

Catatonic... **NO** **WAY!**

WORDS + PHOTOS KEVAN WOLFE

Tackle the wild oceans or cruise the coast...
this cat can do it all

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I'D SEEN IT ALL in catamaran design, up bobs the Glacier Bay 2270. The 2270 has a semi-displacement hull, which sits in the water for its full length and, unlike traditional cats, doesn't come out of the water on the plane. Particularly when it's leaping off waves. You don't get that airborne feeling followed by the big thump as the hull crashes down in the trough. I was to experience the incredible ride of the 2270 as we took off on a wave in the Gold Coast Seaway. More on that later.

A BETTER MOUSE TRAP

Unlike a lot of boat builders, Larry Graf, the founder and designer of Glacier Bay cats, is a design engineer. At the age of 32 he realised the entrepreneur in him had to escape and after owning some 17 boats over the years, he decided to build a better mousetrap. He reckoned if he could bring the ride, stability and comfort of a larger boat into a smaller, trailable boat, that boaties would beat a path to his door.

And so it was that this outdoor enthusiast from Washington State in the north-west of America — up where the big salmon run — introduced a production catamaran to a boating world that had no idea what it was.

It's no wonder people were scratching their heads trying to figure out what the hull design was all about. They hadn't seen anything like it before.

Each hull has staggered, variable-width chines that are wider on the inside (in the tunnel) than on the outside. The design also includes tracking pads on the bottom of each hull for banking in turns, plus top chines to increase lift. The stern shape has a variable deadrise on both sides and again, it's bigger on the inside than the outside.

It's built strong too. The stems are reinforced with Kevlar and up to 10 layers of 24oz E-Glass. The double bottoms of the hulls are filled with foam. This, coupled with the integrated grid structure, produces an extremely strong hull



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GLACIER BAY CATS

According to the team at Glacier Bay catamarans, these boats have earned a high reputation for their unique design, unparalleled performance and high-quality construction. Recognised as the industry leader, its evolving fleet has earned the respect of owners and dealers by exceeding expectations. Glacier Bay's reputation rests on its patented

displacement hull design. Its hulls 'slice' through the water to provide Glacier Bay's now famous dry, stable ride. The end result is a boat that exhibits the softest, most stable, quickest, driest and most fuel-efficient ride available. Owners everywhere love the way their Glacier Bay slices the water and never pounds and spans.

capable of running at high speeds in severe sea conditions. And it all works very well indeed.

To say I was blown away by the performance of this cat is probably a bit over the top, but I was certainly amazed at the way it handled compared with traditional cats.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

The hulls are so efficient there's virtually no wake behind them. Take the outboards up to about 3000rpm and it's just on the plane with no lift in the bow at all. Bump up the power to 3500rpm and trim the twin 115hp Suzuki four-strokes out a little and the lift in the boat is obvious as it sits on the plane nicely at around 22 knots. It takes 5.8 seconds to come out of the hole onto the plane, but it's hard to tell where it starts to plane as it just keeps going forward when power is applied. At wide-open throttle the GPS recorded 32 knots at 5500rpm.

The outboards aren't mounted straight up and down on the transom — they're kicked out a tad — an interesting concept. It makes cornering flatter and keeps the boat in a straight line.

One thing I've never done in a cat is to turn one engine off at speed. I fully expected the boat to dive off and go around in a circle as the torque of the still-running engine took over.

But even from rest on one engine the boat lifted effortlessly and settled down at 25 knots, travelling in a straight line quite unfazed. With hands off the wheel it didn't want to do silly things — that's unheard of in a cat. And it doesn't fight against left-hand turns.

The 2270 is versatile, as it's not only an excellent fishing rig for outside work, it also doubles as a ski and wakeboard family boat as well. Forget about fancy devices to change the wake. In normal trim the boat throws up a good ski wake. When something bigger for wakeboarding is needed, just trim the outboards out a little more and the wake is set. Tabs are

not a requirement either. If the boat needs to be levelled in a crosswind, simply trim one of the outboards out slightly more than the other.

On test day the Seaway wasn't friendly, but we decided to tackle it anyway. Bill Frankhauser, who operates Mustang Marine at Runaway Bay, was driving. It was his boat, so I was happy to let him.

We went out at 4000rpm, about 24 knots, and Bill didn't back off as a 3m wave stood up in front of us. The 2270 launched into the air — and I mean into the air! The whole 1590kgs of boat was out of the water, propellers and all.

"Here we go!" I thought as I braced myself for the crunch on the other side as we came down. It didn't happen. The landing was the softest I've ever had in a boat in such conditions. I couldn't believe it! Bill just grinned.

Once outside, the 2270 loved the 2m swells and soon made itself at home. Coming back in at 4700rpm it ran true without showing the slightest sign of digging the nose in. And during the whole exercise in the Seaway, not a drop of water appeared





on the windscreen. The windscreen wipers weren't needed. The handling of the Glacier Bay 2270 is so impressive and it's so forgiving in a turn that I almost forgot to tell you about the creature comforts. The same attention to detail and engineering that went into the hull design has gone into the rest of the boat.

LAYOUT

Up front in the cuddy cabin is a queen-size bed and a Porta Potti, which is about all that will fit into the space. Except for the four rod racks. A total of 12 rods can be stored on the boat; another eight can be carried in holders in and under the gunwales. If you want more there's an optional stainless Targa available with six rocket launchers.

The helm seat is comfortable and has a storage bin under it. There's a well at the helm station for the driver to stand in. Even though a regular-size person can see over the windscreen, it drops the driver down just enough to be under the slipstream. It's quite unusual to be able to stand at the helm without having your hat or sunglasses whipped off at speed.

The one criticism I did have was the companion seat. It's a semi-lounge and great to relax on in smooth water, but when you're leaping about the ocean and trying to juggle a GPS and note pad at the same time, there's not much to hang onto. (My protests fell on deaf ears as Bill powered on.)

It's evident that Larry Graf is a keen sportsman and fisherman — as well as the rod holders, he's added three tackle box holders near the driver, a cutting board, a couple of kill tanks on either side of the transom and an Igloo cool box that fits under the removable seat at the back of the boat.

Everyone who has driven a Glacier Bay comes back raving about the boat's extraordinary handling and performance.

Bill Frankhauser summed the boat up: "I have driven every cat known to man and the Glacier Bay cats blitz them." Okay he sells them, but his statement is pretty much spot on.

The base Glacier Bay 2270 Isle Runner retails for \$130,334. ⚓

GLACIER BAY 2270

ENGINE ROOM

Two 115hp Suzuki four-stroke outboards power the Glacier Bay cat.

PERFORMANCE

With two adults onboard in a big sea the Glacier Bay 2270 recorded the following performance figures.

KNOTS..RPM

223500
355500

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA:22'
BEAM:8' 5"
DRAFT:16"
WEIGHT: 1530kg
MAX HP: Twin 115hp
FUEL: 480lt
CAPACITY: . 8 Adults
PRICE: \$130,334

- ✚ Extremely strong hull • Great ride
- Lack of grab handles

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