

# READY FOR YOUR ARTISTIC FLARE

With a refined yet affordable hull that presents a blank canvas ready for your personal customisation, Western Australian shipwright Nick Davys designed the new Tidal Flare 24 as a serious sea-taming game fishing rig that maximises your offshore potential while also remaining economical to run and conveniently towable.

There's a lot more than initially meets the eye with Western Australia's Tidal Flare 24. While experienced shipwright Nick Davys hasn't reinvented the wheel with his reincarnation of a traditional classic, he has certainly hit the nail on the head with a modernised package built to demanding criteria.

The development of powerful and fuel-efficient outboards has led to high demand for extra-large trailerable offshore fishing boats, although many of these push the boundaries for what is feasible and legal in towing weights and dimensions. Nick recognised a niche for a vessel that would meet the demands of serious offshore anglers, while still remaining within legal towing dimensions without wide-load considerations. The most critical factor was to keep its weight below 3500kg with a reasonable load, including fuel.

## 'OLD SCHOOL' REINVENTED

Many viewers on Nick's 'Australian Old School Trailer Boats' Facebook site watched the creation of the Tidal Flare 24 as he painstakingly built the first one from the plug up. To say that Nick has a passion for the 'old school' is an understatement, a factor that is reflected in the rather traditional lines of his Tidal Flare 24. While one could easily romanticise about the likes of Don Aronow, Richard Wynne or Dick Bertram competing in the American offshore racing circuit of the 1950s and 60s in Nick's timeless creation, the Tidal Flare has entirely different DNA to those famous Formulas of the past.

It's no secret that its origins evolved from the original Savage 'Ranger' that debuted in Melbourne in 1972 – a ripper hull developed by Melbourne's Savage Boats, first established way back in 1898.

Nick has substantially modified the original hull by raising the freeboard 200mm, handcrafting a new sheerline, reshaping the stem and modifying the running surface with a three-stage V-pad along the keel. Commenting on these improvements, Nick said that this had enhanced the hole-shot onto the plane, and enables cruising speed while carrying heavy loads. This modernised hull – first designed by Jack Savage – has helped create a bluewater weapon equipped for all waters.

## PROVEN FORMULA – NEW TECHNOLOGY

Don't expect the Tidal Flare to be another Formula hull, or one of similar DNA. In fact, the Tidal Flare 24 is a new, purpose-built boat with its own set of criteria.

The hull is crafted with premium-quality, high-end fibreglass cloths and vinylester resins, along with Thermolite and Divinycell foam cores. Thermolite is used in the transom, stingers and floor, which is foam-filled, creating a lighter-weight but exceptionally strong package with terrific inherent strength. There is absolutely no wood used in the hull construction, providing extreme longevity – in fact, the package will cure and strengthen further with age.



The Tidal Flare 24 can be fitted with up to 450hp, although the Mercury 350 SCI Verado 4-stroke on the test boat provided effortless power and exceptionally smooth running.

The use of modern construction techniques and these premium materials are purposely designed to keep the hull weight down. At around 1250kg dry weight, the Tidal Flare is about 550kg lighter than an Edencraft Formula 233 in a similar bare hull configuration.

## IMPROVED HULL DESIGN

To enhance its stability, the deadrise at the transom is 21 degrees – as compared to 24 degrees with the Formula. This is because the lighter Tidal Flare doesn't have as much displacement as the Formula of similar beam and length. The beam tapers only slightly moving forward to the shoulders of the hull, which are positioned just back from the cabin bulkhead. The hull lines then progress beautifully to a fine 58-degree entry, with a lovely cutting stem to slice through sloppy seas. There is only a small reverse chine that extends nearly all the way from stern to stem, while a pair of short chines assist lift off the variable deadrise in the bow.



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39 knots! You know it's well over 30 knots when acres of water get lifted off the surface and splatter directly in your face. Combined with hail stones flying nearly horizontal, these were perfect conditions to truly test the seaworthiness of Nick's new creation.

Although the wind, rain, hail and ensuing swell and slop proved challenging, I never felt uncomfortable in the hull for an instant. The bow certainly threw the spray out, but perhaps more importantly, it never dipped dramatically into a hole, whether we were in a head- or tailing-sea.

