

Ramco Interceptor 580

Back to Basics

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR BLING THEN BYPASS THE NEW RAMCO INTERCEPTOR 580 – IT DOESN'T HAVE ANY. BUT THEN, WHY SHOULD IT? IT'S NOT DESIGNED FOR FASHION, IT'S DESIGNED FOR FUNCTION.

TEXT & IMAGES BY BARRY THOMPSON



A WET DAY IN THE MARLBOROUGH SOUNDS AS WE LEAVE FOR OUR TEST FROM GARY'S HOLIDAY HOME, THAT'S ONLY ACCESSIBLE BY BOAT.

It has been 27 years since I tested my first Scott Robson designed boat. In 1984 I was navigator in Sunday News, one of Scott's winningest offshore racing catamarans and the forerunner to many of his successful race boats that followed. It went on to take boat owner/driver Glen Urquhart and me to a world powerboat championship. One thing that struck me then was Scott's ability to produce winners. In three seasons Sunday News was virtually unbeatable, as we proved in 1986 by winning the world Class 3D championship in Guernsey, Channel Islands, with ease. Twenty five years

later I find myself once again testing a Scott Robson designed boat, albeit a whole lot different and a whole lot slower than my first. Well, I reckon that with the new Ramco Interceptor 580, he has done it again. It's another winner in my books and while it's certainly not designed for speed, it ticks all the boxes as a practical, purpose-designed fishing boat. Added to that it goes damn well also for a boat of this size and weight. This neat little boat is simply a straightforward fishing platform that has been conceived with fishos in mind. The layout is basic and practical, with room for three or four

anglers to fight unimpeded – that's fish that is!

Stylish Design

I went to the Marlborough Sounds for my first run and possibly a fish in the new Ramco Interceptor 580 and had the good fortune to see at least a couple of blue cod come aboard. I was shocked to learn that down there they have to toss the big ones back and can only keep two between 30cm and 35cm per angler! My first impression of the 580, when I saw it in the water at

Picton Marina, was what a stylish little boat it is, even without side windows in the forward cabin. The lines flow nicely and it doesn't look over bulbous in the area between the windscreen and the bollard. The low profile foredeck tapers steeply down from the fully curved acrylic wrap around screen to the anchor locker and so when you get inside the cuddy there's not a huge amount of headroom up forward. In fact the space under the foredeck is really just somewhere to toss your gear to keep it dry. A shallow upstand stretches across the rear of the cuddy to stop anything working its way back into the cockpit.

INSET: THE INTERCEPTOR 580 IS A ROCKET SHIP WITH 115HP.



A BIG OPEN COCKPIT FOR FISHING.

BELOW LEFT: THERE IS PLENTY OF STORAGE IN THE TRANSOM LOCKERS.

BELOW RIGHT: TWIN BLA SWIVEL SEATS ARE STANDARD.

Side trays are provided but need the addition of raised front panels if they are to be any good. As it's a small boat, the chances are you will not have an auto anchor so Ramco has made sure that the front alloy hatch is big enough for those of us who haven't been to the gym lately! There is an anchor locker of reasonable capacity, which will handle all the tackle you'd ever need in a boat this size. According to Ramco MD, Gary Tomes, they could make provision for a small capstan or even an auto one if required. Some change to the size of the anchor locker would be required to get the required fall an auto anchor needs. But then that's the beauty of aluminium boats – making mods to the standard layout is not a big problem.

Working Space

The cockpit chequerplate sole is fully welded to the hull for maximum rigidity. Underfloor there is a 90-litre fuel tank in the centre aft section and a very large underfloor wet storage locker forward. Great for dive gear or if the fish bin is full you will get heaps of snapper in there. You don't need to worry about that for the blue cod! Either side are sealed compartments with airtight chambers, providing enough reserve buoyancy, sufficient to prevent the boat from sinking when swamped. Flood the cockpit and the Ramco Interceptor 580 will not sink! There are full-length shelves with tubular matting under the side decks either side, as well as some locker space in the transom area. A trio of So-Pac hatches conceals the Yamaha



oil tank, which is top filled, the battery and access to the fuel filter. The BEP engine switch panel is located outside for quick and easy access.

Standard seating is back to basics with a pair of BLA moulded swivel seats on alloy pedestals. I found the driver's seat just a little too far forward for me and would mount it about 60-80mm further back so it didn't dig into the back of my legs when standing. However, with that said, it's a boat that you'll find a delight to drive either seated or standing. Visibility is great from either position, the controls are close at hand and the instruments are well placed for a quick glance.

For the driver there's a large dash area that will probably never see more than a few basic instruments, switches and a bracket mounted fish finder. However, there is plenty of space to add whatever extra you feel you need. We had a handheld VHF mounted on a bracket and a small Garmin fishfinder.

For the passenger there is a sturdy grab rail across the front, although you could also use the alloy screen extrusion for extra support. It seems strong enough. Either side there are small tray pockets, also with tubular matting, which are ideal for items such as your cellphone, keys and sunnies.

