

**This stylish, luxury twin-huller proves cats can be classy as well as quick offshore. Test report by James Hill.**

**L**ifestyle is a word you hear a lot of these days in regard to boats, but rarely as applicably used as in the new Powercat 2400 Sports.

This is the latest trailer cat from the Powercat family and a brilliant choice if you want to enjoy boating to the full.

Powercat was one of the pioneer brands of the modern cat scene back in 1970. However, the present range of fibreglass cats is light years ahead of the early models. Most importantly, they have a superb level of finish and are genuinely luxury craft.

These cats still retain great rough-water handling, however the design pitch is very much about using the boat as a comfortable cruisers rather than just a fishing platform.

The transformation came in the 1990s when builder Steve Shaw saw the opportunity to turn a brilliant Queensland cat design into an exceptional, classy sport boat range.

Steve drew on his experience of building many different craft to produce the 'ultimate' range of sport cruisers. The current range extends up to a 38-foot flybridge cruiser, however the main focus is on the sporty, trailerable 20 – 30 foot models.

All have sleeping accommodation in a lock up forecabin, but the key feature is a roomy cockpit with plush lounge seating and central galley cum-bait preparation station.

Recently I had the pleasure of catching up with Steve and the new Powercat 2400 on the Gold Coast. Steve had just driven down from his Bribie Island base and with the sun

# Powercat 2400 Sports



shining it was a superb chance to sample this Queensland creation.

There's no doubt Steve has done an excellent job of streamlining the hull and superstructure. The flawless fibreglass work and stainless steel rails round out a top-class rig.

Stepping aboard is made easy by a folding stainless steel ladder between the outboards. You come aboard via a comfortable walkway directly into the cockpit. Here you find a luxury lounge and a roomy cockpit with island galley console. The latter has Granicote benchtop and rounded corners so it's nice to look at, and super practical.

And talking lifestyle, the 2400 does it all. Whether its evening cocktails around the bay, or a serious fishing trip out to the Reef the Powercat 2400 delivers. It would be equally at home as a scuba platform, or weekend escape machine. It's ability to quickly cross stretches of open water opens up all sorts of opportunities. Just find a secluded beach for a swim, enjoy an alfresco lunch and if things go well stay the night!

**Design:** Like its big sisters the 2400 incorporates all the latest Powercat features like a small, shallow tunnel that creates high-lift at speed. There's no need for a wave-breaker because the tunnel creates sufficient compressed air to lift the cat at speed and provide softer landings.

The hull sponsons are quite buoyant and therefore good load-carriers. At the same time the sponsons have a very sharp 28-degree deadrise that cuts through chop like a knife through hot butter.

A reverse chine also helps to deflect bow spray very effectively. Indeed, on the Powercat you don't get the tunnel blowback you get with many cats.

Those high topsides are not so noticeable with the attractively raked bow, reverse transom and low deck line. Smart topside graphics and a modern curved windscreen also help to give this 7.1m cat a very slick, contemporary appearance.

The 2400 is built strongly to stand up to offshore conditions and serious offshore adventures are not out of the question. It's also worth pointing out you get added safety features like the twin sealed buoyancy chambers in the sponson. Also totally duplicated battery and fuel systems on each engine pretty much eliminate the chance of total breakdown.



Foam filling of hull cavities is another option if you want the absolute highest level of safety.

A big attraction of the 2400 is its suitability for trailing. At an estimated trail weight of 2800kg it's easily towed by popular 4WDs like the Nissan Patrol, or Toyota LandCruiser. And since the beam is right on the legal limit of 2.5m there's no probs with needing wide-load permits.

**Performance:** Thanks to the self-centring trailer Steve had this boat in the water quicker than most small tinnies. It's actually really easy to launch, or retrieve because you can drive on or off the trailer.

Once under way Steve and his crew of young daughters showed me the salient features of the 2400. The wrap-around lounge at the back of the cockpit provides heaps of room for five or more people with dining table as well. With the lounge base removed the backrests becomes a really comfortable 'leg pad' for fishing.

With the girls serving snacks and cool drinks we enjoyed a cruise up the Gold Coast waterway. Passing the glamour boats and hotels I couldn't help but notice how easy it was to walk about the cockpit, at least inshore. This cat is so stable it feels more like a big 40-foot cruiser than a 24-foot trailer boat!

The targa bimini top kept us cool and comfortable and also gave an excellent, all-round view of the water and its goings on. It's a great summer concept, but just to be on the safe side they do provide zip-up clears for the less than pleasant days.

Steve has the helm station almost

centrally mounted. This means you have heaps of dash space for the instruments and twin throttle controls. You also have the room to slip behind the wheel from either side of the cockpit. The double helm seat also folds up to provide a comfortable standing position at the helm.

A raised instrument binnacle keeps all motor gauges in view, while the low windscreen does a good job of keeping wind off your face.

Meanwhile hydraulic steering made light work of the twin motor setup and contributed to excellent helm control.

