



Taken to Excess

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In 1989 well-known Wellington boat dealer, skier and boat racer, Richard Faisandier took delivery of the very first production Buccaneer 720. In 1996 when the new generation 720 Elite came along he was again one of the first in line for the new upgraded model. Along the way he had a 237 Billfisher and then a 720 hardtop and now in 2003, he is the proud owner of 735 Excess #1.

Barry Thompson spent a big day out with the new boat, new owner, the builder and the local Buccaneer dealer who had really only been invited because he had the GPS co-ordinates for the primo fishing spots!

Faisandier, who does his boating in and around Cook Strait, needs a big trailer boat and while today he is no longer involved in the marine retail market, he still appreciates the importance of making the right decision when buying a boat that's suitable for fishing and diving in the wild waters of Cook Strait.

"I have always found the 7 Series Buccaneers absolutely perfect for the type of boating I do and just when I thought I had the perfect boat, Gerry would come along with another model and naturally I had to upgrade", said Richard.

"I loved all the previous models I have had, but even after only a few hours in the 735 Excess I can see that it's even better, with new features that not only improve it, but make it more user-friendly and very practical over the 720. I can't wait to give it the Cook Strait test", he added.

Faisandier says he now has the right boat for long-range trips across to the Marlborough Sounds for weekends and extended stays.

The Buccaneer 735 Excess was released at the 2003 New Zealand Boat Show and several weeks later the builders had 15 deposits for a boat that at that stage they couldn't even give a final price on.

Since then the number has increased and it's a model that is certain to keep Buccaneer busy for a few years to come.

The 735 Excess is based on the proven 720 Elite hull, which can trace its lineage back to 1989 when Buccaneer released the 720 Executive, the first of their production boats in the growing "7 m" market.

In 1996 the new generation 720 Elite replaced the 720 Executive and while it retained many of the attributes of the first Buccaneer to carry the 720 label it was generally a bigger volume boat, with wider internal beam, more cabin headroom and a larger cockpit.

While the Executive had been available with an optional hardtop, the Elite featured a purpose built GRP moulded hardtop, which was a lot more substantial than



Model Buccaneer 735
Excess
Price As Tested: \$130,000
Price Boat only: \$75,000
Designer: Gerry Gerrand
Material: GRP
Type: Hardtop
LOA: 7.71 m
LOH 7.34 m
Beam: 2.48 m
Deadrise: 22.5 deg
Hull Configuration: Deep V
Trailerable Wt (dry) 2460 kg
Engine Capacity: 175 - 300 hp
Power Options: Single outboard only

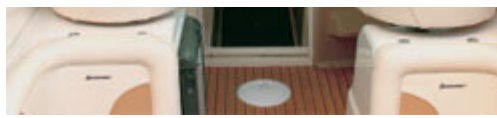
Fuel Capacity: 285 litres
PERFORMANCE
600 rpm 5.0 mph
1000 rpm 6.5 mph
1500 rpm 8.5 mph
2000 rpm 10.0 mph
2500 rpm 15.5 mph
3000 rpm 21.0 mph
3500 rpm 27.5 mph
4000 rpm 33.0 mph
4500 rpm 37.0 mph
5000 rpm 43.5 mph
5500 rpm 50.5 mph
Speeds recorded on a Magellan GPS and rounded off to the nearest 1/2 mph.

Notable Standard Equipment
Hardtop, lock-up cabin, toughened glass screen, electric toilet, trim tabs, Maxwell Freedom 500 winch, pressure water shower, gas cooker, AFL wiper, 50-litre fresh water tank, Flexiteak floor, polyurethane foam filled hull and CPC rated.

Notable Options on Test Boats
Removable rocket launcher, canopy extension, holding tank, Uniden VHF, Lowrance X19 GPS/Plotter, Clarion stereo system.

Engine
Make Yamaha
Type HPDI
Horsepower: 250
Cyl. Type: V6
Max RPM: 5500 rpm
Propeller: 19" T Series
Retail Price: \$32985
Trailer
Make: DMW
Axles: Two
Suspension: Duratorque
Braked: Sensabrake
Rollers: Multi-Roller
Std Equipment: drop-down jockey wheel, sub lights.
Retail Price: \$12000
Manufacturer Buccaneer
Pleasure Craft Ltd, P.O. Box 10433, Te Rapa, Hamilton
Boat Supplied by Buccaneer
Pleasure Craft Ltd

the previous bolt-on structure. No changes were made to the existing 21-degree hull.



