

Aquamaster 530 Half Cabin with Suzuki 140hp



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Aquamaster are South East Queensland's quiet achiever when it comes to aluminium boats. Established nearly 30 years ago, they've been quietly going about their business hand-making dependable hulls south of Brisbane.

Anyone remembering the start of ABT's BASS Pro series may remember that the inaugural BASS Angler of the Year (Brett Thomson, 1999, 2000) fished from a custom built Aquamaster punt. It showed that at the time, these guys were willing to listen and that's what's kept them in business for so long.

The boat we tested here, however, is about as far from a bass punt as you can get. The 5.3m half cab is one of four half cabins in the range that vary from 5-6m in length in the Aquamaster range.

With a roomy cabin and plenty of cockpit space, it's right in the middle of the zone of craft that are great for taking the family cruising, yet still have the ability to do an

overnighter on the bay with a mate or two.

Rod Elliott is Queensland's only Aquamaster dealer, and he happily took us for a ride on Moreton Bay in the 5.3m version.

"Aquamasters feature a fully welded hull, which means that they are basically trouble and warranty free from a dealer point of view," said Rod when explaining the ethos of the brand.

"You'll also notice the upswept bow, which is a feature that Aquamaster boats have had for years. You'll see more and more competitive brands agreeing that this is both good looking and practical."

Arriving on a single-axle trailer, the rig will tow behind most family vehicles. You'll rarely see an Aussie rig more than 1.5 tonnes supplied on a single axle trailer.

Fitted with Australian Marine Centre's own test outboard (a 140hp Suzuki), we set off on a day on Moreton Bay that was way too calm for rough water boat testing.

As such, we can report that it rides very nicely on calm water, if a little sensitive to internal weight changes.



Main: Aquamaster may not be the most well known brand of boat, but they have been built in South East Queensland for the last 30 years, and their upswept bow design has become popular amongst many of the brands over the last decade. There are several half cab models in their range. **Above:** Powered by a 140hp Suzuki 4-stroke, the 530 maxxed out at 66km/h and 6,500rpm.

With all crew on one side underway, the hull would lean while at cruising speeds.

Performance wise, the Suzuki delivered exactly what we expected – a very economical ride with a real sweet spot at 3,500rpm where several repeats in the test showed a spike in economy to 3.1km/L. At those revs it was cruising at 31km/h. Wide open, expect 66km/h at 6,500rpm at a significantly more thirsty rate. That speed yielded only 1.3km/L.

With 100L of underfloor fuel, best economy gives this rig a theoretical range of over 250km.

As far as levels of fit-out go, this is a reasonably basic package at a price to match. Noteworthy are the seat bases with inbuilt storage, the cavernous areas under

the bunks and the optional transom door, which make it easier for boarding both on and off the trailer.

The rear lounge is folding

and fills two thirds of the transom, leaving a space for boarding through the transom door. Priced from mid to high

SPECIFICATIONS

Length.....	5.3m
Beam.....	2.3m
Hull weight.....	580kg
Depth.....	1.1m
Fuel.....	110L
Min HP.....	70
Max HP.....	140
Bottom sheet.....	3mm
Side sheet.....	3mm
Capacity.....	6 persons

www.aquamaster.com.au for the boat site. Alternatively, you can Like their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AustralianMarineCentre.

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The guys from Australian Marine Centre checking out the wreck of the Platypus at Peel Island. The 530 is ideal for family cruising around the bay as well as dropping a line.



Left: 140 is the maximum horsepower rating for this boat, and the big Suzuki did the job with ease. It delivered over 3.1km/L at the most economical cruising speed at 3,500rpm. **Top Right:** Queenslanders love pulling up anchor by hand and the for'ard hatch and built-in anchor well allows this to happen as easily as possible. **Below Right:** Standard side pockets eat up all of the gear that needs to be easily accessible.



The soft top is long enough to cover the travelling positions for the driver and passenger, and the side clears keep the rest of the weather out.



Left: Both seat bases feature plenty of internal storage. **Right:** The front hatch is well sealed and will handle some rough weather, even if the family won't.



There's plenty of cockpit space in the back with a foldable rear lounge that can be tucked away when the fishing starts.



The shop boat demo motor was well worn in and offered the type of fuel economy that Suzuki owner have come to expect. Its sweet spot was at 3,500rpm.



Under the cabin side bunks there's a mountain of storage for items that should be kept dry.



The cabin is deceptively large for a 5.3m half-cab boat.



The transom door is a popular option for getting in and out of the boat.



The helm is simple and there's a lot of room to mount electronics on brackets on top of the dash.

PERFORMANCE

RPM.....	Speed (km/h)	Economy (km/L)
700.....	4	4.0
1000.....	7	4.2
2000.....	11	2.8
3000.....	23	2.8
3500.....	31	3.1
4000.....	38	2.8
4500.....	46	2.7
5000.....	51	2.3
6000.....	61	1.6
6500.....	66	1.3