

# THE LONG RANGER

There's no denying the nostalgia one gets from the traditional look of the Ranger Tug R-27, but the nautical charm belies a sporty performer with a thrifty thirst





**W**hen the email came through to organise a test on the latest Ranger Tug R-27,

I was not exactly sure what to expect, especially considering we generally test boats that are 'new school' so to say. Now mom always said never judge a book by its cover, and even after researching the brand I must say that I still wasn't too sure on what lay before me. I sort of had this vision of sitting back at the helm, putting along at 5 to 8kts, the throttle wide open, a genuine captain's hat on my head and clay pipe hanging out of my mouth. Well, if there has ever been a time where I have made a wrong judgement beforehand on a boat, then this is definitely it.

To put it bluntly the Rangers and in particular the R-27 are probably the equivalent to something like a Winnebago on water. It impressed me as an ocean-going version of a luxury campervan for the grey navy and ocean lovers. The Rangers originate from Kent in Washington State, USA. These fibreglass tug-styled boats have a unique hull design that achieves a 20-knot top speed pretty quick, are super economical, can be trailered and are kitted out with all the creature comforts needed for extended stays away from dock. They strike a fine balance between beautiful teaks and modern finishes that make them very attractive indeed.

**BACKYARD BLISS**

Besides having a unique external design and look, the R-27 is spacious throughout and packed full of homely things to please both gents and ladies.

Take the aft-deck as an example; it's great for outdoor entertainment, makes an ideal spot to sit back and relax watching the sun go down, and is also quite suitable for angling from. Access is via a large swimplatform, featuring inbuilt fenders, and while it may sit low, this makes entry and exit into the water a lot easier for swimming or diving, or in my case maybe dragging a large fish aboard.

The cockpit has a transom settee and side seat plus a number of flush-mount hatches in the deck, with good access to the motor, plumbing and electrics. The gunwales are notably lower than usual to suit the tug-boat look and design, but are compensated by tall rails to give security when standing and will work well to keep the kids contained. As previously mentioned the aft deck is spacious and can be converted quite easily into a dedicated fishing and entertaining platform by adding a few more accessories, like a baitboard and baitwell and perhaps a drop-in dining table.

**NAUTICAL LIFE**

The main attraction to the R-27's layout is definitely the cabin — it's like taking a step

So much of the layout is reminiscent of a more refined age. That is not to say modern technology doesn't have its place, the helm station (inset) is a good example of blended eras.

The forward vee-berth (above) is certainly inviting enough, and situated as it is in the bow allow the captain to keep an open ear for signs of trouble jangling up the anchor rode. Extra amenities like the galley (top right) and the bathroom (right) also impress.

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back in time. The combination of teak, suede leathers and brass-coloured fixtures create a classy look and ship-like feel indeed. What appealed to me was the removable carpet, it's not only great for cleaning but also gives the option of having teak floors and showing them off. Another aspect I liked was the abundance of windows throughout. These make it lighter inside and work exceptionally well for ventilation.

Then there is the well-appointed, open-plan saloon that has a very interesting portside office aft with desk and chair, as well as a small berth conversion at floor level that can sleep two. I think it's a fantastic idea to have a separate office/chart table rather than using the dining room table all the time, particularly for working on the go.

On the starboard side the marine head is spacious, has plenty of natural light and

ventilation, an electric flush toilet, glass bowl sink and shower with hot and cold water. Moving forward the galley is roomy and well-appointed with a sink, refrigerator, inverter, microwave, combination propane stove/oven, and cutlery and crockery cupboards.

Opposite the galley is the dinette seating four comfortably, the table is on a hydraulic piston and easily converts to another double berth or lounging area. Up front the spacious an open-plan V-berth is situated just below and ahead of the antique-looking but modern helm. The forward berth sleeps two adults comfortably and is more than 6ft5in in length.

The Ranger Tug R-27 has all you need to make extended stays on the water a comfortable experience. Once again, the general layout has a nice, airy feel to it with everything is well positioned and accessible. It looks

very posh and is well suited to couples and small families.

**SPORTY PERFORMER**

The helm station has a relaxed seating arrangement that is higher than usual to aid with vision, and in fact there was never a time where I felt like I couldn't see properly through the windscreens. Operating controls were smooth and simple to use, and as you can see in the images hereabouts, we had a lady driver for the test, so clearly the R-27 is an easy boat to drive or she just made it seem that way.

I think the difference with this old-school design is you have all the modern gear and electronics built-in that make the Ranger a typical modern-age boat, at the same time maintaining a genuine yesteryear feel. Like I said earlier, when you get behind the wheel of

**[HIGHS]**

- › Surprisingly good performance for this style of boat
- › Bow and stern thrusters as standard
- › Classic combination between old and new design
- › On-water Winnebago

**[LOWS]**

- › Coxswains chair could do with armrests
- › Some minor attention to detail in finishes, but that's just being really picky
- › Sound system speakers in cabin should be closed-in rather than have open backs



In traditional tug-boat style, the low-level gunwales (this image) have been augmented with quality rails. The isolation system (inset below left) is one example of the quality workmanship found in most areas of the boat.

