

Rog's NEW PEACH



WORDS and IMAGES
by The Captain



BUT IS SHE RIPE FOR THE PICKING?

Aussie custom builders can go two ways. The easy way is to flop a well-credentialed American or classic Aussie shape, build a new top deck, lay a fresh one, bolt on some motors and start taking orders. Easy money.

Roger Veitch prefers the hard way — developing his own shapes and refining them for Australian conditions. As he's discovered, it's not easy developing a new model cherry ripe for production. Telling it like it is, Rog shares the highs and lows of developing the much-anticipated Veitch 23 console model.



“The 23 shares the same lay-up as the 27, with a resin-infused vinyl ester hull and stringers, and a complex hand-laid framing system throughout.”

The new 23 console served several masters. “It’s the test bed for the 23 hardtop,” Rog explains. “Everyone wants the hardtop. Once I built it, I knew I’d never get the chance to build a console, and I’ve always wanted to build a console. They’re a heap of fun, wind in your hair and great fun to fish out of. I also wanted a better-priced boat than the 27, one that came in under 3.5 tonne.”

He concedes there’s a lot of pressure to nail the 23 hardtop, as demand will be sky-high. Getting the 23 console right is a key milestone in that process.

CREATING THE 23 SHAPE

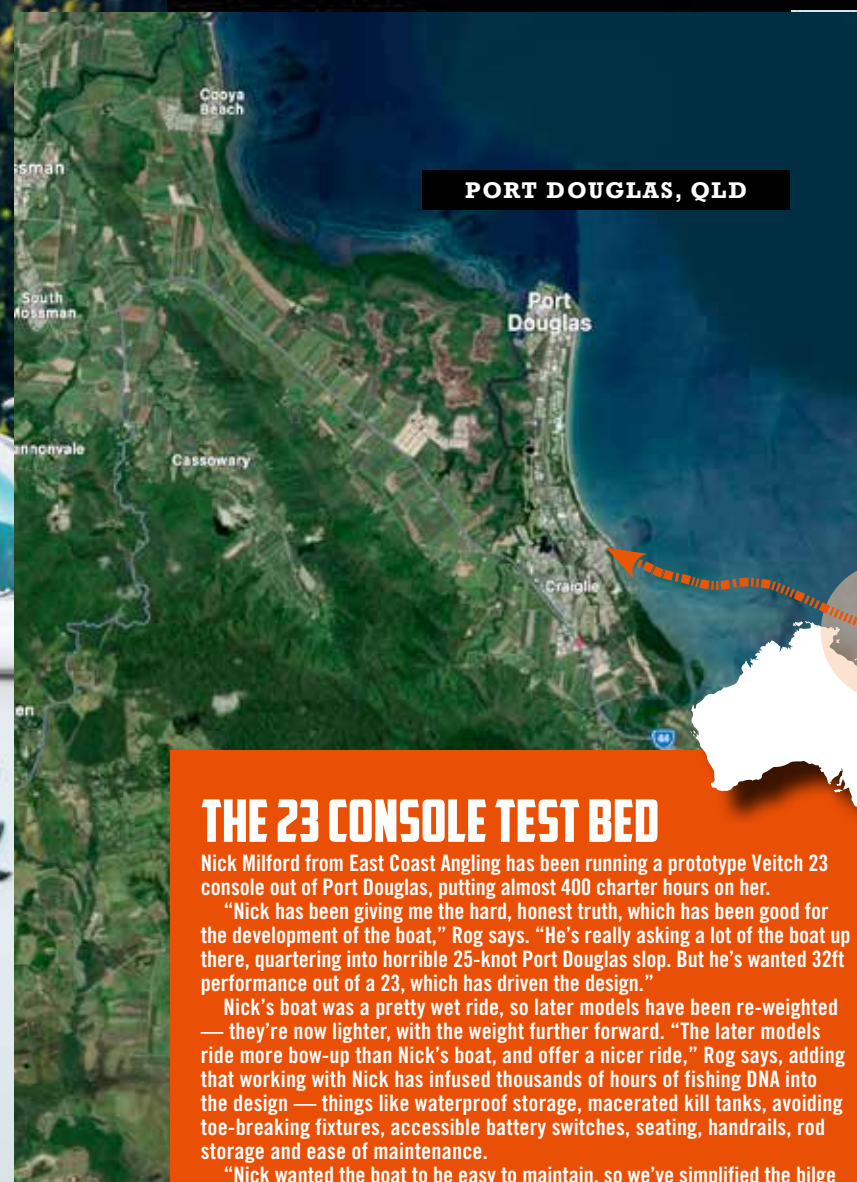
Rog and his team spent two years developing the boat, which involved a lot of moulding and fairing. “We took a 27 hull and cut 1300mm off the back of it,” he says. “Then we rolled it over and bonded a heap of foam to the bottom of the hull to build the back out straight again, as it was just a bow. Effectively, we needed to bring the bottom of the boat back. Then we put a straight keel and a straight running section on it.”

