

Honda

Celebrity

170



Last month we featured Honda Marine's feisty little Slip 170 – a leisure boat offering the average boating family all the benefits of an all-rounder whilst fitting comfortably into a modest budget. The Mallards-built Celebrity 170 offers up basically the same idea in a substantially heavier package that can accommodate ten people as opposed to seven. Parcelled with the outstanding latest Honda BF90 outboard, she enters the entry- to mid-level market in sprightly style and is deserving of more than just a passing glance.

Words and pictures by Scarlett Steer





Power-to-weight

Just like her Angler Boats-built counterpart, I found the Celebrity 170's rigging to be spot on, with overall power-to-weight ratio virtually impossible to fault. For those of you who are not up to date with your *Leisure Boating* reviews or are unfamiliar with Honda's fantastic BF90, let me indulge in a little repetition. The outboard is a totally different block, using a 1 496 cc engine with a bore of 73 mm, stroke of 89.4 mm and compression ratio of 9. The valve train is run by a single overhead camshaft (SOHC) with around 100 cc less displacement than the older model. This SOHC uses a variable valve timing system (V-TEC) to open up and allow more air out and fuel into the combustion chamber for increased acceleration. Engine dry weight has been reduced by approximately six kg (from 169 kg to about 163 kg), making it one of the lightest-weight 90 HP outboards in its class. Other technology includes electronic fuel injection and a lean-burn system for frugal fuel consumption. A vital component in the lean-burn system is an oxygen sensor situated in the exhaust. This sensor monitors and tweaks fuel delivery rates on a continual basis to ensure the engine is running as lean as possible.

A patented ignition timing system known as B.L.A.S.T – Boosted Low Speed Torque – is another piece of cutting edge technology that makes the BF90 what she is. Quick movement of the throttle deploys this ignition timing system, advancing the acceleration curve in a hard-hitting manner. Basically, this means that opening up your throttle in order to get onto the plane triggers the fuel injection system to produce a sudden flow of petrol into the combustion chamber. It takes the air a few split seconds to play catch-up,

TOP Caption XXXX caption XXXXX caption

MIDDLE Caption XXXX caption XXXXX caption

BOTTOM Caption caption XXXXX caption

meaning that for a very short period of time the air/fuel mixture is incredibly rich. The B.L.A.S.T makes up for this by advancing the ignition timing right to the limit of ignition. This is what gives such enhanced acceleration during the few one hundred or so feet of out-of-the-hole pop. The BF90's new styled gearcase adds the finishing touch to the entire silent-running, modern package.

Our review craft's engine was fitted with a 17" propeller, and planed in two ticks of a dove's tail (i.e. a touch over two seconds) without any unnecessary bow rearing. We managed a top speed of 78 km/h @ 6 200 rpm, which to me seems like more than enough pace for a bit of family boating, although according to Honda Knysna's Dave Hoets, the recommended steel prop would probably provide a bit more vooma. A semi-deep V means that the Celebrity 170 handles well in choppy conditions without losing too much stability while at rest.

Welcome aboard

The Celebrity 170 offers an unexpected amount of interior space. Thanks to a charitable sized U-shaped stern bench, she is able to seat up to ten people, although for maximum comfort I'd probably stick with no more than eight. The remainder of the seating setup comprises the typical runabout bow area which comes complete with a filler cushion for sunbathing, as well as separate twin seats with great legroom for skipper and sidekick. An unobtrusive walkthrough windscreen provides basic shelter from the wind and separates the bow from the main cockpit. The craft's helm station houses analogue instrumentation keeping track of mph, rpm, volts, fuel and trim, as well as a switch panel for controls to both anchor and running lights. As with the Slip 170, the Celebrity's non-skid deck has been designed to avoid the blinding glare that white decked boats tend to give off. Instead of being cream however, the area has been done out in a rather retro grey and white which, coupled



Caption XXXX caption XXXXX caption

with black and white piped upholstery, gives a pretty natty twist to the overall look and feel. Despite its funky look the boat's deck is super easy to clean and maintain, requiring little more than a freshwater hose-down after use.

Turn-key operation

The great thing about choosing a package like this is its turn-key status. If there's one thing that would really annoy me when buying a boat it would be the sneaky hidden costs that some boat purchases come with.

Honda Marine Knysna will also throw a Skippers Course into the mix as part of the full house price. Sounds like a bargain to me!

For more information contact Honda Marine Knysna on (044) 382 4090 or visit their commendable website at www.hondamarineknysna.com. If you want to keep up to date with the goings-on of this energetic little team, I can also recommend subscribing to their monthly newsletter. You can do this on their website or by dropping an enquiry to lyndall@hondamarineknysna.co.za. ●

At a glance

Engine	BF90 EFI V-TEC
Type	4-stroke
Displacement	1 496 cm ³
Bore x stroke	73 x 89.4 mm
Valve train	4-valve SOHC V-TEC
Full throttle rpm range	5 300 – 6 300
Rated power HP – (kW)	66.2 (90)/5 800
Cooling system	Water-cooled
Carburetion	Programmed Fuel Injection
Ignition system	Microcomputer programmed
Exhaust	Water-cooled (prop boss exhaust)
Gear ratio	2.33:1
Gear shift	F-N-R
Dimensions	
Overall length	746 mm
Overall width	449 mm
Overall height	1 566 (L) – 1 693 (XL)
Transom height	508 (L) – 635 (XL)
Dry weight	
Extra long shaft (XL)	168 kg
Long shaft (L)	162 kg



“a lean-burn system for frugal fuel consumption”