...THE COMBINATION OF THE SINGLE 180HP YANMAR 4BY2 TURBO-DIESEL ENGINE AND PLANING HULL HAD THIS BEAUTY OUT OF THE HOLE FAST, AND UP TO AROUND THE 20-KNOT MARK AT WOT WITH EASE



the Ranger you feel like a genuine captain.

When it came to the test I obviously was not expecting a launch missile as visually the R-27 comes across as more of a refined gentleman's cruiser — the captain's hat, pipe hanging out the mouth, and 5kts WOT type of boat. That was an absolute misconception, of course, as the combination of the single 180hp Yanmar 4BY2 turbo-diesel engine and planing hull had this beauty out of the hole fast, and up to around the 20-knot mark at WOT with ease.

Quite clearly the R-27 has no issues with planing and it has the ability to get you to a destination a lot quicker than perceived. Another positive is the hull's ride characteristics, which is quite comparable to a standard trailerboat. It might not have lightning speed but the Ranger Tug still produces a stable and dry ride throughout

the rev range, and that with the assistance of the trim-tabs. Possessing such positive handling attributes I even had the confidence to throw the hull around into a few tight turns and even figure eights like you do on sportier boats — again it surpassed expectations.

An interesting observation was that at 20kts the max RPM was 4500 with a fuel burn of 1.9lt/nm, and that's far from thirsty in my opinion. Slackening off the throttle to a more sedate cruise speed, the R-27 sat sweetly at around 15kts and sipped about 1.7lt/nm. With fuel prices on a constant rise you won't have to worry about always having to top-up the tank on the Ranger. The 378.5lt fuel capacity should give you about 250nm depending on cruise speeds. For those happy to putt along at 10kts, you'll go even farther on a tank of juice.

Overall, the Ranger's performance is far from a

chug-along, it rides and drives beautifully regardless of speed. If you want to get to your destination in a reasonable time you can knock down the hammer, if not, sit back and relax at more sedate speeds. Personally, I would be quite happy to sit at a more of traditional 10kts on the R-27, a few lures trolling out the back rather than cranking-up the revs.

Having bow and stern thrusters is definitely a bonus on the Ranger too, and although not entirely necessary they do make docking easier. If anything I think an autopilot would have been an awesome feature to have, but anyway that's simple enough to have fitted as an option.

**WRAP**

It's definitely a refined gentleman's boat, but with just a bit more zest and bling to it. The R-27 is suitable for bay cruising, fishing to a certain extent, and of course extended stays on the water for couples and families of



**[tradeboat SAYS...]**  
Not only does the Ranger Tug R-27 have a classic appearance both in and out, it boasts all modern creature comforts and technology to keep you safe and sound on the water. The boat is also trailerable on an optional custom Dunbier dual-axle trailer with Hydrastar brake system and a braked towing capacity of 4400kg is recommended. The R-27 is 2.6m wide so will require an oversize permit for towing.

all ages. I believe her classic ride and handling traits could see the Ranger go offshore in moderate conditions without a problem, you could even use it on short runs up or down coast depending on where you are.

As a trailerable boat, well it does weigh in at around 3.5 tonnes fully loaded and would definitely need something along the lines of a monster truck to pull it around. Not impossible and it could then be used for accommodation when touring both on and off the water.

For me the ideal scenario for the R-27 would definitely be mellow-cruising around the Whitsundays with the family, along with few

kayaks strapped to the roof and a decent fishing setup in the cockpit.

It does have a price tag of \$250,000, though, but the boat is worth considering for its multipurpose functionality, as well as overall quality in the build and fittings. As I said at the beginning, don't ever judge a book by its cover, or in this case judge a boat by its initial appearance as I did and was horrifically wrong. 🙄

Test day weather information supplied by 

**Facts & figures**  
**RANGER TUG R-27**

**PRICE AS TESTED**  
\$250,000 (inc. GST)

**OPTIONS FITTED**  
Anchor package, macerator discharge, swimplatform rails and gate, 240V shorepower, battery upgrade to AGM, cabin and cockpit carpet, solar panel, Garmin 5212 navigation package (GPS, antenna, depthsounder and fishfinder), antifoul, and hull paint upgrade

**PRICED FROM**  
\$239,000 (inc. GST)

**SEA TRIALS**

RPM	SPEED (kts)	FUEL BURN (lt/nm)
1500	5.3	0.6
2000	6.7	1
2500	8.3	1.4
3000	11.3	1.7
3500	15.6	1.7
4000	17.8	2
4500	19 to 21	1.9

*\*Sea-trial data supplied by the author*

**GENERAL**  
**MATERIAL:** Fibreglass  
**TYPE:** Planing monohull  
**LENGTH:** 8.26m  
**BEAM:** 2.6m  
**DRAFT:** 0.66m  
**WEIGHT:** 2812kg (dry)  
**DEADRISE:** 14° at transom

**CAPACITIES**  
**PEOPLE (DAY):** 8  
**PEOPLE (NIGHT):** 5+1  
**REC. HP:** 137  
**REC. MAX HP:** 180  
**FUEL:** 378.5lt  
**WATER:** 151.4lt

**ENGINE**  
**MAKE/MODEL:** Yanmar 4BY2  
**TYPE:** Four-cylinder turbo-diesel  
**WEIGHT:** 258kg (dry)  
**DISPLACEMENT:** 2lt  
**PROPELLER:** Brass four-blade

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