

REVIEWED

ARVOR 280 AS

The latest addition to the impressive range of French/Australian built Arvors has just landed and is set to impress. Mick Fletoridis reports.

FRENCH



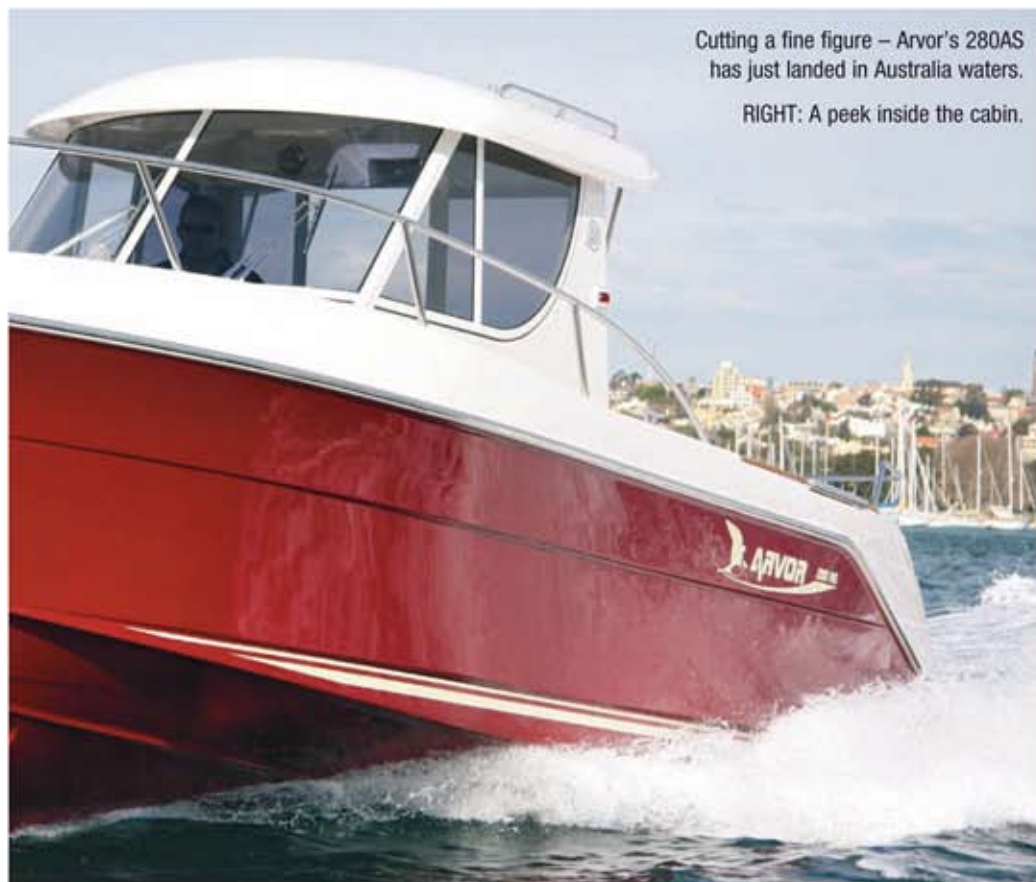
The 280AS features the lockable wheelhouse we've come to expect on these boats, with an added extra – a sliding door to starboard – which made this shot of the helm possible.



I'VE had a run in all of the Arvors available in Australia over the past few years. Starting with the impressive Arvor 20, which is built at Nowra, on the NSW South Coast, and features an economical little French Nanni diesel, 20s sold now number about 150 – through the imported French 23s and 25s. Each have impressed in their own way. The latest model – imported by Australian distributor and NSW Arvor dealer Peter Collins of Collins Marine – is particularly impressive.

The 280 AS, the largest Arvor to date is an example of elegant European class and styling. “We just find that each new boat that comes out seems to get better and better,” enthuses Collins of his new flagship.

LESSON



Cutting a fine figure – Arvor's 280AS has just landed in Australia waters.

RIGHT: A peek inside the cabin.



Design & layout

The 280AS is, not surprisingly, a 28-footer (actual hull length). Although in real terms only three feet or about a metre longer than the 250, it feels substantially larger. As a result, Collins says he won't be surprised if 230 or 250 Arvor owners decide to upgrade.