**DECEPTIVELY FAST**

We drove around in the onslaught for quite a while and I was somewhat surprised when I looked at the speed on the Simrad GPS/plotter to see that we were travelling easily at around 25 knots, with the bow pointed confidently high and never wavering. I thought we'd been travelling much slower, as the big hull slipped easily over the barrage.

This isn't a hull that crashes through a wave, but rather rides over it with considerable range of trim available. Amid the weather onslaught, I didn't even have time to properly tune the trim tabs. However, I can testify that the hull performed well on its own merits, tucking the nose in when cutting into a head-sea and trimming up to ride straight and true down a cresting following sea without any deflection.

**VERY COST-EFFECTIVE**

I consider the Tidal Flare 24 a strong, safe and efficient canyon-runner for serious offshore work. Furthermore, this boat performs very well with a single engine, reducing towing weight and also delivering the flow-on benefits of lower fuel consumption and running costs.

With the 500-litre underfloor fuel capacity in the inbuilt vinylester tank, you also get enormous range for extended sojourns.

**SUPERCHARGED MERCURY POWER**

Although the hull is rated for engines up to 450hp, Nick's demonstration boat is fitted with a Mercury 350 SCI Verado 4-stroke, which is a supercharged, EFI, in-line 6-cylinder outboard. It provided effortless power and exceptionally smooth running. When I gave the power a quick squirt over the slop, the engine's torque performance was instantaneous and gave the boat a very even attitude without any discernible bow rise. I obviously couldn't open the power right up in the conditions, so Tidal Marine have provided the fuel and speed figures for the Spec Check at the end of this article.

The only thing I didn't like was the engine's binnacle control. I found it quite small, which with the instantaneous reaction of fly-by-wire made it easy to apply more power than intended with very little lever movement, particularly when being pitched around in a rough sea. I also found the trim switch awkward for my Shrek-like big fingers, which kept hitting the docking and transfer buttons as I tried to stabilise my grip.

I recorded 27 knots at 4000 RPM using a thrifty 36L/h, while Nick achieved a very fast 48 knots at 6500 RPM using around 100L/h in later tests. However, this was also in a 20-knot wind with 1.7m swell and using a 43cm (17-inch) Enertia SST propeller, so may not show the boat's full potential. You simply will not want for grunt with this rig, although those enjoying huge horsepower may opt for the maximum 450hp, often with twin outboards. In this case, be careful that you don't exceed the maximum legal towing weight!



The test boat was fitted with a functional tackle station with Plastek custom tackle drawers.



The transom features a walk-thru access door and a moulded livebait tank with viewing window in the transom wall.

Shipwright Nick Davys took a classic design and then improved it with advanced materials and cutting-edge hull design, delivering a high-performance 7.4m offshore fishing craft that still weighs less than 3500kg with equipment and fuel, making it easily towable.

The hull sides are very well proportioned and without any obvious distortion. Nick has also raised the combing height with a Carolina sheerline that looks terrific with its bow flare.

To maintain stability and keep the freeboard safely high, Nick wisely decided against the temptation of a self-draining deck, although that would be available for a custom fit-out for a commercial boat if requested. Such an option would require the boat to be heavier or introduce ballast.

The Tidal Flare 24 sports a full-width transom well that allows for a 76cm (30-inch) ultra-long-shaft engine with a half-tilt for trailering. This maximises the ride, keeping the transom plate in line with the back of the hull for buoyancy. Keep in mind that many new engines have integrated power-steering which extends the steering pivot back further, similar to a pod.

**PUT TO A GRUELLING TEST**

For our boat test we were lucky enough to find some very stormy conditions as we set out into the Indian Ocean off Hillary's, a northern suburb of Perth with a terrific marina complex. In fact, it was blowing a constant 25 to 30 knots, with wind gusts peaking at

The Tidal Flare 24's beautifully flared bow and wavebreaker design parted the sloppy seas perfectly. You can still see over the top of the protective superstructure when seated on the high pedestal seat at the helm.

The internal layout can be customised and fitted according to your choice. A step down to the cockpit floor keeps the centre of gravity as low as possible and provides excellent freeboard. Other features include long side-pocket storage as well as large underfloor wet boxes.