He reckons it’s actually straighter on the bottom than the 27. “It makes the boat run a little harder and faster in the flat. It’s never going to run as well as the 27 in really bad seas, but in the stuff we go out in, it’s perfect.”

The 23 shares the same lay-up as the 27, with a resin-infused vinyl ester hull and stringers, and a complex hand-laid framing system throughout. Rog says many moulds were built to create the components, including the hull, top deck, stringers and fully moulded floor. He’s particularly pleased with the T-top.

“There’s some really high-tech moulding going on in the T-top. We vacuum-bonded two bits together to create a really strong, yet complex part that allows us to put the wiring ducts through, but gives us strength where we need it for the top station/second helm. You need to get the ergonomics right.”

The Captain’s right on board with that, Rog. You can’t be too comfortable.



THE 23 CONSOLE TEST BED

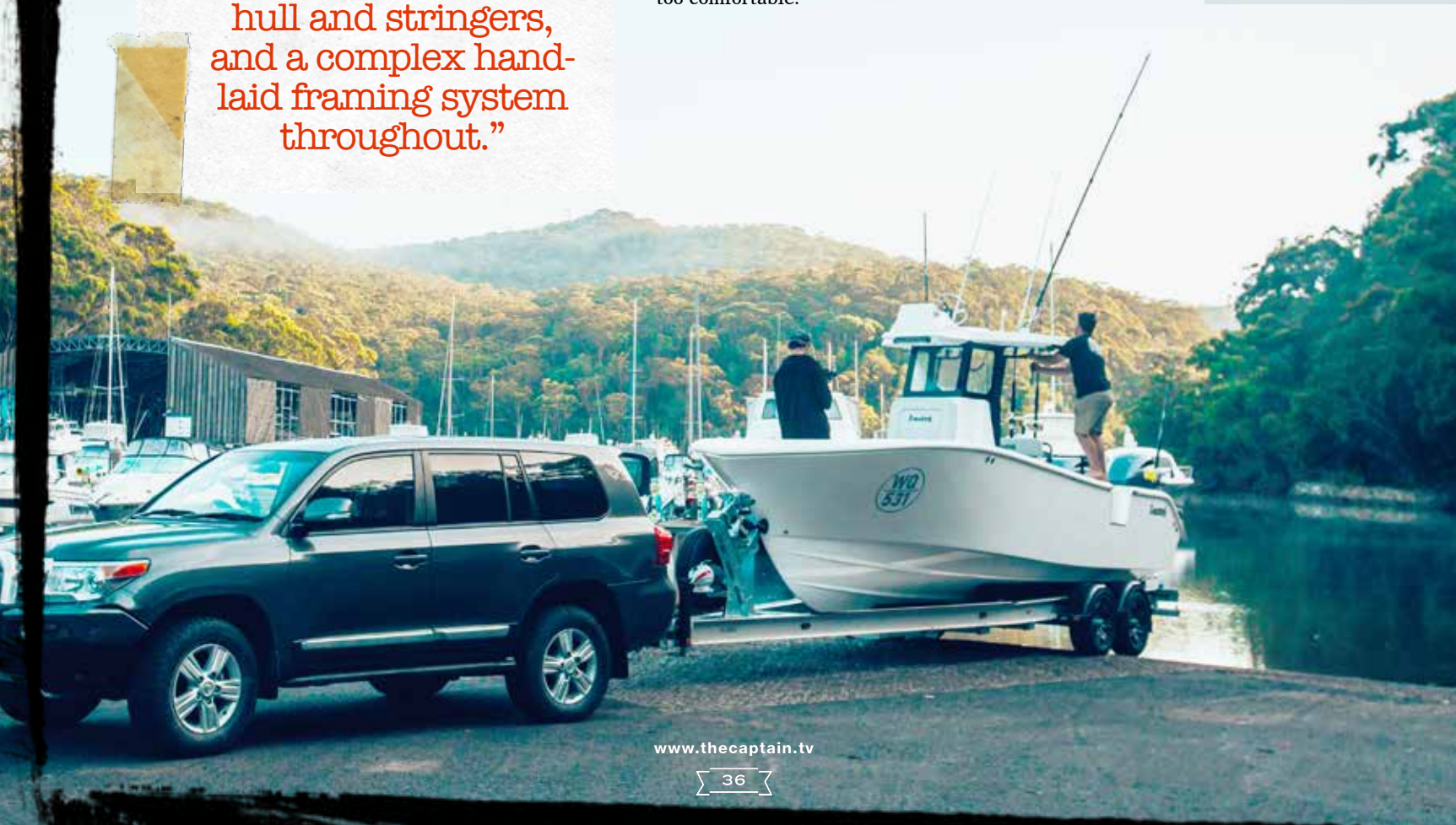
Nick Milford from East Coast Angling has been running a prototype Veitch 23 console out of Port Douglas, putting almost 400 charter hours on her.

