



SPORTSMAN

17 REEF

Words & Images: Kosta Linardos

The Australian market has always offered a few 17ft centre consoles and while they have been good boats, they lacked refinements such as effective storage and the ability to mount electronics the way modern anglers like to fit out their boats. The days of serious anglers getting by with one sonar unit are long gone and they are now opting for smaller, less expensive boats and putting the extra dollars towards electric motors, multiple MFDs (multi-function displays) and all manner of transducers.

The new Reef 17, once made in America and now being manufactured in Australia with its bigger brother the Island Reef 19, is offering anglers a great new option in this size range.

The 17 places itself in the market with some strong points of difference that will appeal to anglers. First off is the design. It's hard to find another 17 that sports those lines and that Carolina flare on the bow. She's a great-

looking boat available in four colours: Polar White, Misty Grey (tested), Sea Green and Athol Blue. You're getting an amazing-looking boat, no matter which colour you choose. It's a vessel you'll be proud to have sitting in your driveway and it's sure to turn heads at the ramp. The build quality is outstanding; I'm extremely picky about the finish of glass boats and the 17 can't be faulted.

It's made with full composite materials and everything from the hatch fittings to the chandlery exudes quality for the size and price point. Most boats in this size range will feature a wooden floor that's fibre glassed and then flow coated, but with the 17 you're getting a full composite liner finished in gelcoat all the way through. There's nothing that can rot and turn soft so it's a boat you can have for a long time without issue, and this is backed by a 10-year hull warranty.

Standard inclusions such as a stainless

steering wheel, hydraulic steering, rear live well and a big front storage hatch on gas struts really set the 17 apart. The inclusion of a 150-litre fuel tank is another big feature you won't find on many (if any) boats of this size.

There are four stainless rod holders on the gunwales, three stainless rod holders either side of the console and an additional four in the transom. On top of this you get a plush leaning post and it sits on a Savage Trailers C series trailer, which in my opinion is the best galvanised trailer on the market.

The positioning of the seat and console allow for good 360-degree movement, and it doesn't feel like a small boat when you're in it. The casting platform is a great size, even for two anglers, and you could easily add a bait board at the stern, making it a boat that can double as an awesome casting and jigging platform as well as a highly capable bait fishing boat.