

At speed near Moreton Island, the Powercat 2600 shows it's just the kind of boat to cross Moreton Bay in complete comfort.

## Powercat 2600 Series SPORTS TARGA

This is hardly a small boat. The impression it leaves is how big it is, rather than how small. When you stand inside it, the sides are up around your hips and out on the water, it feels rock solid underfoot. Power catamarans do have a reputation for being stable, but the Powercat 2600 Sports Targa is like Uluru.

Powercat developed its 2600 series as a trailerable alternative to its popular 2800 and 3000 Series boats. They've certainly achieved that, but it's a case of only just. This boat weighs in at a nominal 3.2 tonnes on a trailer and it's not going to need much fuel or load to come up to 3.5 tonnes. This means you'll need at least a 'Cruiser, Patrol or light truck (like an F100) to tow one.

I suspect that, trailerable or not, a lot of 2600 series Powercats are going to finish up on dry storage in marinas and moored to pontoons behind canal-side homes.

After an enjoyable day on northern Moreton Bay with the Shaw family (who build Powercats), I concluded the golden sands of western Moreton Island, and places like it, are where this boat is most at home.

This is a boat capable of negotiating open water that gets rough (such as Moreton Bay) with a rare degree of comfort. So much so that few, if any, trailer boats would be in the same league.

A 2600 series Powercat is dry. It doesn't bounce about, crash land or skew off course as it encounters surface chop. And it's seriously smooth at speed.

Typically of a power catamaran, it needs to be travelling at 20 odd knots plus to get 'up' on a literal cushion of compressed air in the tunnel between its sponsons. It's here where mono hulls get left behind. Cats are not for those light on the throttle—it actually needs speed to work properly.

As cats go, this one's up there. There was no mist evident in the passenger area at speed, thanks to airflow over the screen and underneath the bimini top.

When cranked into a tight turn, it sat flat on the water. All aboard were hanging on tight at the time, but the boat didn't seem to notice.

As for spray blown aboard from the bow shoulders, we didn't get any. Looking at the way spray is deflected, there may be days when some will be blown inboard, but they'll be bad weather days.

And, like they say on TV, 'wait, there's more'. Twin Saltwater Series 130 hp Yamaha two-strokes sat on the transom of our test boat and while these evergreen workhorse two-strokes aren't quiet, there was no noise from the passenger area.

### ROOM TO MOVE

It's tempting to describe the Powercat Sports Targa as a 'giant runabout'. It has a fairly flat foredeck, a windscreen set in the forward third (sweeping aft around the helm to approximately the centre of the boat) and an open cockpit aft.

This is all contained in a hull 7.7 m long, and with over a metre of freeboard,



the under foredeck area is able to hold a reasonably sized cabin. From the helm/passenger area you step down into the starboard sponson where an electric toilet resides under a small lounge seat beside a big double bed-size bunk. There are individual reading lights on the bulkhead above the bed.

Headroom is low over the bed, except for when standing 'in' the sponson. The bedroom is spacious otherwise. A lockable entryway into the cabin opens to the starboard side of the helm area. This features a central console containing a

Once the aft lounge is removed (a simple job) the Powercat gains an enormous cockpit area for some serious fishing.



bar fridge (optional) with a cupboard each side set into its aft end.

On the bow end of the central console there's a pair of folding seats, which become a lean seat when folded up. The top of the console is finished in Granitex and has a sink unit built into it. It also has grab bars all around it. They serve a dual role of keeping items left on the bench top from ending up on the floor, providing an essential handhold right in the centre of the boat where it's most useful. A cook top is optional beside the sink in the bench top.

The helm is comfortable for two. It's well sheltered from wind and spray by the windscreen, and the sun by the standard fitment bimini top. Shorter folk might have to build up the deck behind the wheel to get a clear view over the screen when the boat lifts its bows at speed.

To port there's another clear space to go aft, but this has been kept to a minimum to keep the clearway from aft to the cabin on the starboard side as wide as possible. An underfloor icebox or refrigerated box is optional under here.

The instrument panel is huge and even the twin instrumentation of the twin Yammies left plenty of room for a Humminbird NS 25 combination GPS/sounder, a 27 mhz radio, the necessary sound system and a glove box.

Thanks to hydraulic steering, the wheel was a tiny, sporty looking unit requiring no more than average strength to operate, despite the massive size of the boat itself.



Believe it or not (thanks to power steering), using that tiny wheel is so easy that girls can do it...



The centre console has a different purpose in this application. It contains a sink and can be optioned with refrigeration and a cook top.

Our test boat had one of Yamaha's superb twin binnacle controls, which made operating the boat a pleasure.

Behind the console the entire aft end of the cockpit is filled by a U shaped lounge. A Granitex topped table converts this into a dinette with ample room for at least six.

Alternately, the centre section of the lounge hinges up to open a walkway between the motors where a couple of steps meet a fold-down ladder. For folk who like to have a swim or snorkel, this arrangement is well done. There's no clambering over bulkheads, you simply climb a ladder into or out of the water, and step into the cockpit through a set of hand rails.

A freshwater shower supplied from an 80 litre freshwater tank is tucked away in the transom beside the transom door. Beside each motor there's recessed storage for a fender.

For us fishos, the entire rear lounge can be unfastened and lifted out to clear a large cockpit. Powercat do a central baitboard/workstation as an option and a game chair can be mounted centrally in the cockpit if desired.

Powercats are upmarket, outstandingly well-finished boat these days. They've come a long way from an earlier career in rough and tough workboats. ■