"We've used the fundamental hull designed by Jack Savage, but bought her into a modern era."  
— Nick Davys



## > SPEC CHECK

### TIDAL FLARE 24



#### PERFORMANCE (with 20-knot wind, 1.7m swell)

SPEED	RPM	FUEL
8kt	2000	12L/h
10kt	2500	
17kt	3000	
23kt	3500	
27kt	4000	36L/h
34kt	4500	
38kt	5000	
48kt	6500	100L/h

#### PRICED FROM

\$62,000 (hull only, with basic fittings).

#### PRICE AS TESTED

\$135,000 (approx.)

#### OPTIONS FITTED

Tackle station (at \$3000).

#### GENERAL

Type: Deep-V Express mono hull

Material: Fibreglass

Length overall: 7.4m

Beam: 2.45m

Deadrise: 21 degrees

Dry weight: 1250kg (approx.)

Wet towing weight: 3400kg (approx.)

#### CAPACITIES

Maximum power: 450hp

Fuel: 500 litres (standard)

Freshwater: 80 litres (optional)

Livebait tank: 70 litres

Maximum persons: 5

#### ENGINES

Make/model: Mercury 350 SCI Verado outboard

Type: 4-stroke, supercharged, EFI in-line 6-cylinder

Rated hp: 350

Displacement: 2.6 litres

No. cylinders: 6

Weight: 303kg (lightest model available)

Shaft length: 76.2cm (ultra-long shaft)

Gearbox ratio: 1.75:1

#### SUPPLIED BY

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**Left:** Constructed from lightweight materials, the Tidal Flare has a small displacement and so performs perfectly with a transom deadrise of 21 degrees, with enhanced stability. The hull lines then progress to a fine 58-degree entry to slice through sloppy seas.



### FUNCTIONAL DESIGN

The Tidal Flare 24 is well suited to offshore fishing and diving, yet remains a somewhat controversial boat due to its deck design and layout. Most will love the almost art deco deck design, although some will not. However, I can tell you that these photos just don't do justice to what really is a beautiful boat.

Although the cuddy cabin might appear rather small in these photos, the V-berth is actually two metres long and quite suitable for an overnighter should you opt for a mattress instead of the more commercial style unit with storage beneath – as in our demo boat.

The wavebreaker design of the forward superstructure will be very popular with gutsy offshore devotees, and it is at a good height where you can still see over the top when seated on the high pedestal seat at the helm.

The helm and dash are very simple, offering a large, flat panel with room for a plethora of instruments and controls. The binnacle engine controls are in a comfortable position and the helm sports a stainless-steel 3-spoke steering wheel with knob, giving you effortless control. Our demo unit was fitted with Mercury VesselView 7 multifunction display (MFD), Simrad VHF radio, Lenco trim tabs and a humping 'Wet Sounds' audio and entertainment system from Total Mining & Marine in Australia that rocks your socks off.

### CUSTOMISABLE INTERIOR LAYOUT

There is a step down in the cockpit floor, keeping that centre of gravity as low as possible and producing terrific freeboard. The internal layout can also be customised and fitted according to your choice.

Our test boat had a matching passenger pedestal with beautiful upholstered bolster seat, a functional tackle station with Plastek custom tackle drawers, Kraken outrigger bases with precision poles and long side-pocket storage.

Other features included a rear walk-thru access door, pop-up cleats, stainless-steel rodholders, a moulded and plumbed livebait tank in the transom wall, as well as large underfloor wet boxes.

The batteries and plumbing are well secured behind hatches, out of harm's way, and other than the dash the side panels and entire interior is finished in grey/white speckle-coat for easy cleaning.

### A BOAT WITH A PURPOSE

The new Tidal Flare 24 is most certainly a boat with a purpose – and one with a difference. The hardtop only came off the production line after our boat test was completed, but will now be a popular option for many. I would have been very thankful for it during the maelstrom that hit us during the test!

This is a smart fishing rig with traditional appeal, but crafted with high-tech materials and thinking. Its purpose-built credentials will appeal to both the old school and the new boat brigade.

Watch out for this one, it's got a bright and very fishy future! 

**Above:** The hardtop only came off the production line after our boat test was completed, but will now be a popular option.