

SAILFISH 200

Words by Anton Pretorius

Pictures by Paul Weavers, Honda Marine Knysna

leisure
boating
SA's leading power boat magazine



There's nothing fishy about the Sailfish 200, except its fishability! With rodholders, rocket launchers, live wells, fish and tackle boxes, she's geared towards the serious fisherman.

Which fishermen wouldn't rather spend his weekend on board a craft, relaxing and hooking a monster marlin or two? With Honda Marine Knysna's Sailfish 200, you can stop dreaming! Now you can spend every weekend (or weekday, for that matter!) on board this 20-ft smooth-cruising beauty and do what all men love to do – to fish!

Leisure Boating goes offshore with the Sailfish 200.

General Impressions

I caught my first glimpse of the Sailfish 200 standing on Honda Marine Knysna's showroom floor. How Dave Hoets and his team managed to get this hefty craft under their roof was beyond me.

She measures 6.30 m (20-ft) and with a hull weight of 860 kg, she's a robust looking craft, ideally suited for the notoriously rough coastal waters of Knysna.

Her flowing contours, appealing red colouration and stump nose design maintained her fish-like demeanour. And with every fishing amenity available, anglers would be sorely impressed.

She certainly looks the part and, depending on the depth of your imagination, you can see her blending in easily with a school of fish while cruising the deep sea – a wolf in sheep's clothing, if you prefer.

Conditions for test

I tested the Sailfish 200 in the rough oceanic waters just beyond the Knysna Heads. Even though sea conditions weren't favourable, I felt immediately at ease with experienced skipper Derik Meintjies at the helm.

Overhead conditions were miserable and beneath us, even worse. A strong northeasterly wind swept across the bay causing big swells and plenty of white horses on the surface.

Such conditions aren't great for photographs, but on the upside, we managed to give the Sailfish 200 a decent run on the ocean surface,



A 2.6 m beam allows for a roomy interior plus a comfortable helm area. The collapsible T-top is an optional extra, but well worth considering.

thoroughly testing her capabilities, which she handled with much aplomb.

Launching and Trailering

With a length of 6.3 m, buyers are advised to rather take the double-axle trailer option with hydraulic brakes. Despite her size, offloading her at the slipway was smooth and comfortable, and she slid into the water easily – all you need is a bit of practice and lots of patience!

Deck Layout

The Sailfish 200 boasts broad shoulders and a large beam (2.6 m) which allows for a roomy deck capable of comfortably accommodating up to eight passengers – and an entire school of fish.

She's geared towards the serious fisherman and comes standard with an open deck, a live bait well and two hatches astern. In both gunnels, you'll find recessed rod holders and near the bow, a four-drawer tackle box. ▶



Despite her hefty hull size (860 kg) and broad shoulders, she's real easy to launch. All you need is a bit of patience and practice.



Shiny stainless steel grab rails at the stern lead you to a small swim platform that's easily accessible for skiers and wakeboarders.



Honda Marine Knysna had the rigging spot on with the Sailfish 200 when they fitted two powerful Honda 90 HP V-TEC motors aft.

With two retractable swivel seats at the helm area, skipper and sidekick can sit comfortably and enjoy the 360° view of their surroundings. In addition, a Perspex windscreen protects the helm occupants.

There is also a storage hatch on either side of the front console and another in the middle at the walk-through. There is space for four fuel cans on each side of the boat, and a fish hatch up front.



A storage hatch situated in the middle of the deck not only provides adequate seating, but also sufficient storage.



Some noticeable features on the Sailfish 200 include a four-drawer tackle box and a Perspex windscreen to weather the elements.

The Sailfish 200 features a carpeted deck with high-density rubber for better comfort and grip while fighting those feisty fish.

And when you are feeling a bit parched, there's a built-in cooler box to store those frosties.

Motors and controls

When other dealer's Sailfishes have failed, Honda Marine Knysna's Sailfish 200 is the perfect rig, thanks to two 90HP Honda V-TEC 4-stroke motors fitted aft.

In the past, the Sailfish 200 was fitted with two 135HP Honda engines, which was completely overpowered. Horsepower recommendation varies from 60 to 140HP, but Honda Marine Knysna has the rigging spot on with the twin 90HP outboard installation.

These V-TEC motors, with aluminium 19-pitch propellers, pack quite a punch! I had no problem pushing the Sailfish out of the hole and getting her onto the plane (3.5 sec) and up to top speed.

Interestingly, Honda's V-TEC technology synchronises the lift and duration of the intake valves at both low and high rpm. This yields a longer, flatter torque curve, which means maximum power at all speeds.

The craft was fitted with cable-drive sidemount controls, which were a little



Interestingly, skipper Derik Meintjies shows that the Sailfish 200 is more than capable of planing with just one motor in the water.

stiff initially, but as the test progressed, they seemed to smooth out.

Handling and performance

As mentioned above, the performance of Honda's 90 HP V-TEC motors was just mind-blowing! You wouldn't expect a burly catamaran to be capable of exhilaration speeds, but the Sailfish 200 got around quicker than you can say "Jack Robinson".

We established a top speed of nearly 70 km/h (37 knots) at 6 000 rpm and a decent cruising speed of 45 km/h

(24 knots) at 3 500 rpm. Her catamaran hull provided a soft, smooth ride while her powerful engines may well surprise you.

Not once did I experience any cavitation on sharp turns or with a following sea. I did however, notice a slight loss in speed during those tight turns, but not enough to concern a potential buyer. Neither did we experience any rolling or broaching.

Despite rough conditions, not once did I get water over the nose of the boat, making her an extremely dry craft. ☒



In both gunnels, you'll find recessed storage compartments that conveniently store away your fishing gear out of harm's way.

The Sailfish 200's handling capabilities are great, so even a novice would feel safe piloting her.

Finishing touches

Another noticeable aspect about the Sailfish 200 is that she's accentuated with the subtle and clever use of sexy (and shiny!) stainless steel grab rails.

You'd find these grab rails neatly fitted at the stern, bow and at the helm (integrated into the optional removable

T-top!) that will provide secure grip should the ride become a little bumpy.

You'll also find that the motor wells are integrated into the craft's small swim platform for those avid wakeboarders or skiers looking to board or disembark into the water.

Optional extras on the Sailfish 200 includes a Garmin GPS/Fishfinder, mooring cover, rod holders, safety equipment, VHF radio, wakeboard tower and stainless steel T-top.

Conclusion

Although she's predominantly a fishing craft, she's rather versatile as well. Dave Hoets reckons she's powerful enough to tow a skier, durable enough to cruise the oceans and her big deck makes her extremely accommodating.

The Sailfish 200 is smooth on the surface and strong in the chop. Not only that, but Honda Marine Knysna is offering her at a special price. So, for those chilled-out weekend fishing trips, she's a definite must-have!

For more information about the Sailfish 200, please contact dealer principal Dave Hoets at Honda Marine Knysna on (044) 382 4090. Alternatively, drop him an email at info@hondamarineknysna.co.za, or visit www.hondamarineknysna.co.za

At a glance

LOA:	6.30 m (20-ft)
Beam:	2.60 m
Hull weight:	860 kg
Passenger capacity:	8
Engine:	Twin Honda 90 HP V-TEC 4-stroke
Top Speed:	70 km/h (37 knots)
Price:	Approx R425 000