“Nick has been giving me the hard, honest truth, which has been good for the development of the boat,” Rog says. “He’s really asking a lot of the boat up there, quartering into horrible 25-knot Port Douglas slop. But he’s wanted 32ft performance out of a 23, which has driven the design.”

Nick’s boat was a pretty wet ride, so later models have been re-weighted — they’re now lighter, with the weight further forward. “The later models ride more bow-up than Nick’s boat, and offer a nicer ride,” Rog says, adding that working with Nick has infused thousands of hours of fishing DNA into the design — things like waterproof storage, macerated kill tanks, avoiding toe-breaking fixtures, accessible battery switches, seating, handrails, rod storage and ease of maintenance.

“Nick wanted the boat to be easy to maintain, so we’ve simplified the bilge system and guttering,” Rog says. “Now he just pulls the boat out, washes it down, pulls the bungs out and drives home.”

The 23 comes with the option of a second station. This is a must-have for hard-core topwater fishing, offering a bird’s-eye view over the reef, crew — and customers, in Nick’s case. Rog reckons it’s loads of fun driving up on the reef, but rates anything over 30 knots as a bit “shit-scary” which will change the dynamics of the ride.



TESTING TIMES

The Captain was invited for the 23's first run offshore. As we slid in behind a svelte helm sporting a pair of Garmin screens, Roger delivered a warning. "It's a very aggressive boat, a lot like the 27, with a 26-degree deadrise, and it loves to be driven hard."

The ride proved as soft as the numbers suggest, with the 23 slicing through the swell and chop like a hot knife through butter. Captain's crewman Jack rated it the softest boat he'd ever driven. Pushing out wide, straight into some snotty 2m slop that would turn most 6m boats away, we held a steady 17-18 knots. And stopping to turn the boat side-on for the all-important, though highly unscientific, stability test, we found the 23 to be surprisingly stable, even without ballast. The floor is a bit high — we'd sacrifice the self-draining deck for a lower floor, especially in a hardtop model.

The 23 was more temperamental down sea, falling onto her shoulders when coming off larger waves. After moving some ballast aft, she behaved herself. Roger suggested some running strake reconfiguration would make her behave. He also reminds us that a fine hull is sensitive to weight and engine configurations. It takes a while to dial in the sweet spots, but when we do, it's happy days.