For fishos the Ramco comes standard with four-rod holders, set into wide flat side decks finished with 'surf grip'. Divers will appreciate the shape and height of the side decks when rolling over the side in search of scallops and bugs. A drop-down ladder on the port side makes entry back aboard an easy task.

The builder of the Ramco brand, Icon Custom Boats Ltd, has in a few short years carved out a reputation for quality construction. When the company bought the Ramco brand and the remnants of its assets a few years ago, it straight away set about getting the once iconic alloy boat brand back up to the forefront of the production alloy boat market. The Interceptor 580 certainly shows off the skills of Icon's alloy boatbuilders and that their hard labour through the GFC is starting to pay off. Construction is high-grade alloy plate, with 5mm used on the hull bottom and 3mm on the hull sides and deck. All up dry weight of the boat and motor, excluding fuel, fishing gear and the aluminium trailer, is around 675kg, so you would not need a big car to tow it.

Plenty of Power

The Ramco Interceptor 580 is designed for outboards from 70hp-115hp and our test boat came with the maximum allowed. The 2-stroke Yamaha 115 is a great package for the boat if you like going quick and it certainly delivers that throughout the range. The outboard is mounted on a transom bracket and set well back from the transom.

Punch the throttle hard and the 580 leaps onto the plane and quickly reaches its maximum 6000 rpm and 45.5mph. The 19" pitch alloy Yamaha prop bites hard, although I noticed some prop ventilation in hard turns at mid speed, so the engine could possibly be dropped one hole without losing much speed.

Conditions for the test were rainy, wet and a little miserable to be honest but it was warm and the sea state was little

THE INTERCEPTOR 580 HAS A SMOOTH EXTERNAL PROFILE.

BELOW: THE CUDDY IS A GREAT PLACE TO STOW YOUR GEAR.





TOP RIGHT: A GOOD SIZED FOREDECK LOCKER MAKES ANCHORING A LOT EASIER.

RIGHT: STORAGE IN THE SIDE SHELVES IS PLENTIFUL.

For a full report and video on this boat go to www.boatest.com



more than a chop. The 580 lapped it up and I found a really comfortable cruise around 4500-5000 rpm @ 32-36mph. It's a reasonably quiet hull, with just the usual slapping sound associated with small alloy boats. Certainly we never got more than that and even crossing a reasonable wake there was more of a soft 'thummmmp' than a bang!

At mid range the hull proved very stable and turned flat without any bow steer. It's a boat that likes plenty of trim, which is a common trait of any Scott Robson designed monohull. At mid range through to maximum rpm I had 3 to 4 bars indicated on the Yamaha trim gauge. At rest, with two people over on the same side of the cockpit, the angle of heel was quite acceptable. The beam is 2.25m and deadrise 18.5 degrees. This might lead some to believe that stability at rest is compromised, but the pronounced turn-down of the chine flat takes care of that.

If you want to keep the cost down and don't see the need for 40 plus mph then a 90hp outboard would be a very good option.

Spoiled for Choice

The Ramco Interceptor 580 is a great boat that does the business and whilst it will never win a world championship,

it's certainly going to win plenty of praise from those who are serious about their fishing.

The Interceptor 580 is one of ten models in the Ramco range, starting with the 5.05m Getaway, through to the 8.45m Ultimate hardtop. It is also one of four based on a very similar windowless cuddy cabin profile, the Getaway, 5.50m Dominator, the Interceptor and the 6.0m Fisherman. The main differences are size and weight and thickness of alloy plate used. So if you think the Interceptor is slightly too small or too big then you have the benefit of options either side. **PPB**

Ramco Interceptor 580

Model: Ramco Interceptor 580
Priced from: \$NZ35,000
Price as tested: \$NZ39,995
Type: Cuddy Cabin
Construction: Alloy 5mm/3mm
LOA: 5.95m
LOH: 5.80m
Beam: 2.25m
Deadrise: 18.5 degrees
Trailerable weight: 975kg (no fuel and fishing gear)
Engine capacity: 70-115hp
Power options: Outboard only
Fuel capacity: 90 litres

Notable standard features on test boat
 Built in underfloor tank, drop-down ladder, swivelling BLA bucket seats.

Notable options on test boat
 Hand held Uniden VHF, Garmin fish finder

Engine
Make: Yamaha
Power: 115hp
Model: 2-stroke
Cyl. config.: V4
Displacement: 1.7L
Max rpm: 6000 rpm
Propeller: 19"
Retail price: \$NZ?????

Trailer
Make: Ramco
Braked: No
Suspension: Leaf springs
Rollers: Yes

Std Equipment: LED lights, alloy guards, alloy construction
Weight: 300kg
Retail Price: \$NZ4500

Performance

RPM	MPH
1000	3.0
1500	4.5
2000	6.5
2500	12.5
3000	18.5
3500	22.5
4000	27.5
4500	32.5
5000	36.0
5500	40.0
6000	45.5

Speeds are rounded off to the nearest 0.5 mph.

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