



Walking the Line

JACK MURPHY SET OUT TO DISPROVE AN OLD WIVES' TALE ON SYDNEY HARBOUR WITH THE NEW ARVOR 605. HE FAILED, BUT LOVED THE BOAT...

It was at the 2014 Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show that Peter Collins (director of Collins Marine) introduced me to the new Arvor 605 Sportsfish. He could clearly see that I was itching to take it for a fish. With a full walkaround wheelhouse, livebait tank, outboard powered and heaps of cockpit working space and plenty of rod holders, this

new rig was definitely up my alley.

No more than a week and half later and I was wandering down the dock at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia on Sydney Harbour at a bone-chilling 5.30am with a couple of mates, a bunch of rods, some camera gear and the keys to the 605 Sportsfish in my hot little hands. "Excited" was an understatement. Just like the old wives'

tale that "bananas are unlucky on boats", boat tests themselves have a few superstitions surrounding them, one of which is, "You'll never have a good day's fishing on a boat test". I laughed in the face of this ridiculous fallacy and headed to the local bait grounds.

The plan was to fill up the livewell with yellowtail, slimy mackerel and a few squid, then shoot out to some

productive grounds off Long Reef and try our luck at a few winter hoodlum kingfish. But we never made it that far.

As the first clump of burley sunk beneath the boat, the baitfish came swimming in from all directions. But there was one problem: the grounds were also overrun by sweep (a rubbish, bait-stealing fish). We persisted and tried our luck at a few different spots, but had the same problem. After two hours of fishing for bait, we only had one measly live yellowtail to show for our efforts.

We then decided to focus our efforts on squidding, but again, no luck. By this stage we were losing the tide and a change of plan was needed. "How about we give up on the kingfish mission and try our luck plasticing for some flathead?" I suggested.

Off we went in search of sand banks, and on arrival, we found that the 605 Sportsfish is just as capable in skinny water as it was bobbing around the heads of Sydney Harbour. The elevated walkaround is awesome for casting small lures on the flats – the higher perspective gives you a great view of what's going on below. However, with or without the advantage of the 605's walkaround, the only fish we managed were a handful of throwback whiting and snapper, as well as one nice flathead.

Maybe this whole fishing-on-boat-tests thing is right after all? Hmm...

PERFECT PLANING

Bad fishing aside, the 605 Sportsfish handled choppy inshore and offshore conditions with ease. The hull planed surprisingly quickly without any labouring from the Mercury 150hp four-stroke outboard on the back. Having the wheelhouse so far forward also means you don't lose any visibility when jumping onto the plane.

I found it was a bit loud inside the cabin when punching into the chop, but there's really no way around that when a boat has a wide beam and a relatively shallow 15° deadrise. However, it's not necessarily a bad thing – it's merely a trade-off. In return you get awesome stability at rest, a roomy cabin (with a realistic bedding arrangement) and, most importantly, heaps of extra fishing space.

The 605 Sportsfish is one seriously practical and versatile boat. With its transformable layout, your options are endless from bow to stern. It's fuss-free boating too, with a self-draining deck, two automatic bilge pumps and a dual



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Highs

- Great cockpit layout that really does work for both fishing and cruising
- The walkaround wheelhouse makes casting lures from the bow a breeze
- Roomy cabin with lots of creature comforts
- Fuel-efficient and fast with the Mercury 150hp four-stroke
- Heaps of storage

Lows

- Under-coaming rod storage could be improved
- Raw-water deckwash hatch was a little fiddly
- Needs some passenger grab handles in the wheelhouse

ABOVE The foredeck makes a great vantage spot for sight-casting lures.

BELOW It's a simple task to keep the decks tidy with so many hatches to hand.

OPPOSITE TOP That thumping 150 Merc pushed the Sportsfish to almost 40kts.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM Safe and dry inside the cabin (unless you're a photographer).



BELOW This could be the view from a seaside hotel room. The Arvor's lockable cabin is spacious and comfortable with panoramas to die for.

RIGHT The walkaround decks make fishing easy. There's also loads of storage both inside and out, plus that roomy cabin if the weather turns foul

“One minute it's all set up for family cruising and the next, it's a bare-bones fishing machine”



How does it rate?

Arvor 605 Sportsfish

1	SUITABILITY FOR PURPOSE	★★★★★★★★★★★★
2	INNOVATION	★★★★★★★★★★★★
3	DESIGN AND LAYOUT	★★★★★★★★★★★★
4	QUALITY OF FINISH	★★★★★★★★★★★★
5	HANDLING AND RIDE	★★★★★★★★★★★★
6	STABILITY AT REST	★★★★★★★★★★★★
7	ERGONOMICS	★★★★★★★★★★★★
8	STANDARD EQUIPMENT	★★★★★★★★★★★★
9	VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★★★★★★★★
10	X-FACTOR	★★★★★★★★★★★★

Average ★★★★★★★★★★

Sea Trials

Arvor 605 Sportsfish, single Mercury 150hp (with a full tank of fuel, fishing/camera gear and two passengers)

RPM	SPEED (KTS)
3000	9.5
3800	Planing
4000	23.4
5000	30.4
5600 (WOT)	35.6

*Sea-trial data supplied by the author.