"The ride proved as soft as the numbers suggest, with the 23 slicing through the swell and chop like a hot knife through butter."



(LEFT) FULLY LINED

The floor liner features plenty of moulded and guttered storage, as well as a fully moulded kill tank that can swallow a Seakeeper 1.

(BELOW) GO WITH THE FLOW:

The 23 can carry 250L of ballast water. You can lock it in or out with a Lenco actuator system, depending on the conditions or payload.



"The Veitch 23 loves to be driven hard."

I'VE HEARD IT ALL

Everyone has an opinion on Veitch Boats. Here, Rog responds to some of the regular feedback he hears on his 23 and 27 models.

They say: "It's too tippy."

Rog says: "Yes, it's sensitive to weight. Everything in design is a compromise. You sacrifice softness for stability. If you can't handle it, get a Seakeeper — or a Noosa Cat."

They say: "It's too expensive."

Rog says: "You're buying an original, Australian-made, high-performance fishing machine. It's built by the best tradesmen, with the best-quality materials, using state-of-the-art processes."

They say: "The 27 porpoises."

Rog says: "The first couple of boats definitely did — it was a weight and engine set-up problem that we sorted out. It did need more running surface in the back section of the boat. Hence, we're now onto the third-generation 27ft hulls that ride sublimely."



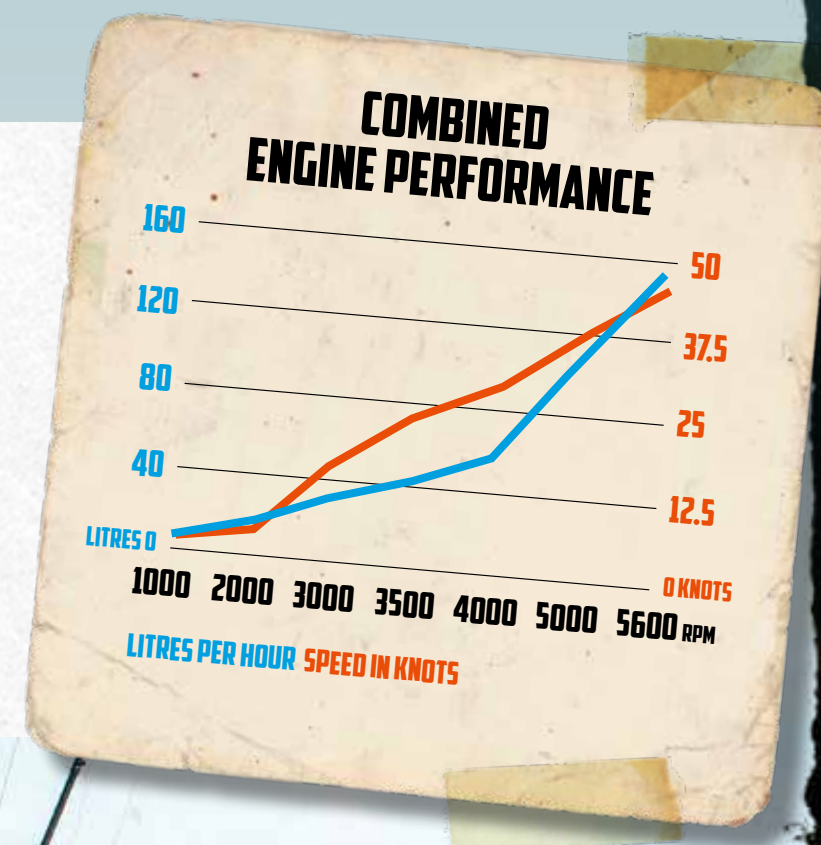
“The great benefit of these motors is they’re just over 220kg apiece,” Rog says.

PERFORMANCE BULLETIN

The majority of Veitch boats coming out of the Bairnsdale factory feature Yamaha fit-ups, with the new digital rigging and steering as standard. For Rog, it's simple. “It's clean and easy to install, with incredible performance. They're a great company to work with — you buy Yamahas and you know what you're going to get.”

