

Stessl Edge Tracker 435

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Manufacturer: [Stessl](#)



If the Modern Boating team wasn't overly impressed with the latest generation of Stessl Edge Tracker hulls before this test, we certainly were after it was finished. And here's why. During the return run to the Runaway Bay Marina, following the photo shoot of the Edge Tracker 435, we hit a gusty northeasterly wind and a messy 1m chop that came at us from an awkward angle off the bow quarter.

This particular section of the Gold Coast Broadwater is well known for its habit of getting rough when certain conditions prevail. And a 20-knot plus wind pushing against the outgoing tidal flow produced the perfect conditions. It wasn't the best place to be in any boat, but in an average (note that I said average) 4.3m tinnie it was a real recipe for a thumping. But not so in the 435 Edge Tracker, it handled the chop like it wasn't there. Amazing the Modern Boating team to a point that we nearly forgot to slow when the big wake of a passing Riv came powering at us. Yes, we had to slow down for it, but as soon as it rolled through it was back to planing speeds for the rest of the trip home.

As demonstrations go, this one was an eye opener. So much so that when Stessl's livewire marketing man, started talking about how the latest generation Edge Trackers compare to fibreglass hulls, we were forced to comment that we would not have liked to make that run in any 4.3m fibreglass hull we've tested thank you very much. In terms of ride, and we're talking strictly enclosed water boats like the Stessl Edge Tracker here, the perennial "fiberglass vs tinnie" argument is history. At least three tinnies we could name are already on an equal footing with 'glass boats, including the Edge Trackers.

Sure, fibreglass hulls are quieter over the water and from some builders anyway are perhaps better finished. But this comment must be qualified by the fact that there are few quality 4.3m fibreglass boats around. However, what isn't available in fibreglass boats is fishing layouts as effective as the Edge Trackers.

As top fishing boats, tinnies win hands down. And with a layout like the 435 Edge Tracker and a ride like the 435 Edge Tracker, enclosed water fishing has never had it so good. From barra fishing in the north, to bass and the current mania for bream in the south, on estuaries, lakes and dams, our ride up the Broadwater was in conditions that were bad enough to stop any sane person from even considering going fishing. That the 435 Edge Tracker literally made light work of the conditions was quite remarkable.

On casual inspection, there are few dramatic differences between the latest Edge Tracker design and its predecessors. The most noticeable one being a new curved chine line at the bow. However, subtle changes in shape, particularly to the distinctive semi-sponson forming the chines down towards the transom and the new bow shape, have changed its handling and ride characteristics profoundly.

Up front, the new bow means a steeper deadrise and finer entry, which are great reducers of

the bumping and banging we have come to expect from a tinnie. Aft, the new chines give more lift to the transom getting the hull up and running quicker, requiring less power and returning better fuel consumption. There was obviously plenty of aerated water passing through inside the chines, because the Edge Tracker hull broke the water's surface tension easily and slid along effortlessly, again aiding fuel consumption. So, now I am sure readers will be as equally impressed with the Edge Trackers performance as we were.

A Honda 50 outboard powered the test boat. This motor is known in equal parts for its sweetness on one hand, while being a little down on "grunt" compared with later generation motors featuring larger capacities and electronic fuel injection. However, in this application, even at 10hp below the hull's rated maximum of 60hp, the Honda performed well and kept the hull scooting along.

There was some bow lift under acceleration at sub-planing speeds, which a more powerful motor would have "climbed over" a bit quicker. But the top speed of 29.2 knots we recorded is ample for fishing and the general smoothness of the Honda right across the rev range made it an excellent choice of a great fishing motor for a great fishing boat.

Of course, the hull and motor are important parts of any boat, but when it come to fishing, the interior is equally as important. Today's sophisticated fishing style demand fishing friendly interiors and here the 435 Edge Tracker also delivers. The concept of high fore and aft casting decks with a lower central "passenger", or "travelling" area, is well established. As is a side console balanced by a passenger seat on the opposite side; however, few boats execute the fine detail as well as this one.

Stessl now run their own family bass tournament circuit around the impoundments in south eastern Queensland and their involvement, plus their interaction with "top gun" tournament fishers, has lead to the ever-evolving development of this excellent fishing platform. The test boat was optioned with a full tournament live well beneath the aft end of the bow casting deck. This holds 100lt of water and was well set-up with a baffle and reticulation to keep fish healthy for live "weigh-in" tournament fishing.

Forward of this is a pair of hatches that access an enormous under deck storage area. It's so spacious we were able to stow a folded pedestal seat in it and there was still plenty of room. Moving further forward is the anchor well where we found yet another manifestation of Stessl's exceptionally fishing friendly design. The anchor hatch has a slot at the bow to allow the rope to exit, because the mooring bollard - a necessary evil of safe boating is the curse of all fly fisher when it snatches errant fly line - is mounted inside the well where it can't do any harm.

There's a pedestal seat mounting in the bow casting deck and two more on the portside of the passenger area - one forward for trolling and another aft for travelling. Naturally, there's another at the helm behind the side console.

Now we come to the only negative observations we found on this boat. We thought the steering wheel was positioned too low for comfort during long runs. This, plus a console that otherwise looked good with its aerodynamic windscreen and moulded dash, was spoilt by a glaringly obvious weld around the top of the metal part of the console.

Then, when we loaded a couple of rods onboard, strictly as props of course, it posed the

question where do the rods go? Thankfully, a rod locker along the portside is an option. Aft of the lower passenger/travelling area, the aft casting deck is of a good sized and set a little lower than the bow one. We found the fuel tank and the battery stowed under here. Other options available for the 435 Edge Tracker include the already mentioned rod locker, a live bait tank beneath the aft casting deck and a 60lt underfloor fuel tank.

We liked the Edge Tracker 435 tested very much, but we wondered whether we'd run with the side console seen in the test boat. The positive steering from a tiller-steer outboard is a definite asset in many fishing situations and it would leave even more room inside a boat that left us itching to do just that, fish that is!

So, how much will it cost to park a Stessl 435 Edge Tracker in your driveway?
For further information telephone Stessl Boats on (07) 5598 4737 or visit their website at <http://www.stessl.com.au/>.

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