After taking a right turn at the Seaway we dashed offshore into the Pacific to sample this cat's real potential. Running at 26 knots along the Gold Coast oceanfront it was easy to see why people are shelling out \$115,000 or so for this beautiful sports craft.

The 2400s ability to run at speed in a metre swell shows it's not going to shy from rough conditions. Indeed, you could set your course for just about any location with the confidence you're not going to be caught out by a change of weather.

Mind you, trailer boats of this size should be pretty offshore capable. However, what the 2400 offers is above and beyond the call of duty. It's fast, smooth and able to out-run most monohulls.

It also can do what most cats can't – turn easily. Only a touch of outside throttle gets the big cat banking into a turn like a sports car. It's a small, but very important feature.

Suffice to say the at-rest stability offshore is rock solid and marlin fishing isn't out of the question if you were so inclined.

**Power:** This cat is rated for twin outboards up to 140hp, however it performs very happily with the twin Suzuki 90hp four-strokes that come standard. The following results were recorded with the GPS:

3500rpm 18 knots  
4500rpm 26 knots  
5500rpm 32 knots  
6000rpm 33 knots

Most boaties will be happy with these figures, however for those with a yearning for speed the 2400 could take motors up to twin 140hp and no doubt blast off at better than 40 knots!

Powercat sells factory-direct with a choice of Yamaha or Suzuki motors. Backing up the twin motors are 200-litre fuel tanks in each hull, along with water separators and individual batteries. You can also have a 240-litre fuel tank upgrade if you wish.

**Deck Layout:** The Powercat provides a roomy foredeck with low stainless steel bow rail, anchor sprit and bollard position. There's also a moulded anchor locker and a big foredeck hatch so you can access the anchor from the safety of the cabin.

Other deck features include heavy-duty PVC gunwale fender, bow and stern mooring cleats, grab rail around the windscreen edge and four stainless steel rod holders.

The cockpit has fully enclosed sides, yet also a good toe-under position thanks to the padded coamings. The centre console makes up for the lack of side pockets and provides most of your stowage needs including big esky, sink and bait-prep area. There's also quarter locker behind the rear lounge that can be optionally fitted as live bait tanks.

The cockpit is self-draining and features a snap-in carpet that looks not unlike a laid-timber deck. The cabin, which is accessed via a bulkhead door to starboard, provides a surprisingly roomy double berth and optional electric marine toilet. Like the rest of the boat the cabin is fully lined and well finished with quality fabrics.

Our test boat was also fitted with a Humminbird Matrix 67 GPS Chartplotter and fish-finder combo. You can also order the boat with Navman electronics including the Navman 6600 colour combo chartplotter/sounder unit.

**Verdict:** The Powercat 2400 proves cats can be classy as well as quick. There's no doubt this twin huller can deliver on serious fishing, however the main attraction is the ability to enjoy all aspects of boating. Indeed it would be a shame to use it just for fishing when it's such a terrific vehicle for day cruising.

Occasional overnight stays are not out of the question and whether you trailed, or kept the 2400 at the end of your private jetty it would be brilliant boat choice.

Given the money I might be tempted by the bigger 2600, or even the 3000 but given the whole equation of trailing and cost of running the 2400 gets the nod in my book. Her two big

sisters have each won Australian Boat-of-the-Year awards and it wouldn't surprise me to see the 2400 get the nod in 2006.

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## BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

### Powercat 2400/Twin Suzuki 90hp

Boat supplied with dual-axle Ezy launch trailer, power trailer winch, twin Suzuki 90hp four-strokes, Humminbird sounder/chartplotter, rocket-launcher, four rod holders, bimini and clears, rear deluxe lounge, cockpit carpet, sink and pump, dual batteries, fire-extinguisher, EPIRB and marine safety and mooring pack. Price \$115,000 as tested ex-factory. Further information: Powercat, Caboolture Qld ph (07) 5428 0043 or [www.powercatmarine.com.au](http://www.powercatmarine.com.au)

#### SPECIFICATION CHART

Model	Powercat 2400	Sailfish 7000	BostonWhaler 205	Antares 1952	HainesHunter 650Escape
Construction	GRP	alloy	GRP	GRP	GRP
Configuration	cabin	cabin	w/around	w/around	cabin
Length overall	7.1m	7m	6.1m	6.1m	6.7m
Max. beam	2.5m	2.4m	2.54m	2.4m	2.4m
Deadrise	28°	n/a	18°	n/a	21°
Hull weight	1720kg	1450kg	1270kg	1100kg	1200kg
Weight on trailer	2800kg	2750kg	2260kg	2200kg	2200kg
Rated max. power	2x140hp	2x135hp	200hp	115hp	230hp
Power as tested	2xYamaha90	2xFicht135	Mercury200	Honda90	Yamaha225
Fuel capacity	400L	300L	257L	136L	210L

#### STAR RATING

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

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