battery system. When it comes to the cockpit, the deep freeboard means it's safe, yet amazingly functional – one minute it's all set up for family cruising, the next it's a bare-bones fishing machine. The aft bench seat comes standard with full upholstery, and removing the cushions reveals a makeshift casting platform and the standard issue live bait tank. There's a transom door on the

starboard side that leads to a neat, yet smart swim ladder locker. This simple innovation is great as it stows away your boarding ladder when not in use – which means no more stubbed toes, tangled fishing lines or botched trophy fish landings when using the transom door. On the port side you'll find a great little foldaway bench seat that I really loved. It was strong and sturdy, yet still easy to flip away and hide in a flash

– a rare commodity when it comes to foldaway cockpit seating. There are four gunwale-mounted rodholders and storage for more below the coaming on the starboard side. The additional coaming rod storage space could, in my books, be better used, as reels tend to get banged around and damaged the moment you hit a patch of swell. I'd personally prefer a second foldaway bench seat in its place and rocket-launchers mounted on the

tradeboat says...

A lot of boat designers and builders try to be too versatile and, as a result, their boat doesn't excel in any particular area. Arvor have done a great job of walking that line and managing to build a boat that works well in all aspects of its intended design – there are no compromises here

hardtop. Speaking of fishability, I was excited to find a circular port in the floor that I initially thought housed an optional game chair. I later found out that it was actually for the removable table that comes as standard. The blokes might be disappointed, but it may also be the one feature that gets the girls over the line when it comes to getting a new toy. Finally, open up the hatches on the cockpit floor and you'll find “storage

central” – literally, not an inch of space has gone to waste, with draining killtanks and storage for all sorts of bits and pieces. There's also a sneaky little raw-water deckwash that works well, but was a little fiddly to put away. Moving into the lockable cabin, the first thing you notice is the ample headroom – there's certainly no ducking or crouching on the 605 Sportsfish. There's a large flat wraparound windscreen that gives you great panoramic visibility at sea – although just one small windshield wiper let the team down, as it only covered a small portion

of the tempered glass windscreen. Adding a few passenger grab handles throughout the cabin would definitely improve its functionality too. But, apart from those two small criticisms, the rest of the cabin layout worked seamlessly. It's nice and airy with two windows on each side and a sliding roof hatch that's great for cruising on summer days or for people who go a little green in a rolling swell. When it comes to seating, there are two comfortable sit-stand seats for the skipper and his first mate. The driving position was great, with the throttle and wheel right at your fingertips,



no matter whether you're sitting or standing.

The dash configuration is minimalistic but effective and would happily accommodate a 10in-plus electronics package.

Underneath the forward berth, you'll find even more storage and when you insert the infill bunk cushions, you've got a proper sleeping setup that would happily suit two. I really did love the entire layout of this boat – being a centre console man, the walkaround layout is right up my alley. You really do get the best of both worlds: the creature comforts of a fully enclosed cabin boat with the adaptability of an open boat – it's certainly one snug sportsfisher.

PETROL POWER

If you're an Arvor lover, but have always yearned for an outboard option, you're finally in luck – the entire Sportsfish range is outboard powered. The 605 Sportsfish comes with two four-stroke Mercury engine options, 115hp or 150hp. Our test boat featured the big 150hp and it exceeded many of my expectations. I was super surprised to find that the outboard was capable of pushing so much boat to a speed of almost 40kts at WOT. Even more impressive, at cruising speed (4350rpm) you're burning only 28.9lt/h and travelling at 26.7kts, which gives you a total cruise range of 246km – pretty cool, huh?

At \$76,975 as tested, the 605

Sportfish is incredibly good value for money. It's in desperate need of a fishfinder and GPS but, as Peter Collins said: "Fishermen are such a fussy bunch – if I put in Furuno electronics, they'll want Lowrance, and vice-versa." He's 100 per cent correct. I'd definitely prefer to set up the electronics package to suit my own personal style of fishing.

One further option that's not included in the price is a trailer. For an extra \$10,990 your 605 Sportfish can be sitting on a dual-axle Dunbier trailer. But there's one catch: the beam is 2.54m which means she's 40mm wider than the national towing laws allow. However, all is not lost – you can get around this restriction quite easily. Research the Wide Load laws in your state – it just might mean you need a flashing light and "Wide Load" sign when you hit the road with your new Sportsfish in tow.

NO COMPROMISES

With voluptuous styling and superb versatility, this is a boat that will appeal to hardcore fishos who still have a penchant for superior luxury at sea. It's a boat that's also safe and comfortable for small families – particularly with young kiddies. A lot of boats try to be too versatile and, as a result, end up excelling in no particular area. Arvor have done a great job of walking the line and managing to build a boat that works in all aspects of its intended design – there are no compromises here. ■

ABOVE There's aft deck space to suit hardcore fishos, a forward deck to lounge on and lockable cabin. All boxes ticked!

facts & figures

Arvor 605 Sportfish

PRICE AS TESTED
\$76,975

OPTIONS FITTED
Upgrade to Mercury 150hp, plus forward windlass

PRICED FROM
\$70,750

GENERAL
TYPE Monohull
MATERIAL GRP
LENGTH 5.75m
BEAM 2.54m
WEIGHT 1345kg (dry)
DEADRISE 15°

CAPACITIES
PEOPLE 6
REC. HP 115
REC. MAX HP 150
FUEL 160lt

ENGINE
MAKE/MODEL Mercury 150hp EFI
TYPE Four-stroke outboard
WEIGHT 206kg
DISPLACEMENT 3000cc

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