He reckons the twin F200 four-strokes are a perfect match for the 23, delivering big savings at the bowser. Cruising speed (25–26 knots at 3500RPM) gives 1.1km to the litre. At 4000RPM, it's one for one, giving the 23 a comfortable cruising range of 500km.

“The great benefit of these motors is they're just over 220kg apiece,” Rog says. “The more weight we save on motors, the more gear we can put in the boat and not take away from performance. We're running SeaStar jack plates for dialling in engine positions, with about three inches of travel up and down at the turn of two screws. With 19-inch Saltwater Series II props, the top speed is 87km/h at 5600RPM, with fuel burn at 150L per hour.”



FULLY JACKED:
Captain's crewman Jack said it was the softest ride he'd ever had.



CAPTAIN'S SHIPS: **VEITCH 23 CONSOLE**



FACTORY FINISH

Rog swears by resin infusion. "It's super-strong and every single hull is exactly the same, with the same laminate schedule of 70 per cent fibre, 30 per cent resin and no air. It's hard to do, but we're so confident in the strength of these boats — they're stronger and lighter than a hand-laid boat."

Resin infusion also means the customer can put whatever they want in the boat, including Seakeepers, three displays and big transducers. These days, the fit-ups are done at the ever-expanding Bairnsdale factory, including upholstery, rigging, stainless and alloy work. Instead of being polished, the handrails on the 23 have a Raptor finish. The rails are sandblasted then epoxy coated. As well as looking good, they deliver the grip where it's needed.

"Resin infusion also means the customer can put whatever they want in the boat."



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CAPTAIN'S SHIPS: VEITCH 23 CONSOLE

MORE HULL REFINEMENT

Since our test run, Rog has taken to the mould yet again. He's reduced the deadrise to make it a more predictable and stable boat. "The boat is not just for two blokes ripping along at 40 knots, sadly," he says. "I wanted it to run equally well with a crew of five, full tanks and fishing gear. I also need a hull form to perform with the new 23 hardtop, which carries even more windage."

The refinements included larger strakes at the bow to create more lift and a drier ride — and the plank is now gone. "It's less of a driver's boat now and more of an all-rounder," Rog reckons. That all makes perfect business sense, but we'd happily own the slice-and-dice-model. If you've got one of those puppies, hang on to her, she's a limited edition.

Bring on the hardtop, Rog!



THUMBS UP

- Soft ride — look out Formula, Veitch is coming for the title
- Resin infusion saves on weight
- Sweet console configuration
- Seakeeper compatibility
- Great storage for a console
 - Comfy helm seat
 - Dive door
- Sandblasted, epoxy-coated, Raptor-lined handrails
- Rog's raw, balls-out approach to boat building



THUMBS DOWN

- Console windscreen has a thick black frame, impairing visibility
 - No toe holds at rear
 - Small bait tanks
- T-top height is a tad low for six-footers
- Second station needs more comfortable seating



VEITCH 23 CONSOLE

LENGTH: 7.01m

BEAM: 2.45m

DRY WEIGHT: 3200kg

DEADRISE: 26°

FUEL CAPACITY: 400L

HULL WARRANTY: 5-year structural

REC MINIMUM HP: 300HP

REC MAXIMUM HP: 450HP

ENGINE SPECS

MAKE: Yamaha

MODEL: 2 x F200X

TYPE: In-line 4

DISPLACEMENT: 2.8L

WEIGHT: 222kg

PRICE AS TESTED

\$290,000

OPTIONS:

Custom furniture and upholstery, Yamaha DES system, Garmin displays, Wet Sounds sound system, Zipwake trim tabs, Savage dual-axe

MORE INFORMATION

Veitch Boats

15 Bosworth Road, Bairnsdale, Victoria.
(03) 5141 0022; www.veitchboats.com.au

ROGER THAT:
Roger says the 23 is, "less of a driver's boat now and more of an all-rounder."



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