

The new Twinfisher Bassmaster delivers double the value in fishing space and a stable platform to enjoy your lure and fly fishing. Test report and photos by JAMES HILL.



# Webster Twinfisher 4.9 Bassmaster

**A**re two hulls better than one? You better believe it when comes to Webster Twinfisher's brilliant new Bassmaster 4.9. This alloy cat really delivers on fishing space and 360-degree fishing access from its open interior.

This latest model is arguably one of the best things to come out of the Twinfisher stable and is perfectly geared to modern lure fishing.

One of the outstanding features is the smooth topsides that give the 4.9m cat very modern, edgy styling that looks great on the water. However, buyers can still choose the clinker if they wish.

Quality of finish is absolutely outstanding with a power-coat paint system applied over the whole hull for exceptional protection against saltwater.

Make no mistake, the Bassmaster is a great platform for inshore lure and fly fishing and for a range of species, not just bass.

Catching up with this new centre console Twinfisher I was blown away by the high quality finish. Everything about

the Bassmaster is top class including the steering wheel and Faria premium motor gauges. This Aussie tinnie is without doubt one of the best things we've seen in trailer boats for some time. It's a first-grade product that could very well on the export market.

The US might be the leader in specialised bass boats but Bassmaster is probably better attuned to our fishing scene. In particular, it allows you to work both freshwater impoundments and saltwater estuary conditions. The Twinfisher does the latter nicely because of its great rough water handling.

We'll talk about the ride qualities shortly, but what's really great about the Twinfisher is its super stable hull that lets you move around the craft in total safety.

Our test boat was supplied by East Coast dealer, Webbe Marine and came with a 60hp Honda four-stroke motor, Minn Kota thruster and high quality electronic package. It's an above average rig and includes a classy trailer with custom alloy wheels. As tested it comes to \$41,990 – excellent value considering what's on offer.

**Design:** Right from the get-go Twinfisher was designed to be a catamaran that needs only one engine. This is in stark contrast to other cats that require an engine on each transom. The obvious benefit is a big cost saving but you also get lower fuel consumption plus a cleaner wake.

Some might argue that Twinfisher throws away the best safety benefit of cats with a single engine. However, I'd argue the design makes sense because modern outboards are so reliable and you really don't need twin engines unless you're going way, way offshore.

As the name implies the Bassmaster is designed for inshore cast and retrieve style fishing. This is the reason for the open centre console layout with raised casting deck for'ard.

The craft is also quite compact measuring 4.9m overall and 1.88m beam so it's not too hard to garage. The console windscreen also folds down to make it easier to park in a garage.

With a low-ish gunwale height of 65cm the Bassmaster is just right for netting or



releasing your quarry alongside the boat. The cat design also makes it rock-solid in the water even when you have two or three crew on one side.

Looking at the twin bows you notice they flow to quite full volume sponsons (hulls) that give the cat a lot of buoyancy. This is further enhanced by the extended 'pod' sterns that help support the added weight of the four-stroke motor.

I love the smooth topsides and the fact they really enhances the look of the vinyl graphics. Our boat had a lovely two-tone green graphic design but there are other designs available as well.

Further down towards the waterline you notice the distinct chine lips to deflect the spray. There are also chine lips on the inside of the hulls to further suppress spray and stop blow-back up over the bows.

These cats feature a self-draining cockpit that ensures any water coming aboard goes out the back-door scuppers. There's also an electric bilge pump and the hulls are separately sealed for safety.

While not built to the level flotation standard the 4.9 Bassmaster none-the-less gives a high safety level due to the natural buoyancy and stability of the hull.

The other great feature is the walk-aboard access via a stern ladder and door into the cockpit.

Structurally, Twinfisher hits the spot with a 3.3mm gauge bottom and 3mm gauge alloy side panels. This is supported by internal framing and welded side decks, plus checkerplate foredeck. Warranty on the hull is a long five-years for this reason.

All up trail weight is approximately 930kg, which is within the range of cars like the Mazda 6, Honda Accord and wagons like the Subaru Forrester.

**Performance:** It's always a pleasure to take the Twinfisher cats for a spin and we couldn't wait to get this new Bassmaster model in the water after we took the trailer photos.

These cats are super easy to launch and retrieve because of the central trailer guide frame. You can literally drive the cat on and off the trailer, making it very easy to go boating if you're on your own.

Tying the cat up to the marina dock I was also impressed by the stability of the Twinfisher as we stepped aboard. There is no lurching of the hull as you step aboard and this makes the Twinfisher feel more like a big cruiser than a tinnie.

The same stability also means the Bassmaster carries its way more easily

in a straight line, which makes driving much easier.

It also helps that you have the modern Honda four-stroke that has the ability to tick along at very low speeds and still keep steerage way.

