



For a boat under 5m you'd be hard pressed to find anything that would ride better.

Rebranding An Icon

A name that epitomises the very heritage aluminium boat building in New Zealand is still a strong player in the market. Barry Thompson checks out one of the smallest models in the all-new range.

A few years ago I was reintroduced to Ramco, a brand that I have seen develop through highs and lows since its inception 27 years ago. Over the many years it has always been one of the most successful and better known brands of alloy trailer boats in the country. The Ramco brand has always been at the forefront of new design and styles and the latest models are no exception.

Now built in Rangiora, the Ramco brand has undergone a revamp in recent years and the end result is a very practical, well priced range of boats that are designed to suit local Kiwi boating.

The quality, design and finish are certainly very apparent and the current owners are continually looking at ways to improve the existing models as well as adding new ones. The extensive dealer network of the 1990s has gone and there are now only a select few based around the country.

New Designs

In recent years the whole range has been given a make-over by talented Christchurch-based designer Scott Robson, who was given the task of redesigning the entire range. His eye for the aesthetics has always been one of his strengths, especially in the larger 10m plus

powercats and monohulls, where he has carved out a highly respected reputation. His interest in designing and in the early years building offshore and marathon racing powerboats has also been transposed into his ability to get the best out of the performance and handling of the boats he now designs. The Ramco range has benefited from his experience in both areas.

The 4750 is one of 12 models in the new Ramco range and the smallest of three cabin boats that carry the Prelude branding. The others are the 5050 and the 5450 Preludes, which essentially are just larger versions of the 4750.

The 4750 Ramco prelude is an entry level aluminium boat that is unashamedly pitched to the fishing market, although it is equally well suited as a crossover boat for family boating. The construction is aluminium alloy, with 3mm sides and a 4mm hull bottom. The hull is all CAD designed and the plates are pre-cut before arriving at the Rangiora factory, so the precision fit of all components is spot-on.

The 4750 weighs in at around 360kg for the hull only and has a trailerable weight of approx. 600kg. It is light enough to be towed behind a standard passenger car and also the single axle trailer doesn't require the extra expense of brakes.

Standard Layout

The layout is very much typical small cuddy cabin with an open area under the foredeck with a generously sized anchor locker in the forepeak. Nice to see that the tradi-



A nice clean workable cockpit with plenty of space for fishing.

tional plastic moulded Ramco anchor hatch has been retained. A forward hatch - which will be increased in size on future models - allows easy access for anchoring duties. Less than 1m headroom means there's not even enough sitting headroom, but a full width squab is available if you want to cover the chequer plate cuddy cabin sole.

The sole carries on through to the transom and as this is an area that is going to be mostly used to toss dry gear, I feel it

needs a rear upstand/footrest that would stop anything working its way back into the cockpit. Soft tube matting was used in the test boat which I love as it takes away that cold alloy feel under bare feet, especially when winter fishing.

Seating is twin swivel bucket seats on fixed pedestals and there is the option of single or twin back-to-backs. This will, however, encroach into the fishing space in the cockpit. If you want extra seating, the

The Ramco 4750 Prelude is an exceptional entry level cuddy.



Standard features are the wide flat coamings with built in rod holders and full length trays either side.



A Cule hatch allows easy access for anchoring chores.



A neat little compartment for your keys, phone and sun glasses.



The layout is very much typical small cuddy cabin with an open area under the fordeck.

best deal is a large, removable cooler/fish bin with a squab, that can be left behind when not required.

Across the transom is a wide and deep tray which houses the battery and provides more storage space. Twin tote tanks can be stowed under. Rods can be secured in full-length side shelves or in any of the four coaming rod holders that come standard with the 4750. Keys, cellphones and sunnies have their own dedicated space either side of the twin bucket seats. There's no storage under the sole, with the space providing airtight buoyancy compartments.

The style and type of canopy you have on the Ramco 4750 is your choice, but I have to admit that I really liked the purpose built bimini from Auto Upholstery & Canvas that was on the test boat. This provided shelter from the sun, but was also high enough to stand under. Often canopies that slope down and button onto the screen are too low on a boat this size and get in the way. Add some

clears to the bimini and you have all the protection you'd ever need. Best thing is it can all be rolled up and hidden inside a sock cover and folded down out of the way.

Tight & Dry

I got to run the 4750 in calm to choppy waters off Gulf Harbour, Auckland and I can't say I was at all surprised as to how well it ran. Robson Design has a reputation for soft riding performance-based hull designs and the Ramco 4750 Prelude is no exception. The 17 deg deadrise hull carves through the short

The Ramco 4750 is rated for outboards 40-60hp, with our boat presented for the test with a Mercury 50hp 2-stroke.



chop and apart from some wind induced spray we remained totally dry no matter what direction I ran the boat.

For a boat under 5m you'd be hard pressed to find anything that would ride better. It feels firm and doesn't have any of those awful 'tinnie' sounds or rattles. This is a small boat with big boat attributes.

The Mercury 50 gave the boat a top speed of 32mph @ 5500 rpm, running a 15" pitch 3-blade alloy Mercury propeller. I found

a nice cruise speed of 25-27mph @ 4750-5000 rpm.

The Ramco 4750 is rated for outboards 40-60hp, with our boat presented for the test with a Mercury 50hp 2-stroke. This has proven a popular option for the 4750 and although larger engines and 4-strokes would be suitable, the 2-stroke certainly helps hold the package price below \$NZ30,000.

Auckland Marine Centre package the boat with the 40hp Mercury 2-stroke, a

single-axle DMW trailer, bimini, fish finder and a load of extras for \$NZ29,990. Yes, that's under \$NZ30,000!

The Ramco 4750 Prelude is an exceptional entry level cuddy that is more than suited to sheltered water fishing, towing water toys or cruising to a quiet bay with the family. Finish, presentation, style and performance are all first class. •AB

SPECIFICATIONS

Model:	Ramco 4750 Cuddy
Priced from:	\$NZ17,499 (hull & trailer)
Price as tested:	\$NZ29,990
Type:	Cuddy
Construction:	4mm/3mm alloy
LOA:	4.75m
Beam:	2.05m
Deadrise:	17 degrees
Trailer make:	DMW
Height on trailer:	1.89m
Trailerable weight:	600kg
Power:	Mercury 50hp 2-stroke
Propeller:	15" pitch 3-blade alloy
Power options:	40-60hp
Fuel capacity:	Tote tanks

Notable features:
Alloy chequer plate sole, wraparound screen, folding dive ladder, battery box & isolation switch, bilge pump, navigation lights.

Notable Options on Test Boat
Lowrance X5 fish finder, bimini, VHF radio, PVC tube matting.

Performance Rpm	Mph
1500	5
2000	9
2500	11
3000	15
3500	18
4000	21
4500	25
5000	28
5500	32

There are storage spaces in the transom, with tote tanks stowed below.



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This boat is protected against the effects of corrosion, oxidation and discolouration
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