The AS denotes the asymmetrical (off centre) placement of the wheelhouse. Unlike the 230AS, which has the wheelhouse to port, the 280AS features a full walkaround foredeck – its offset design wasn't obvious until Peter Collins pointed it out.

I really like Arvor's enclosed wheelhouse design. The 280 AS also features a sliding door to starboard – sure to come in handy on steamy summer days for and docking duty.

The main entry door slides and is lockable;

inside is a roomy control area with good headroom, highlighted by Peter Collins at 6' 3" standing with room to spare.

The skipper has a stylish helm highlighted by classic wood complementing white dash mouldings. A six-spoke wheel is all shiny wood and metal. At a touch are switches for Bennett trim tabs, windscreen wipers, electric windlass, bow thruster and more – impressively, all a standard fit on the 280 AS.

The boat didn't come with electronics fitted as the review boat's buyer was yet to finalise requirements. An overhead panel has ample space for housing large electronics sets or entertainment units depending on requirements.

The view from the helm is excellent, the large windscreen providing good all-round

observation. The seat height is good; it adjusts forward and a step provides good foot support. I found the reach to the throttle lever a bit of a stretch and would prefer it closer to the touch. Longer armed humans probably won't find this an issue.

The cabin space is well thought out and will win points with the fairer sex. There's a flush toilet with holding tank and bathroom sink and vanity to starboard and accessed via a timber door complete with porthole-style mirror. The forward berth transforms into a double bed with the addition of a central in-fill panel.

Fishability

Directly aft of the wheelhouse is the engine bay and a neat Cummins MerCruiser turbodiesel installation. The powerplant supplies 320hp to a low-maintenance shaftdrive, the latter featuring water cooling for longevity. An automatic engine bay fire suppression system is another standard inclusion.

The rear deck of the Arvor 280AS is quite impressive. Essentially flat thanks to no engine box to contend with there's plenty of room available for fishos to walk freely around the deck. Two large storage tanks reside either side to provide plenty of fish storage or cooler space.

When fishing trolling rods can be slotted into any of the four stainless holders mounted to the timber gunwale inserts. Storage is available below the gunwales for other outfits, gaffs or boat hooks. Fishing hard up against the sides might highlight the need for padded coamings, the benefit of which would be obvious when offshore in pitching seas.



Fishos are well catered for with rod holders, twin bait tanks fitted at the transom corners – one plumbed – with the portside version having a handy viewing window also. A tackle locker resides in the starboard aft quarter.

Fishos are well catered for with twin bait tanks fitted at the transom corners – one plumbed – with the portside version having a handy viewing window also. The same size, the tanks have ample capacity for storing more than enough livies for a busy fishing session. A tackle locker resides in the starboard aft quarter.

The cockpit also features timber bench seats either side and jump seats in the aft quarters. The seating folds away easily when fishing.

A locking stainless boarding gate accesses the cockpit or marlin board/swim platform. Handy items here include a freshwater deck shower and removable bait board that slots into holders central in the transom. A 240v shore power connection allows the easy charging of the three onboard batteries. The stern also features grab rails in the corners, reasonably high off the topsides for moving around casting from the deck – although possibly high enough to be a hindrance when fighting or landing fish.

The walkaround to the bow is wide enough for chasing a big fish around the boat if required.

On the water

Start-up highlighted how civilised the Cummins diesel is. Noise levels are impressively low and hull vibration minimal. Underway, the bold candy apple red and white Arvor felt like a big boat but handled like a much smaller one. Turns had the hull sitting reasonably flat rather than leaning in.

Thanks to the instrument modes available via the instrumentation fuel usage at different speeds could be easily viewed. With around 300 litres of fuel and 100 litres of

water on board the hull planed at 2200rpm and 10 knots. At cruising revs of 3500rpm the engine used 55 litres an hour; with 3000rpm that reduced to 38.2 lph. With a fuel capacity of 400 litres you can reasonably expect 10.5 hours of constant running at 3000rpm.

Of interest to fishos was a good trolling speed of just over seven knots @ 1500rpm – fuel usage was less than five litres an hour. For a full day of offshore trolling that equates to good economy and range. **EA**

ARVOR 280 AS

LENGTH:	9.5m LOA; 8.48m (hull only)
BEAM:	2.99m
WEIGHT:	3600kgs
WATER:	137 litres
FUEL:	390 litres
POWER:	Cummins MerCruiser turbo-diesel 320hp
PRICE:	\$200,000

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