



Boat Test – Propeller Magazine – October/November 2007

Rapid Growth

The Marco 760 Sou'Wester is the company's biggest model and was released at the 2004 New Zealand Boat Show. Freddy Foote went to Whangarei and tested out one of the latest boats to hit the water; this particular model fairly well equipped with a whole range of extra features.

It was only but a few years ago that the Marco Boats was only a small production builder in the small Waikato town of Morrinsville. The company was then run by Graeme and Marilyn Ranson and had three staff producing 30-35 boats a year, most of which were sold direct from the factory. Graeme was one of the original owners of Fyran Boats with Trevor Fyfe – the joining of their surnames creating the name of the company. In later years he was also involved with Ramco. Nearly five years ago Graeme and Marilyn sold the company and now with new ownership Marco Boats has a healthy dealer network of around 10 dealers and a fulltime production staff of 20, producing about 150 boats a year.

In more recent times Bob Jarvie and Dayne Horne, the two blokes at the forefront of Marco Boats, have slowly developed and broadened the Marco range and brought the brand to the forefront of aluminium boat production in New Zealand.

The concept for the 760 came from their wanting to offer a boat over 7m, as their current model range topped out below that. A 7m model followed soon after, sharing many of the features of the 760.

“The 760 is just starting to become a popular model for us; this is the fifth one we have built and we have another four currently on order, and we’ve also found the 7m model to be quite popular as well” says Dayne Horne.

Production Design

The 760 is largely a production boat with the boat itself being computer cut and folded; however, the finish and level of appointment of the interior can be customised.

“We basically say to customers, this is where all the bulkheads and dashes go, but anything inside that is customisable. So you can add the nicer finishing touches; like teak etc to build the boat to your liking,” said Dayne.

“We had this boat on display at the New Zealand Boat Show; just to be able to show customers what you can do.”

Like the majority of aluminium hardtops; fishing is the primary focus in the boat's design, this is plain to see in the sizeable cockpit which the 760 boasts.

Large, deep side pockets run the full length of the cockpit and the coamings are large.

A walkthrough is located in the aft port corner, that also incorporates vertical access to the large live bait tank built in underneath.

One of the most noticeable features of the 760 is the rounded transom section; clearly a lot of work has gone into it; and the large boarding platforms on either side of the outboard are a great feature. Three rod holders are built into the top of the coamings on each side; these are complemented with a further six rod holders built into the rocket launcher located above.

One really neat feature and a little pet project of Dayne's is the bait board. As well as a place to rig your lines and baits, it also has built-in measuring slots for scallops, paua and crayfish, as well as a measurement length for measuring the various fish species.

Large removable bin seats are positioned in the forward corners of the cockpit, immediately behind

the cabin area. The one on the port side houses the gas bottle for the cooker and also has a tackle box built into the side; the starboard side seat is utilised as a storage bin for miscellaneous items. Light into the cabin is via the large forward deck hatch; which also provides ample room to access the Quick anchor winch fitted to the foredeck if required.

In the cabin and helm area; this particular boat has been given a high level of interior finish and detailing. Teak trim is most noticeable around the ceiling and also the cabinetry located to port. The ceiling has also been lined with a leather looking vinyl in an effort to warm the helm area. The floor and sides are all fully carpeted as is the large forward dash area that if desired, can have large electronics displays mounted on brackets instead of mounting directly into the dash.

The forward cabin has two infills that convert the V-berth into a large double. There are large side shelves along each side of the cabin that are also nicely trimmed with teak. An electric flush toilet is fitted under the forward squab and additional storage areas are under the sides of the berth.

Handrails are fitted to the roof for passenger security, and a grab rail also runs along the entire edge of the cabin entrance and wraps around both sides of the helm area, so both passenger and skipper have something extra to hold onto. Sliding windows also provide a little extra cabin ventilation when needed.

Seating around the helm area is made up of a single pedestal seat with lift-up bolster for the skipper. This seat is located on a slider so you can adjust to suit. Below the seat, a fairly decent sized fridge is housed in the seat base.

Opposite is a cupboard and drawer unit that accommodates a sink and three-burner stove above. When not in use, a seating squab can be positioned over the top to provide extra passenger seating. If this layout isn't to your liking, you can opt for twin pedestals or whatever would suit your particular needs.