Never one to let the industry or media know too much about new models before they are released, designer Gerry Gerrand of Buccaneer Pleasure Craft Ltd surprised everyone at the 2003 New Zealand Boat Show in June with the 735 Exess.

"What I wanted to achieve was a boat that said 21st century styling, without going to the extreme and losing the practical features of the previous 720 that have made it one of our more popular models", said Gerrand.

He added that this time he not only gave the topside styling and layout a complete revamp, but he also made serious alterations to the hull to improve what was already a damn good riding boat into an even better one.

"The 735 is a worked over 720 hull and we did to it what we did to the 605 when we relaunched it as the 605 Elite a few years ago. This included increasing the deadrise to 22.5 degrees at the transom to give a softer ride, a steeper stem which increases cabin volume and building in the pod on the transom, reducing the overhang to about 150 mm", he said.

If you were thinking about comparing the new 735 Exess with the previous 720 Elite then look for more volume in both the cabin and the cockpit and while above the chine there are certainly many changes, below it's quite a different boat with effectively a completely new hull.

The deck styling and layout are a progression of the 635 Exess and many of the features such as the lockable sliding cabin door, and dashboard configuration have been copied from the smaller 635.

A first for Buccaneer is that the 735 Exess is only available with a single outboard power option, whereas the previous 720 could be powered by single or twin outboards and sterndrives.



"With the advent of the new generation direct injection outboards and 4-strokes, it's easier for us as boat builders to limit the options and it's also a lot better for customers further down the ownership line who may want to repower", said Gerrand.

Also, the 735 are only sold in a hardtop form, it's not an option and an open cockpit model, such as was available with the 720 Elite has been discontinued. The reason according to Gerrand is that with over 95% of all 720's in recent years sold with hardtops, it seemed pointless in tooling-up a model that had already proven it wasn't popular with consumers.

This is no ordinary hardtop either, featuring custom manufactured Taylormade cross-curved glass screens with no centre panel. The first impression is one of extraordinary vision from the helm and forward seats, with no obtrusive support pillars getting in the way. With over 2 m headroom it's high enough for most of us. There is an optional opening quarterlight window and the hardtop comes standard with twin overhead Weaver hatches and an AFL windscreen wiper.

318 m and No Fish

While still tied-up against the jetty at the Tauranga Marina, I noticed local Buccaneer dealer Murray Condor of Powerboat Services locking into the Lowrance X19 GPS/sounder his favourite hapuka and bluenose spot about 4 nautical miles off the back of Mayor Island, so I knew that we were in for more than a quick burst around Tauranga Harbour.

For about three weeks we had been planning to get to Mayor Island, but the weather and circumstances had until now been against us.

A volcanic island that sits about 25 nautical miles off the Tauranga Harbour entrance it was once the headquarters for the Tauranga Big Game Fishing Club, but is now controlled by the local iwi and hence all the onshore facilities are no longer in use by the club. There's a small fee to land on the island and the facilities that are still in Opo Bay (SE Bay) are still available for short-term rental.

Mayor Island was the principal source of obsidian, used by the Maori for making cutting tools and outcrops of the rock are still found. Now a wildlife sanctuary, it offers bush-walks and some of the best diving in New Zealand. There are few bays for boaties to shelter apart from SE Bay and invariably there's a swell running.

The trip across to Mayor Island is one that boaters with anything less than about a 6 m boat should not attempt – although there are plenty of exceptions – so the 735 Exess hardtop was absolutely perfect for the task. When we left Tauranga the wind was around 10 knots with a 1/2 m swell from the North, so it was destined to be an interesting run into the head sea. The Yamaha 250 HPDI had already shown 50.5 mph on the speedo in the calm waters inside the harbour but for now we settled back at around 30 mph @ 3750 rpm. As we got about halfway across the predicted Northerly front arrived and we found ourselves punching into 1 m swells with 20-knot winds whipping the tops off the waves. In the interests of comfort we dropped the speed back to around 20 mph @ 2900 rpm. Taking the breaking swells head-on, the 735 rode well and in just over an hour we arrived at our destination of SE Bay.

After setting up the fishing tackle it was off to Spot X on the GPS – if I told you the co-ordinates Murray would kill me – to tempt a few hapuka or bluenose to join us aboard. With the Lowrance X19 GPS/sounder taking us right to the spot, it was lines over and wait.



