm so blown away by a new craft that I don't want to give it back, but that's exactly how I felt after driving the new Ozsea 710 custom plate-aluminium centre-console. Perfect as a coastal sportfisher and explorer, this is a rapid, armour-clad package.

The boys at Ozsea aren't new to building tough custom boats. Their extensive boatbuilding experience includes construction of commercial and charter vessels for the former Melbourne-based Pro Marine, where they worked with respected marine architect Denis Pratt. Although Pro Marine and Denis are now retired, Ozsea still use Denis's hull designs and drawing services.

Along with a proven hull design and modern sportfishing technology, the 710 also boasts plenty of grunt thanks to the magnificent 300hp Yamaha powerplant. It's no wonder this weapon from heaven is capable of reaching a top-end speed of over 80km/h!

This particular 710 is destined for long-range exploration in the north of Western Australia. The lucky owner is a miner and keen angler who came to Ozsea with a clear picture of his dream boat in mind. To ensure he got the proportions right, he laid out the internal dimensions on his living room floor, using pots, pans, vegemite jars and jam bottles – along with a few stubbies to make sure he got it right! The resulting measurements were then laid up in precise engineering specification on the CAD machine before work got underway.

SAILFISH AND ADVENTURE

This Ozsea 710 is destined to chase billfish and many toothy pelagics along our rugged north-west coast. It will often be beach launched in less than ideal conditions, with the added challenge of the region's huge tidal range. The owner also plans to take it

into remote rivers and estuaries chasing barra and other inshore sportfish during his extended safaris into the wild.

Obviously a hardy hull with high sides was required, not only for the security of good freeboard when steep chop makes it sloppy, but also to keep the crocs, pigs, sharks, snakes and other pesky critters at bay when camping out in an aluminium armoured shell.

While launching the big 710 into the drink, many onlookers stopped to admire its raw, rugged beauty. The impressive layout, design and extensive X-Dek anti-slip closed cell deck tread beckons you to jump in and enjoy the ride.

While the X-Dek is a sensible option in all climates, this is particularly the case when heading north, where hot alloy floors not only burn the skin clean off the extremities, but the resulting glare and reflection bakes you in the process. The X-Dek is also helpful in reducing slippage on wet and bloody decks.



AUTHOR: JOHN WILLIS PHOTOGRAPHY: ALISON KUITER



Above: The bow deck is ideal for casting in calm conditions, and the central pedestal can be fitted with either another seat or a boomerang-shaped leaning post, which would be helpful when fighting fish in sloppy conditions.

Above right: The Ozsea 710 provides plenty of room for a group of anglers to fight multiple fish at once – and easily follow them all around the boat.



The Savage Pro Series dual-axle aluminium bunk trailer features galvanised rocker springs and stainless-steel callipers, bolted construction to reduce fatigue, and 'I-beam' rails that minimize the corrosion normally associated with water ingress into a hollow frame.

> SPEC CHECK



OZSEA 710CC

PERFORMANCE		
RPM	FUEL	SPEED
1000	4.6L/h	9.1km/h
1500	6.9L/h	10.9km/h
2000	10.4L/h	12.6km/h
2500	18.3L/h	16km/h
3200	23.1L/h	39.9km/h
3400	24.3L/h	41.6km/h
3800	31.1L/h	48km/h
4500	45L/h	59km/h
5000	55L/h	67km/h
5600	67L/h	75km/h
6000	92L/h	83km/h
6100	95L/h	83km/h

PRICED FROM
\$84,500
All boats are custom built to order. A bare-bones hull and trailer is also available.

OPTIONS FITTED
Fully customised construction

PRICE AS TESTED
\$110,000

GENERAL
Material: Marine-grade alloy, 5mm bottom
Type: Survey-standard self-draining mono hull
Length: 7.10 metres
Beam: 248cm
Weight: 945kg (dry hull)

CAPACITIES
People: 7
Fuel: 500L
Water: 90L

ENGINE
Make/Model: Yamaha F300
Type: 4.2 litre V6 4-stroke
Rated HP: 300
Displacement: 4.2 litres
Weight: 260kg
Gear Ratio: 1.75:1
Propeller: stainless Reliance SDS 36 x 43cm

MANUFACTURED BY
Ozsea Boats
Factory 4, 3-4 Patrick Court, Seaford, VIC 3198
Phone: (03) 9785 3989 / 0408 862 684 / 0417 327 581
Web: www.ozseaplateboats.com.au
Email: sales@ozseaplateboats.com.au

TESTED IN THE RAW

The test boat was still in its very basic form as it had yet to be fitted with its fishing accessories, electronics and bimini canopies.

