

Big Brother Twinfisher provides all the attractive features of a cat but with cost-savings of a single motor. JAMES HILL test report.



# Webster Twinfisher

**N**o doubt about it - Twinfisher is a clever concept. Like tomato sauce and meat pies it brings together two great ideas – the stability of the catamaran and the toughness of the tinnie.

What's also attractive about the Twinfisher to fishos is the single-engine design that makes for affordable running and purchase cost.

This clever mix of ideas has allowed the Twinfisher to carve out quite a successful little market niche for itself over the past decade.

The original Twinfisher were only around the four metre mark, however they've gradually evolved over time to provide a number of models upwards of 5.2m.

We looked at the very popular 4.9m runabout back in Nov/Dec 2008. More recently we caught up with the latest 5.2m runabout.

The 5.2m is the flagship of the range and comes in both centre console and runabout version. However, the runabout is my pick because of the great crew protection it provides especially when operating offshore on a wet, spray-tossed day.

This is a big, powerful boat and just the ticket for chasing bigger pelagics, or snapper on reefs.

We first sampled a Twinfisher 5.2m some years back, but it's a totally different beast with modern touches and a much smarter, up-market finish. Indeed, since coming under the ownership of the Schofield family the Twinfisher range has undergone a major make-over with smarter colour schemes and finish.

A major improvement has also been the extension of the sterns to enhance performance, and support for four-stroke motors.

What's also good is that hint of a cuddy under the windscreen. Effectively, you've got a low bulkhead that helps to raise the windscreen so it provides more crew/cockpit protection.

It's fair to say the Twinfisher 5.2m is the equivalent of a bigger trailer boat than the size suggests. It certainly has a bigger footprint in the water, and terrific stability. Just to give you an idea of stability – even with four blokes on one side the boat stays pretty safe and has only a slight lean. It goes without saying this is all good news for either fishing, or pottering around the bay with the kids.

Stability wouldn't mean a thing in an offshore boat unless you have good ride as well. Fortunately, the twin bow entry and tunnel ensures the Twinfisher delivers a very nice ride in rough water.

With that sort of introduction let's take a closer look at the Twinfisher 5.2.



# 5.2

**Design:** This model measures 5.2 overall, and with a beam of 2.15m and fairly deep sides it's quite a roomy boat. Physically, it's not half bad on the eye either with sharp, raked bows, neat clinker topsides and fastback transom.

The sponsons (hulls) are very full in volume and feature a sharp Vee entry that graduates to a flattened Vee aft. Combined with distinct chine lips, the Twinfisher comes quite easily to the plane and throws a fairly clean wake by cat standards.

Meanwhile, a central tunnel forces air and water through a narrow vortex and this helps to produce an air-cushioned ride as you speed up.

The longer, fastback transom creates a landing step at the stern and also allows the Twinfisher to support motors upwards of 140hp. You also get landing steps and a new door access (portside) that is a favourite with everyone.

Keen fishos will also appreciate the self-draining cockpit. However, this feature only works when the crew steps out of the boat so it's more for those times the boat is left on the trailer, or mooring.

The cockpit floor is fully sealed and forms air-tight buoyancy chambers within each sponson. This is a great safety feature and another bonus if you are fishing offshore.

Structurally, the Twinfisher is tinnie tough. It features a 3.5mm gauge bottom and 2.5mm side sheets. This is all backed up with internal framing, welded side decks and checkerplate foredeck.

From a trailing point of view the Twinfisher 5.2 delivers a total package of around 1200kg fully-loaded up with a full fuel tank and safety gear. Even with another 100kg of holiday gear you're still within the range of cars like the Subaru Forrest (1400kg), Toyota Aurion (1600kg) or Nissan Dualis (1400kg).

**Performance:** I've always enjoyed taking the Twinfisher cats for a spin, especially on Botany Bay where I've tested many over the years.

The early Twinfisher models were smaller, more basic models but this craft is different kettle of fish, larger and certainly a lot more sophisticated in looks and performance.

From the moment we hopped aboard I was impressed by the standard of

finish and the roomy cockpit. The Twinfisher 5.2m is very easy to drive off the trailer, thanks to the custom, dual-axle trailer the boat is self-centred as you drive on, or off the trailer. In fact, you never get your feet wet!

Picking up sales agent, Gavan Daly of Webbe Marine we slipped quietly and smoothly out of the marina with the Honda 135hp barely audible.

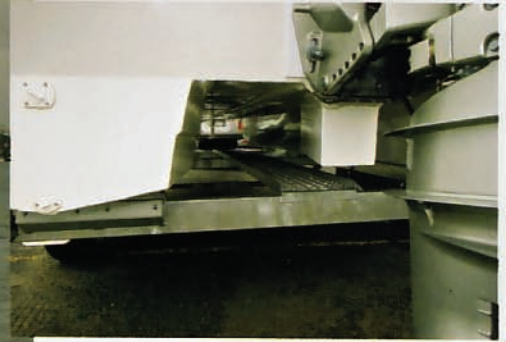
Out on the bay the waves were being whipped up by a brisk southerly. You could see there was rain on the way too so I was glad the test boat was fitted with a bimini top and side/front clears.

Gunning the big Honda the Twinfisher just flew onto the plane and was doing 30 knots in no time at all. Indeed, we were knocking the tops off the little white caps like a bricklayer having a beer after work.

It always impresses me the way these alloy cats ride over rough water and it seems they go better with a bit of wind blowing up that tunnel.

Gavan, who also markets the Sailfish alloy cats, says he's very impressed with the Twinfisher. He sees them as a complimentary fit to the Sailfish as they are smaller and more affordable.

Taking a left turn down the bay we ran with the wind and wave on the starboard quarter. At this angle the 5.2m Twinfisher also feel very comfortably and not throwing up too much spray.



windscreen also ensures older boaties can reach the anchor gear easily without going on deck.

**Power:** This Twinfisher is rated for motors in the 90-140hp range, however, I'd suggest the optimum rating band is really 115-135hp.

Keeping in mind the occasional big loads you might have aboard with a few friends, I reckon you need the 115hp at a very minimum. Meanwhile, the 135hp is more than enough for any task offshore and gives you pretty good speeds as attested by the following speed results using a GPS.

Some people criticise this particular model of motor as being too heavy, however, it's a beautiful motor in terms of smoothness and quietness. It looks great on the transom and these figures aren't bad at all.

3500rpm	23 knots
4500rpm	28 knots
5500rpm	33 knots

These are good numbers and I expect you would get a touch more once the motor was fully run in. Indeed, the 135hp Honda will be a great motor for



Cats can have a habit of 'sucking' spray back into the boat from the tunnel exit. However, in this case the builders have helped to keep the spray down by using spray deflection rails and the unique Twinfisher 'wave breaker' that sits ahead of the outboard motor leg.

My only quibble was a tendency for the cat to 'wobble' at speed, especially with the wind on the quarter. However, we soon fixed that by simply lifting the bows with more motor trim up.

The Twinfisher's ability to execute a turn at speed was also impressive. We

didn't need to back off the throttle much at all to hook through a turn.

Hydraulic steering is a standard feature of the Twinfisher 5.2 and this makes it lighter and easier to steer.

Underway I also liked the comfortable ride over a variety of water conditions. This is also helped by the large-sized bucket seats that snugly support the body.

The pedestal seats are fully-adjustable and sit atop console boxes that also house tackle boxes. Meanwhile, a centre-opening

