



New Power





Caravan of the sea

Three years after Ranger Tugs introduced its R-21 into Australia, attracting much interest at the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, the newest and largest flagship of the fleet has made its Australian debut in Perth.

The downsized Bristol Bay trawler from the United States has often been referred to as a caravan on water and the latest R-29 is a beefed-up version of her earlier siblings – the 21, 25 and 27.

“It’s been surprising how these vessels have appealed to the younger families. Originally we thought they would be more suited to mature retirees, who are not in so much of a rush to get to their destination,” said West Australian agent, Michelle McAllister as we prepared to head out from the Fremantle Sailing Club. “But,” she added, “we have sold boats to people in their late 30s and

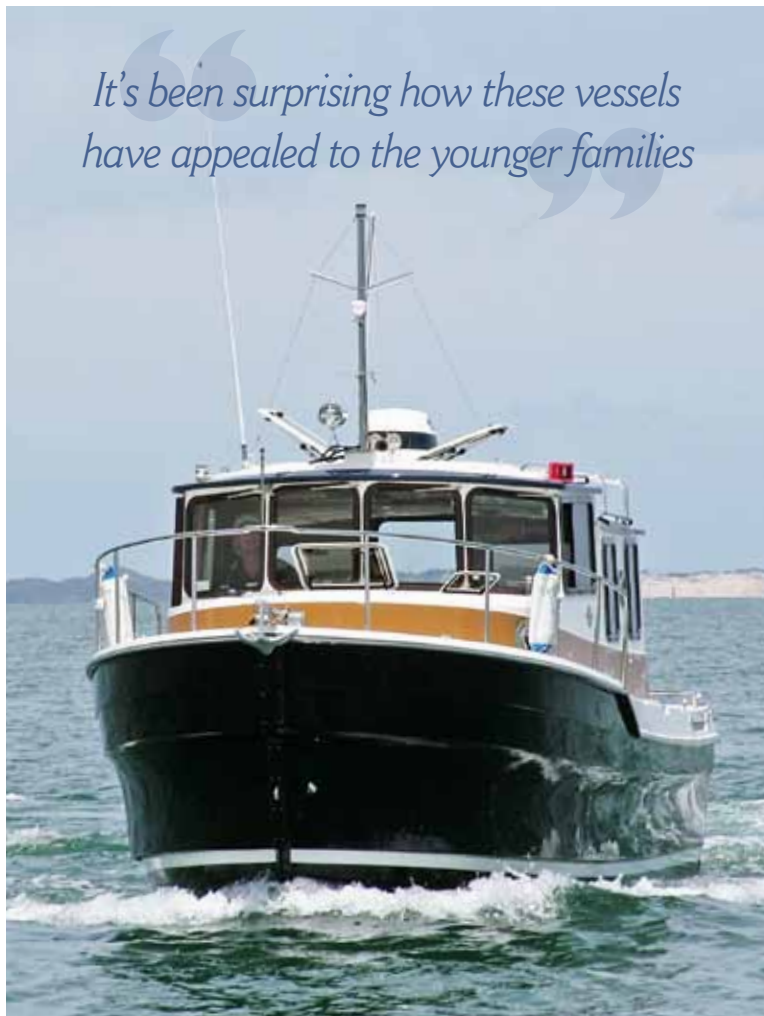
Ranger Tugs are becoming more popular Down Under as boaties experience their unique interior features.

early 40s, who have young families and just want something different and not to be in a hurry.

“The reception has been great. We’ve had a lot of people who were planning to get a motorhome to travel around Australia, but after seeing the Ranger, with its easy living and roominess, they are considering that instead because they can go by road or by sea. All models are trailerable – even though you need a good-sized vehicle for the R-29 – and they launch and retrieve really well.”

By Barry Wiseman

It's been surprising how these vessels have appealed to the younger families



While the name Ranger Tugs might suggest a vessel connected with the movement of large ships, the design is actually taken from the Bristol Bay trawler. In fact, the original R-21 started its life as a 5/8th scale version of the popular fishing vessel and was designed by retired fisherman, Howard Smith. In 1998, marine designer John Livingston bought the business and absorbed the

product into the family boat-building enterprise, Fluid Motion, and the vessels are now made in the US in Kent, near Seattle, in Washington State.