Once out on the bay we picked up the speed and enjoyed the cat's performance at higher speeds. I have to say up front this was no speedster with the 60hp motor on the transom. However, the performance is very smooth and craft doesn't struggle to get over the planing hump. Again, you feel like you're on a bigger size boat and it's much more relaxing.

Our top speed was no more than 22 knots with two people and gear aboard. However, with one person aboard we were a bit quicker at 26 knots.

Underway, the wide two-seater console gives you plenty of comfort plus good vision for the driver. In really rough waters you may get some spray coming over the gunwales but during our test the cockpit stayed very dry.

The Bassmaster turned nicely at speed and showed itself to have very good manners in the handling department. About the only difference to a normal boat is the need to use more down-trim, which does mean some loss of potential top end speed.

We had quite a bit of wind chop during our test but the ride remained very comfortable – a great credit to the Twinfisher hull. I reckon this model would make a brilliant dive boat for the scuba enthusiasts because it's so easy to get aboard and super stable.

**Power:** The Bassmaster is rated for outboards 60-90hp and my initial reaction is a motor of 80hp or 90hp would be ideal. However, I have to admit the 60hp four-stroke Honda has me thinking. Sure we weren't breaking the speed limit but the speeds are still fast enough to get around the bay in good time.



As we try to work towards more fuel efficiency this package makes a lot of sense. The GPS speed results with a 14in alloy prop (11in pitch) was as follows:

3500rpm	10 knots
4500rpm	18 knots
5500rpm	22 knots

Top speed was about 26 knots, which is probably quick enough for pottering around waterways like Botany Bay and bass fishing up quiet estuary waterways.

Other engine options include the new style of clean-tech two-strokes and the new class of lighter-weight four-strokes coming from Suzuki motors. I might mention there are some good deals on four-strokes these days so you need to shop around.

Fuel capacity is 100-litres, divided into two 50-litre tanks in each hull. These feed to a single fuel line with a pressure equalising line between the tanks as well.

Our test package included a dual battery with master switch, navigation lights, deck lights and a Minn Kota bow thruster motor with its own battery up the front.

**Deck Layout:** Bassmaster comes with all the deck goodies like bow anchor roller, Tee bollard and large anchor locker.

A checker plate finish on the foredeck ensures you can step aboard from a dock in safety. However, the best place to board without a doubt is through the stern door into the cockpit.

Behind the bows is a raised casting deck with pedestal fishing seat that is very comfortable. There are also two large stowage compartments under this carpeted deck plus compartment for the bow thruster.

Further back you find the centre console with Perspex windscreen, glove box and room for a Garmin





FF400 fish finder and Icom VHF radio. There is a sports steering wheel and dash-mounted throttle box for easy operation when you're standing.

There is a large stowage locker under the helm with double magnetic locking doors. There is also a Fusion AM/FM stereo to entertain you while fishing – pretty nice.

The padded seat box provides more stowage space for fishing or personal gear and there are raised side pockets for gaffs, nets and other fishing gear.

Right at the stern you find a fully plumped livebait tank and raised cutting board. The boat also comes with four rod holders and rear and bow grab rails that can be used for dock lines, or tying a keeper net.

**Verdict:** Webster Twinfisher has really hit the spot with this specialised inshore sport fishing rig. It's a slick, well-equipped boat package that will appeal to experienced boaties who demand something above the average.

I've got a feeling family boaties are also going to take a shine to this new Twinfisher once they see the cruising/recreational potential. And with the smaller size motor I couldn't think you would find a better package for the retiree fisho. Just add a sun canopy for summer and you'll be right.



### BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

Boat supplied with 60hp Honda four-stroke outboard, stainless steel prop, trailer with custom alloy wheels, Garmin FF400C Fishfinder, ICOM VHF marine radio, Fusion stereo, bow mount Minni Kota FT55, dual batteries, cutting board, live bait tank. Price \$41,990 from Webbe Marine Sydney ph (02) 9521 7944.

### SPECIFICATION CHART

Brand	Webster4.9	Signature	HainesHunter	Stacer489	Dash
Model	Bassmaster	485SF	495Prostrike	NFisher	5m
Material	Alloy	Fibreglass	Fibreglass	Alloy	Fibreglass
Style	console	console	console	console	console
Length	4.9m	4.8m	5.2m	4.9m	4.9m
Beam	1.8m	2m	2.2m	2.2m	2.2m
Rated power	90hp	90hp	150hp	60hp	60hp
Power as tested	Honda60	Mercury60	Yamaha150	Mercury40	Yamaha40
Hull weight	440kg	320kg	580kg	n/a	350kg
Fuel capacity	100L	130L	125L	70L	70L

### STAR RATING

Finish	★★★★★	Helm Set-up	★★★★★
Fitout	★★★★★	Fishability	★★★★★
Ride	★★★★★	Safety Features	★★★★★
Dryness	★★★★	Value for Money	★★★★★

\*Data ESTIMATED by the TBF team when accurate information is unavailable. Maximum star rating 5 stars.