The cabin and helm area is sealed off by the sliding door which comes standard on the 760. It is easily shut or kept open and locked into place; when we were out on the water we kept it open, then closed it for the return journey home; and on both occasions we were able to converse quite adequately; with the engine noise being quite minimal while underway.

Northland Bound

Our test boat came courtesy of Whangarei Marco dealer Anchorage Marine Team and was powered by a Mercury OptiMax 225hp outboard.

We tested the 760 on a very calm day on Whangarei Harbour, also venturing out of the harbour and up the coast towards Ocean Beach. Test day conditions were brilliant for boating with a very light breeze and the swell almost nil.

To test the boat's rough water capabilities was virtually impossible, other than riding the boat over our camera boat's wake (Marco 700).

The new Mercury OptiMax 225hp pushed the Marco 760 along to just over 42mph. Given that the engine was operating in 'safe mode' during its break-in period, I would expect to see that top speed creep up after a few hours' running.

The 225hp is the minimum recommended engine rating for the 760, which I think is the perfect option, but the boat would easily handle a larger capacity engine, right up to a 350hp.

The full bow sections of the 760 would give it quite a predictable and forgiving ride, and it should run well in a following sea.

On our test day in and around Whangarei Harbour, we saw it as a good opportunity to try and gather a few scallops, as the season had only just opened a matter of days before we hit the water. With all the best intentions of getting our limit; as John of Anchorage Marine reckoned the spot could produce good numbers as he had much success last year; two runs with the dredge turned up mostly empty shells and a grand total of three keepers! Then to put the final nail in the coffin, the dredge broke!

Luck wasn't on our side. Fortunately, the dredge on our camera boat was still working, and the boys managed to get around thirty, so here's hoping the season improves!

Having seen Marco boats at numerous boat shows over the last few years I was well impressed with the 760. The overall finish and attention to detail was superb; and it's plain to see that the design and innovation in layout and features has been well thought out.

The enclosed cabin area, large forward berth and galley amenities make it an ideal overnighter if that's your aim; or it can quite simply be a well appointed day boat to fish and journey comfortably. As I mentioned earlier; Marco Boats has come a very long way in quite a short time; a builder that has quietly developed its model range and raised its profile on the local market, creating a brand that is certainly being noticed. If you're in the market for a 7.5m-8.0m alloy hardtop, then the Marco 760 should definitely be on your list.

Specifications

Model: Marco 760
Price as Tested: \$147,900
Designer: Marco Boats
Material: Aluminium
Type: Hardtop
LOA: 8.3m
Beam: 2.49m
Deadrise: 17°
Hull Configuration: Medium V
Trailerable Weight: 2460kg
Height on Trailer: 3.0m
Engine Capacity: 225-300hp
Power Options: Outboard/Stern drive
Fuel Capacity: 250L

Performance

580 rpm 2.5 mph
1000 rpm 5.2 mph
1500 rpm 6.5 mph
2000 rpm 8.2 mph
2500 rpm 11.0 mph
3000 rpm 18.0 mph
3500 rpm 26.0 mph
4000 rpm 30.0 mph
4500 rpm 33.5 mph
5000 rpm 38.0 mph
5500 rpm 42.5 mph

Speeds recorded on a Lowrance GPS
and rounded off to the nearest 1/2 mph.

Notable Standard Equipment

Swivel pedestal seat, curved windscreen, 2x sealed buoyancy chambers, 6 rod holders,

Notable Options on Test Boat

Electric toilet, wash down, stereo, Quick freefall windlass, back drop cover, fridge, storage bins in cockpit, VHF, floor matting, Furuno 10.4" Navnet, trim tabs, live bait tank, fish bins, bow cover, 50L freshwater tank, tandem braked Voyager trailer.

Engine

Make: Mercury
Model: OptiMax
Horsepower: 225
Cyl config.: 60° V6
Max rpm: 5500
Propeller: Revolution 17" pitch 4-blade.
Retail Price: \$30,184

Trailer

Make: Voyager
Model: Tandem Axle
Braked: Yes
Rollers: Multi

Manufacturer

Marco Boats

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