



Tested by Heinrich Kleyn

AT A GLANCE

Length: 5.9m

Beam: 2.1m

Draft: 400mm

Approx weight: 480kg

Fuel capacity: 90 litres

Rated min hp: 115hp

Rated max hp: 200hp

Power as tested: 135hp Mercury Optimax

I WAS quite surprised when Boating International asked me to test the Sunsport 1950 out at sea for them. Firstly, as far as I was concerned, this was a dam or estuary boat, or so I thought until I took her out to sea. I am used to the big cats and monohull boats with twin engines, so I was rather sceptical about this test.

On the other hand, I do love a challenge and like testing the boats properly and as hard as possible.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

The Sunsport 1950 is a very clean, sleek, well-presented boat that has been put together by Ace Boating for Boating International. When I saw her for the first time at The Durban Rod and Reel Club, my first impression was, "Mmmm ... very nice!"

I immediately saw that she was a versatile boat that could be used anywhere, depending on the conditions. I would even use her to take the family on a cruise behind the backline on a Sunday morning.

CONDITIONS

The conditions were perfect to test this boat. If she had been a deep sea craft I would have preferred some wind and slightly rougher sea conditions, but for the Sunsport we could not have asked for more. The sea was not smooth, but was flat with no wind — ideal weather to cruise on the backline.

TRAILERING

Because she is so streamlined and everything gets put away, there is no major wind resistance when towing the Sunsport. Through traffic you have to keep reminding yourself that you've got a boat behind you because she is so light. She sits on a single-axle galvanised trailer, and even though she is a monohull, she slipped off the trailer with ease.

When we returned from out at sea, loading her was just as simple — I just drove her up the trailer and tied her on — no problem.

MOTORS AND CONTROLS

This specific model was fitted with a 135hp Mercury Optimax motor. It's one motor that I have fallen in love with — just plain superb in all aspects — quiet, smooth and very powerful.

The Sunsport 1950 is quite nippy and has definitely got what it takes. The controls were also as smooth as you could get — no grinding or breaking of wrists to get it into gear. As this engine is so powerful, I would recommend always fitting hydraulic steering which makes it a pleasure to drive.

Even though this is a two-stroke motor, the fuel consumption is very good, depending on how you drive, of course. It's like driving a car: if you drive like a youngster who's trying to impress his girlfriend, then it will be heavy on fuel, but if you drive normally, then your fuel consumption will be like that of a four-stroke, if not better. In some instances, the Optimax actually out-performs a four-stroke when it comes to fuel consumption.

PERFORMANCE

The 135hp Mercury Optimax on the back of the Sunsport 1950 made a stunning combination. With her being a monohull and with so much power to back you up, there is no question about how fast she jumps out the hole — even from a standing position. She shoots out!

We easily ran up to 60km/h in a flash, and this was out at sea. I would like to feel what she is capable of in the bay or even in a dam.

When it came to the steering, it felt like I was driving a car with power steering. She's so light you could use one finger to turn the steering wheel, and coupled to this driving ease is acceleration out of this world.

I could not fault this boat's stability, largely because of her low deck. Even at 60km/h I didn't once feel that I would lose control or that I was endangering anybody's life. She just sits tight and reacted exactly as I wanted her to.

Even out at sea her handling was very easy and I did not experience any cavitation, not even during sharp turns. She ran easily against the swells, and with the swells and sideswells we didn't experience any cavitation or broaching.

Even with full-lock turns she didn't cavitate — she just bit in and I had to be careful not to overpower her, considering the powerful motor we were using.

This is any young man's dream, and she is likely to be just as popular with anyone — older or young — who likes to go for a cruise every now and then.

LAYOUT AND FINISH

The finish on these boats is simply superb. Everything is perfectly in its place and the workmanship is some of the best I have seen.

At the console you've got everything you need — gauges, fishfinder, control panel and a CD player. To the left of the driver's seat there's even a small fridge to keep all your drinks cold. Above the fridge there's a small lockable compartment, and in the side of the steering console you have some tackle racks and a fire extinguisher.

In the bow there are two luxury seats where the wife can lay back and relax while you take her for a sundowner cruise.

If you happen to take this boat tigerfishing, you have the ideal seat and a livebait well in the front. This is also very handy for estuary or lagoon fishing. The other very well thought out feature of this boat is that it has got a wet deck and is not carpeted.

There is plenty of storage on this craft, with some nice space in the front underneath the seats as well under the deck next to the skipper. There is also some more space under the back seats.

The Sunsport 1950 is fitted with an aluminium sun canopy that is optional, but should you spend a long time on the water, I would say it's essential.

CONCLUSION

No doubt many people will ask, "What's a boat like this doing in SKI-BOAT magazine?" Well, considering how this boat performed, I would happily take her out backline fishing — conditions permitting.

This is not only the ideal dam boat, but it is also perfect for bay, estuary and lagoon fishing. The Sunsport 1950 would perform well in places like Knysna, Langebaan and other places where people like to fish, but also want to take the family for a cruise or just enjoy a day on the water with the kids.

In my opinion, this is the ideal pleasure boat for any family that doesn't want to invest in a deep sea boat, but still wants to experience the fun and excitement of fishing and time spent on the water. She's the perfect all-rounder for fishing and skiing and fun in the sun. Indeed, if this is what you enjoy in a boat, then you should make the time to test this beauty. •