However, during our test I was immersed in an inexplicable feeling that this boat just felt right in every way. This comfort was based on trust and confidence, as well as an ergonomically friendly layout. While this is not a boat for those seeking extensive creature comforts, it does have removable upholstered pedestal seats and an easy living layout for those long sojourns.

The minimal centre-console did the trick with a good helm position, protected instrument enclosure, storage and a rimmed tray on top for keeping important implements like pliers close at hand. There's a tonne of useable deck room, enhanced by the massive 1.8m casting platform at the bow, complete with its own pedestal seat mount and cavernous storage beneath.

GREAT STORAGE THROUGHOUT

On our run, the Ozsea did feel quite light in the nose, but that was to be expected as the large storage cavity will be heavily loaded with a swag, food and

clothing containers, fridge and electric motor batteries for its long-range adventures.

Up on the pointy end is a good bowsprit and deep anchor locker where you could easily fit an electric anchor winch. In addition, there's an electric motor mount ahead of the wide side decks. The gunnel is suitably scattered with rod, refreshment and sinker holders, and the gunnel width also extends the seating capabilities.

The Ozsea provides full-length side pocket storage along both sides, perfect for housing gaffs and all those other items you need within arm's reach when fishing. They lead all the way to a very workable transom, complete with raised battery trays, a centrally mounted 60-litre plumbed livebait tank, saltwater deck wash and a solid cutting board with four rodholders. The decks feature short side rails along almost the entire length of the boat, without being obtrusive to those casting saltwater fly.

Out back on the transom platforms we found a folding ladder and step, as well as a very smart set of height-adjustable legs that keep the boat in a comfy horizontal position when sleeping out the low tide on a remote sand quay.

THRILLING PERFORMANCE

Due to my long experience with Yamaha outboards, I feel total confidence with their ability and the choice of a premium 300hp 4.2-litre V6 4-stroke in this case was simply enthralling! When I planted the throttle she jumped through the expected bow rise due to the light load with just two on board, using little fuel. However, the boat soon evened out to a swift, choppy-water travelling speed of 41.6km/h (22.5 knots). At 3400rpm, we were consuming a low 24.3L/h, giving the huge range of 770km with 10% reserve from the 500-litre underfloor tank. Incidentally, the Ozsea is built to survey standards, including a cofferdam encasing the fuel tank for maximum safety.

The 710 easily ripped through the rev range, returning some very impressive figures. This includes a sweet spot at 59km/h (31.85 knots) at 4500rpm, using only 45L/h, which allows a long 590km range. However, the real punch came as I unleashed the beast to wide-open throttle, with the test boat peaking at a thrilling 83km/h (44.8 knots) at 6000rpm. At that speed you don't want to think about the fuel use, so instead we just enjoyed having our sunglasses firmly imprinted into our eye sockets as we skated along with the wind in our hair and huge smiles on our faces.

If speed is your thing and you only run day trips, you may want to consider stepping up to a 48cm prop, which will help achieve greater top-end speed with light loads. However, Ozsea wisely selected the Reliance SDS 36cm x 43cm prop for carrying the expected heavy loads.

SOFT, DRY, TOUGH & UNSINKABLE

The Ozsea 710CC surprised me with its soft, quiet ride even at high speeds over small chop. It throws minimal spray due to the strakes that also assist tracking and reduce side shift. The hull also features a full-length keel channel for hard grounding and protection against the inevitable impacts with the bottom in the wild environment that this boat will call home.

The 5mm plate alloy hull is filled with survey-approved foam flotation, rendering it unsinkable. Safety is further maximised with survey-standard scuppers for the self-draining deck, with the floor height seemingly having little effect on the excellent stability. The ride is also excellent and will only improve once you fill the 90-litre underfloor freshwater tank, along with the fuel and perhaps even the livebait tank.

To complete this exceptional coastal package, Ozsea chose the Savage Pro Series dual-axle aluminium bunk trailer with galvanised rocker springs and stainless-steel callipers, bolted construction to reduce fatigue, alloy wheels, LED lights and 'I-beam' rails – which minimize corrosion by eliminating the usual water ingress into a hollow frame.

I was seriously disappointed when I had to hand the boat back after enjoying this iron-clad offshore warrior. I can only imagine the thrills this boat is destined for in its new home in the north-western frontier.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tough rig ideally suited to remote adventures.
- General layout and practicality.
- Huge storage and capacities.
- Survey-standard construction.

