

# *leisure* **boating**

SA's leading power boat magazine

# **HONDA** **AQUATRAX** **F12**

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*Honda knows you love to play on the water; that you live for the weekends so that you can light the fuse on the firecracker. That's why they are able to offer the unbelievable F12. It may not have as much power as their bigger F15X, but it's certainly got its own benefits which could make it even more popular.*

*We check out the Honda Aquatrax F12 to see if it's comparable to its big brother.*



**R**egular readers will know that last month we featured Honda's biggest offering in terms of their Aquatrax PWC range, the turbo charged 200 HP F15X. On the day of the review, we were offered a back-to-back testing of this month's featured PWC, the 125 HP F12. It's not often that you get to try two similar toys concurrently, so we grabbed the opportunity to really see just how different they really are.

Having met at the Vaal River, south of Johannesburg, Honda had both crafts in the water waiting for us and ready to go. Clinton Lambert of Honda South Africa reckons the bigger F15X is better suited for Vaal river type cruising, while the lighter F12 is arguably more practical for coastal wave jumping conditions. With this and our location in mind, I hopped on board the F15X which, if you remember last month's conclusion about the craft, I came away incredibly

impressed with. Having that scenario as a starting point, I climbed onto the F12 to note the differences in characteristics.

### Conditions for the test

It had been a cloud covered morning and now the sun was starting to shine. There was hardly a breath of wind across the water, so I was going to have to make my own waves, seeing as this craft is made for the ocean. But, the absence of waves in both reviews would take



out all other factors in my decision of which craft, if either, I would ultimately want parked in my driveway.

## General impression

Yes, the F15X and F12 look similar, but that's just because they are both PWC's. Further than that, just about the only similarity between them is that they both have proven Honda reliability, performance, affordability, and economy, ensure that you get as much time on the water as you want.

There are differences in the chines on the hull, so the handling and ride is always going to be different, but the impression I got just from looking at her sitting there in the water, is that she's going to be comfortable and every bit the safe family package that you need her to be.

## Deck layout

The F12 is just as devastatingly gorgeous in my opinion. She can seat three for those times when you need to, as there's enough space in the footwell and on the seat if the occasion arises. There's a material strap over the seat for the middle person to hold onto, and a moulded handle on the back of the seat for the passenger at the rear. A large enough deck at the rear allows you to climb onboard easily and lets you put your wakeboard on for a quick session. Non-slip padding is in the floor to ensure the craft doesn't get scratched for any reason, as well as offering you a secure feeling of never slipping off. It also does a good job offering a comfortable, soft feeling under foot.

The chunky seat is wide and long (108.5 cm) enough to ensure you sit comfortably on the craft, and can remain seated there for the entire day if necessary.

The width of the craft is 124.5 cm and overall length pushes the measuring tape to 319.8 cm. The F12 has a slightly more discreet rub rail around the craft when compared to the F15X, but it still does the job of keeping the craft protected from inadvertently rubbing against jetties



The Honda AquaTrax F12 is comfortable and every bit the safe family package you need.




when moored. Although the craft is designed to either push the water that is displaced either downward or outward, the rub rail has the nice spin-off of keeping any fine water spray from being caught by a strong wind and being blown onto you as you skip across the water.

Behind the steering bar, you've got a clear view forward towards the full set of digital instrumentation gauges. The dashboard gauges are similar to the set fitted to the F15X, remain easy to read, and provide all the information you might need, when you need it, in digital format as well as warning lights. Rear view mirrors aren't moulded into the craft, but in this means they are extended outwards slightly and therefore offer a better view backwards.

The seat can be lifted to reveal a certain amount of storage space, but where you're going to keep most of your items is below the binnacle, where a massive 87-litres of capacity can be found in the watertight compartment. For smaller items such as the craft's coded keys, your cell phone, GPS and more, can be stored in an area just behind the steering bar.

There are two towing loops at the back of the craft just below deck height, and a further mooring hook just below the seat.

## Performance

Just because she isn't turbocharged, doesn't mean she's lacking in the power stakes. The 4-Stroke inline 4-cylinder 



With a horsepower rating of 125 as well as exceptional handling and reliability, the AquaTrax F12 shoots like a rocket across the surface.



motor has a displacement of 1 235 cm<sup>3</sup>, according to the manufacturer. They also claim a total horsepower rating of 125 and a 0-30 mph time of just 2.6 seconds. The craft has a total fuel capacity of 62.8 litres, which, since the craft is a Honda 4-Stroke, is likely to last from sunrise to sunset. Having an engine producing all the power in the world is great, but it depends on how the pump can handle it all which dictates how the craft will run. An axial flow single stage 155mm jet pump provides the thrust to rocket the craft to top speed in a matter of seconds. It has reverse to aid you with parking and other manoeuvring, and is activated by lifting a handle on the right side of the helm just below the steering bar.

I spent a little while causing havoc on the water to roughen up the water surface. The result of this, as well as

riding across other boats' wakes, was to see how she would handle it all. I'd already had a chance to ride the craft in sea conditions when the media were invited to the sneak peak at Richards Bay. My day at the Vaal just reaffirmed my confidence in the craft. Through rough water, the ride is slightly softer than the bigger F15X, and was able to handle it all as well as – if not better – especially the cornering moments.

She's got enough power to really surprise you at times, and in tight corners, you have to hold on since she's going to grab the water and turn, largely without fault. From my past experience in the sea, I know that the craft feels strong and sturdy and I had no problem trying to jump off the highest waves at the fastest speed possible. I actually felt incredibly safe and comfortable at all times.

## Conclusion

I really did like the F15X, but I'd have to say that for my needs and my lifestyle, the F12 would be my pick. Best part is that it's cheaper too, and it's not exactly as if the F15X would make a huge dent in one's budget in any event.

The Aquatrax F12 is great for coastal sea conditions and would still offer you and your family ample fun on other waterways 24/7.

For more information, contact Honda Knysna on (044) 382 4090 or email [hondamarine@knysna.sa.com](mailto:hondamarine@knysna.sa.com)

## At a glance



L.O.A.	319.87 cm
Width	124.5 cm
HP	125
Total storage	112-litres

All Honda Aquatrax PWC's meet the California Air Resource Board's 3 star emission controls.