Now I have never been hapuka fishing so this was all new to me. Seems the rule is drop the lines down to the bottom – and that takes more than a few minutes – wait 30 minutes or so and then wind them back up. Either you've got a huge hapuka or bluenose wrapped around your Tuna Circle hook, or you've got your bait back. In our case it was baits back aboard as I was told the extra strong wind and sea conditions meant we couldn't hold on 'Spot X'. After waiting for quite some time for first Richard to reel in his 65lb braided line using a 2- speed Shimano 1230 and then Murray his 37 kg IGFA on his Tiagra 50W from about 300 m, we opted to go back to the shelter of Otura Bay on the northern end of Mayor Island.

The snapper fishing here and later on the Tuhua Rocks wasn't any better and with fading light and a growing wind we headed back home to Tauranga Harbour.

The ride back was marvellous with the speedo sitting on 35 mph all the way.

The 735 ate up the miles of following sea with ease and we were passing the Mount 50 minutes after leaving the Tuhua Rocks. Such was the ride home I 'nodded off', with Gerry at the wheel and me firmly entrenched in the queen seat.

One thing that was noticeable is you don't need as much tab to level the boat out, although in the strong wind they were certainly a bonus to keep it on an even crossways attitude.

It was on a trip like this that I really appreciated the benefit of the hardtop with no wind, no spray and no rain in the cockpit. Apart from a little excess spray whipping around into the rear corner of the cockpit, the interior remained totally dry. Earlier, while trying to hold station at Spot X, we had taken a lot of water over the transom, but this was quickly dispelled into the deep sump and the automatic bilge-pump took care of the rest.

Room to Move

The 735 Exess is a boat with huge capacity and lends itself to being a comfortable weekender or serious fishing platform.

It has all that's necessary for extended stays and being trailerable (2460 kg dry towing mass) has the advantage of multi destinations. Lake Taupo this weekend, the Bay of Islands the next.

The cabin layout has undergone some major changes over the 720, with a moulded cooker unit to port complete with a two-burner stove, sink and freshwater, with an electric toilet complete with holding tank to starboard. The 2 m plus berths have a large infill and a fibreglass table doubles as a base when not in use. Wide full length side trays look after a lot of loose gear and if you need extra ventilation or access to the foredeck, a large Weaver hatch is fitted forward.

Gerry has upgraded the quality of Buccaneer's fittings, such as the lighting package and even the Flexiteak floor covering is a standard item. In fact, apart from the electronics and the rocket launcher, the 735 Exess comes just about fully optioned. A sliding fibreglass door provides the 735 Exess with a lock-up cabin and also gives anyone using the head the necessary privacy.



The dash is very reminiscent of the 635 Exess although some minor moulding changes were necessary. There are dedicated areas for everything from the Lowrance X19 fishfinder/GPS to the Uniden VHF, BEP switch panel, Yamaha gauges and even the Clarion stereo. With a fully automatic Maxwell rope/chain Freedom 500 taking care of the



anchoring there's no need to go forward.

The standard seating layout on the test boat was a single helm pedestal on a moulded storage base, with a king/queen opposite. There is another large storage locker beneath, but with the addition of an optional fridge, a lot of that space is removed. However inside the cabin there is still copious storage and the large removable bin under the cockpit sole can handle both wet and dry gear. Rods are stowed in dedicated rod racks either side or in the removable rocket launcher on the hardtop.

Fishermen will appreciate the large central bait board, wide flat side decks and padded coamings with deep toe kicks, which would have been well used if we had got onto a 50 kg hapuka! You can fish four easily from the cockpit and if you are one of those boaties who likes to keep everything clean as you fish, you'll love the pressure saltwater flush-down system, which is optional. A separate 50- litre freshwater system is standard.

There is also a clip-in rear bench seat, which doubled as our bait bin and if you want still more seating then there is the option of a king/queen on the driver's side as well. The moulded fish bin under the cockpit sole is another great place to keep the day's catch.

Construction of the 735 Exess is very conventional with solid GRP, incorporating triaxle glass and foam filled cavities under the cockpit sole. The sole has been raised 65 mm to provide better visibility than the 720 Elite and is the same as on the 635 Exess.

With hundreds of Buccaneer 7 Series built over the past 14 years, the new 735 Exess provides a fresh look for a proven and well-tested design. As an offshore bluewater trailerboat, the 735 has a lot going for it. The hull represents a continuation of an ever-evolving design that gets better every time a new model is released. Its sensible layout and highgrade appointments will also appeal to those more interested in a cool weekender. The best news for fishos is that next year the 735 hull will be available as the 735 Billfisher.

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