

BOAT REVIEW:

Buccaneer 650 Esprite

IMPROVING WITH AGE

It's almost 20 years since Buccaneer released the 635 DC and its replacement, the 650 Esprite, is long overdue. Barry Thompson checks out what's so different...

In late 1996 Buccaneer released the 635 DC, which while I always saw it as a bowrider, designer/builder Gerry Gerrand always called it a Dual Console (DC) boat.

According to Wade Gerrand, assistant supervisor at Buccaneer Boats, the main reason for changing the very popular 635 Esprite DC was not only because after nearly 20 years it needed to be modernised, but also that there seemed to be a lot more interest

in big bowriders. "We knew we had a great boat, but we were also conscious that it was time for a change and we needed to make some significant improvements, not only to the layout but also to the way we built the boat." The result is a whole lot different from the 635. Most noticeable is the softer appearance of the deck, with new swage lines that take away the previous harsh square look. The windscreen has also been altered with longer side panels that flow more harmoniously with the boat's profile.

As the twin consoles, and accordingly the windscreen, are about 50mm further forward, there's a little more space in the cockpit. Not that it needed it.

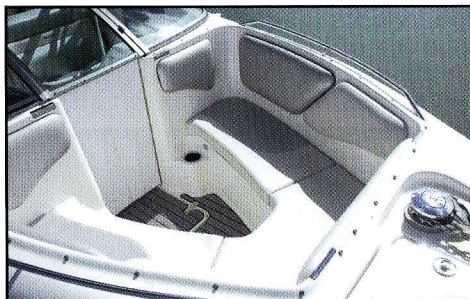
The bow section remains very much unchanged and is the same size as the previous 635, but is forward by 50mm. Just a little more upmarket and also more serviceable.

Another big change in the bow area is to the short foredeck, which sees the inclusion of a more modern and hands-free Maxwell RC6 winch and a deep anchor locker.

In the new 650 Esprite there is a dedicated rebate either side of the walkway, allowing for two solid swing doors that can be easily folded back out of the way. Much better than the old



The full GRP inner liner means a little more space in the cockpit.



The bow section is much the same but comes with a few extras.

curtain.

The storage space inside the twin consoles is about the same size as in the previous 635, but the base is now flat, so you're not chasing bits of gear into the recessed corners. There's easy access also to the back of the dash, although in the 650 this is now not so critical.

The dash (big, for all your extras) is well equipped with a Lowrance HDS12 MFD (you could squeeze a 14-inch MFD in its place), triple Yamaha digital gauges, Fusion MSUD 750 stereo, plus the controls for the tabs and winch.

NEW SEATING

Another big change from the 635 is the seating. While there is still a single swivelling bucket seat for the driver and king/queen on the passenger side, they are now quite different. The sliding and swivelling driver's seat comes with a fold up base that forms a bolster seat. This makes it very versatile, allowing you to stand, sit or squat to drive.

The cockpit sole is now 100mm lower than the 635 and not self-draining anymore due to the full GRP inner liner. All water taken aboard runs through to the sump, where a big Rule 900 auto bilge pump quickly expels it over the side. Because of the new inner liner construction, the side trays are now wider and the coaming height is deeper.

The transom houses a fresh water sink unit to starboard and a bait tank to port. The bait tank can be fully plumbed in if you require a live bait system, or left as a bait storage. A multi-purpose single ski pole can also be used to mount a bait board, which again adds to the versatility of the new 650 Esprite.

Because this boat is set up for wakeboarding, overhead is a custom-made stainless steel wake tower from XAir. If wakeboarding isn't your thing, then you can get a basic bimini with rocket launcher and clear, which Buccaneer now build in two-inch stainless tube, so it is very robust. Towing a wakeboarder from this would be fine.

PRACTICALLY PERFECT

With the GRP liner and full-length fibreglass top hat stringers, and about 30kgs more hull weight, the new 650 Esprite feels stiffer on the water than I can remember of the 635. The



The new 650 Esprite may look a lot like the 635 it replaces, but there are a lot of differences.

foam fill between the liner and the hull makes it a very quiet boat and there is no thumping resonating through the boat while underway in choppy seas.

Our test power, a Yamaha 250 was well matched and provided a super quick holeshot and smooth transition right through to maximum 5700rpm.

As for the changes, Buccaneer has done it right and simply made a great boat even better.

SEE FULL REVIEW IN NOV-DEC ISSUE OF PACIFIC POWERBOAT MAGAZINE.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model:	Buccaneer 650 Esprite
Type:	Bowrider
Construction:	GRP
LOA:	6.76m
LOH:	6.35m
Beam:	2.42m
Deadrise:	21deg

MANUFACTURER

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