The Livingston family would spend weekends on the waters of the US Northwest, crossing the Straits of Juan De Fuca with its strong tides and winds merging with seas rolling in from the Pacific. Over the years, changes have been made to the design and there are now more than 1000 Ranger Tug owners in North America.

Since being introduced into Australia in 2008, more than 30 boats now grace our waterways. Earlier this year, Ranger Tugs Australia and New Zealand was taken over by Peter McCook, who is looking to expand the dealership to all states.

DELIBERATELY DIFFERENT

Some of the appeal of owning a Ranger can be due to their unusual appearance. Rangers are definitely different, even down to the artificial funnel on top of the cabin, which doubles as a TV antenna. It certainly attracted a lot of attention as we headed out into Gage Roads off Fremantle.

If you're wanting to be in a great hurry, the R-29 is not for you, even though it's a 22-knot (41km/h) boat. If you are happy to sit on a leisurely 6 knots (11km/h), using a miserly five litres of fuel an hour, then Ranger Tugs' flagship is worth considering.

Our performance figures on the day were as follows: Idle speed at 700rpm, doing 3 knots (5.5km/h) using 1lt of fuel per hour; 900rpm; 3.5kts (6.5km/h) consuming 1.7 lt/h; 1500rpm traveling at 5.3kts (10km/h) using 4.5lt/h; 1800rpm (which is regarded as best cruising speed) 6.2kts (11.5km/h) consuming 7.5lt/h; 2000rpm doing 7kts (13km/h) using 10.5lt/h. At this point we had increased the throttle by only 200rpm, but had increased the fuel burn by about 20 per cent so there was no real advantage in trying to speed. Our top speed for the day was at 3800rpm sitting on 18.4 knots (34km/h) consuming 46.1lt per hour.

Our figures were very close to those published by Ranger Tugs and our boat test was carried out on Cockburn Sound, with a tide and strong current running. To the west was the Indian Ocean, with Garden Island offering us some protection.

Stability is excellent, both at rest and underway. There was only slight listing as I moved around taking photographs and the stainless steel safety railing is extensive on the cabin roof, plus



Above: Leisurely boating is what Ranger Tugs are all about.

Right: Teak dash is well laid out and easy to read.



Some of the appeal of owning a Ranger is their unusual appearance

there are high side and bow rails. The roof also holds a stainless steel mast and large spotlight. The mast folds down for greater bridge clearance or for when towing on the road.

The helm and the co-pilot's seating are raised, giving excellent vision. There are secure stainless

footrests and the passenger seat is a bench-style, able to accommodate two people.

In keeping with the teak timber theme throughout the interior, the wood dash on the review boat was flush-fitted with a Raymarine C-120 W GPS/sounder combo and Garmin VHF radio. This is a busy area, with all instrumentation in good view, including the switch panel, anchor winch, trim tabs and horn. The Yanmar engine management display is in large detail and easy to read.

THRUST A MUST

Bow and stern thrusters come as standard equipment and the joystick control is located just to the rear of the throttle remote. The sliding door leading to the starboard side deck is to the right of the helm station and the console housing the throttle and thruster controls slides back to allow easy access through the doorway. While there is ample roof hatch ventilation in the pilot house/saloon, the open door gives more airflow and is a shortcut to the bow.

As mentioned earlier, the Tugs' interior is very similar to caravan-style, with the dinette on the port side being collapsible to make an extra double bunk.

RANGER TUGS R-27 | EXCLUSIVE SANCTUARY COVE BOATSHOW 2012

» AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Designed to provide maximum comfort and versatility in an easy-to-own, easy-to-operate coastal cruiser, the R-27 offers great stability, economy, roomy on-deck areas and large interior spaces.



RANGER TUGS - QUALITY CRUISING WITH OVER 53 YEARS OF BOAT BUILDING HERITAGE

We invite you to the Australian launch of the Ranger Tugs R-27. On show for the very first time at the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show 24 - 27 May 2012.

Call Ranger Tugs now to organise a private pre-show inspection, or join us at Sanctuary Cove to explore all the features of these unique cruisers up close.



RANGER TUGS R-27 — SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	Yanmar 4BY2-180 hp 4 cyl.	Turbo Diesel
Length Overall	27' 1"	8.26 M
Beam	8' 6"	2.6 M
Draft	26"	0.66 M
Weight, Dry	6,200 lbs	2,812 kg
Fuel Capacity	100 U.S. Gal	378.5 L
Fuel Rate 15kn	5.8G/PH	23L/PH



Ranger Tugs Australia & New Zealand
tel 1300 00 TUGS (8847)
eml sales@rangertugs.com.au
www.rangertugs.com.au

» MODELS ALSO AVAILABLE



The master stateroom is located forward and full advantage has been taken, making the head of the bed wider than the foot. The wide part doubles as seating if needed. There's plenty of cupboard space, plus a flatscreen television on the starboard bulkhead. The teak folding door gives complete privacy from the pilot house. If you don't want the door closed, there is a curtain, which can be drawn for privacy, but there is still access to the bathroom and day-head from the upper deck.

The bathroom is located on the port side near the forward cabin and is surprisingly roomy, complete with electric head, vanity and full-height shower.

As in a caravan dinette, there is bench seating both forward and aft of the large teak table top. The back of the portside passenger seat folds forward to create the front bench seat when dining. If another double berth is required, the table top collapses on its pedestal stand.

A six-bottle wine cooler has been fitted under the forward bench seat, opposite the below-bench refrigerator in the galley section on the starboard side. For extra space during meal preparation, the skipper's seat folds forward, giving an extra half-metre of benchtop.

The review vessel was fitted with a two-burner electric cooktop and oven, twin stainless sinks and plenty of cupboards and drawers for utensils. A microwave oven is fitted under the rear dinette bench seat.

The whole saloon/pilot house is flooded with natural light thanks to numerous windows, open doors and the windscreen. All the windows are sliding and fitted with insect screens, plus there is a brass porthole each side if you want the large windows closed. For night time privacy, interior curtains can be drawn, plus there are UV-resistant, clip-on curtains when closing the vessel up.



The R-29 has a second small cabin on the port side, which can sleep a couple of ankle-biters.

The head room here is surprisingly good because the dinette is raised on a similar level to the helm.

The review boat was fitted with optional reverse-cycle air-conditioning rated at 16,000 BTU.

BATTERY BONUS

At the rear, the cockpit is roomy and the side walls double as stairs, which are fitted with gas struts and lift with ease, revealing battery storage on the port side and a Cummins Onan generator to starboard. The standard vessel comes with six batteries and there's lots of space in these boot-like compartments for fenders, ropes and other gear. The steps double as rear seats, with clip-on cushions.

The transom console is fitted with a stainless steel sink, with a hot and cold fresh water tap, which doubles as a shower. There is also a wet

Top: Plenty of visibility in all directions.

Bottom right: The cockpit boasts a sink and leads to the large marlin board.


Bottom left: Master stateroom boasts good use of available space.





or dry storage well and folding lids convert the area into a large benchtop. The aft deck is large enough for a couple of folding directors chairs and an optional barbecue could be fitted for outdoor cooking. A door on the starboard side leads to the large marlin board, with built-in fenders and folding ladder.

The insulation surrounding the engine room is very effective, reducing noise significantly with the hydraulic hatch closed. Conversation is easy, whether you're sitting in the aft cockpit or up front. For servicing and regular maintenance of the Yanmar 260hp six-cylinder, turbo-charged diesel motor, the engine room is in the middle of the cockpit floor aft and surprisingly roomy.

It was a great pleasure to drive the R-29. The steering is light and responsive, it's very affordable boating using around five litres an hour cruising at 6 knots, and there is always that option of using the Ranger as a mobile home. That would certainly turn heads in the caravan park ... 



Above right: The engine room offers plenty of space for maintenance work.

Right: Add a barbie and you've got a great outdoor food-prep area.

SPECIFICATIONS: RANGER R-29

Length overall:	8.9m
Length with marlin board:	10.06m
Beam:	3.05m
Draft:	.71m
Displacement:	4196kg
Capacity:	10 people
Fuel capacity:	454lt (main), plus 114lt (auxiliary)
Water:	265lt
Power:	260hp Yanmar 6BY2 Common Rail/Direct Injection/turbo
Price:	\$335,689 as tested. From \$335,000.

For more information: Ranger Tugs Australia & New Zealand, tel 1300 00 TUGS (8847), email: sales@rangertugs.com.au, web: www.rangertugs.com.au. West Australian agent is Michelle McAllister, tel 0417 962 610.