

BOAT REVIEW
BUCCANEER 550 ENFORCER

Clockwise:

The anchor locker is in the floor below the forward storage locker.



While the console is similar to the 640 it is narrower but still has space behind for two.

The side decks are wide enough to walk around the console.



SPECIFICATIONS

Boat Design Name: Buccaneer 550 Enforcer
Price As Tested: \$56,446
Type: Centre Console RIB
Construction: GRP Hull/PVC Tubes
LOA: 5.50m
Beam: 2.50m
Deadrise: 21 deg
Towing Weight: 1140 kg
Height on Trailer: 2.95m
Test Power: Mercury 45 90hp
Top Speed: 34 knots
Propeller: 18"
Power Options: Outboard Only
HP Range: 60-130hp
MFD: Lowrance 9"
Fuel: 100 L (standard)
Manufacturer: Buccaneer Boats Ltd
 Ph +64 07-849 7129
 gerry@buccaneer.co.nz
 www.buccaneer.co.nz

FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA

Fuel capacity: 100 litres

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range (NM)
1000	4.5	2.2	0.490	180
1500	5.6	4	0.720	120
2000	7.0	6	0.860	100
2500	8.7	7.8	0.900	100
3000	12.0	10	0.840	100
3500	19.5	12.6	0.650	130
4000	24.3	16.8	0.700	120
4500	27.8	22.2	0.800	110
5000	30.8	25	0.820	100
5550	34.0	32.4	0.960	93

L/NM is calculated to two significant figures and rounded up. Range is calculated to two significant figures and rounded down.

very predictable and easily driven and didn't really need any more than the 90hp we had on the transom. Based on the 525/530 hull, it's still not a big boat, although you do have extra beam and length due to the tubes and these certainly make a difference when it comes to stability at rest (rear of the tubes are sitting on the water) and underway. While the hull length of the 530 Esprite is 5.21m and a beam of 2.14m, with the tubes added to the 21 deg GRP hull, that increases to 2.50m beam and an overall length of 5.50m. When I went forward I opened up the forepeak hatch which I assumed was the anchor locker, only to be told by Gerry that no, that was the rope storage locker, with the much larger anchor locker down in the cockpit sole. Ten metres of chain and 100m of rope fit in easily. While there was no capstan on the boat, Buccaneer do offer it with a stainless steel tow post with a top mounted capstan. There is a bow roller and the option of an anchor platform with bollard and fairlead.

GENERAL PURPOSE

The Buccaneer 550 Enforcer is a true Kiwi RIB, designed to be as versatile as possible, so that it doesn't matter if you are fishing, diving, wake boarding or using it as a tender, the boat is ideally suited to any task. It comes with a great pedigree, with both Buccaneer and Southern Pacific highly respected and well established in their respective areas of expertise.

If you liked the 640 Enforcer but thought it was too big for your needs and out of your price bracket, then consider the 550 Enforcer which is around \$11,000 less for the basic boat, has a single axle trailer and runs a lot less horsepower. Overall package is way cheaper and you are still getting a reasonably large RIB, which will be cheaper to run.

Maybe I better get back to the Bay of Islands, same time same place next year and who knows I might see the next Enforcer to join the Buccaneer RIB stable. ☺

BOAT REVIEW

BUCCANEER 550 ENFORCER

Text & Images by Barry Thompson



By utilising the 640 Enforcer as a baseline, the smaller 550 Enforcer encompasses a lot of the same layout and styling.

**CLASSIC
KIWI RIB**

It was almost 12 months to the day that I first experienced a Buccaneer Enforcer RIB, when I ran the 640 Enforcer, Buccaneer's first ever RIB. I was in the Bay of Islands over the Xmas break and by chance I was back in the Bay for a few days this summer when I got a call from Buccanner's, Gerry Gerrand who told me he had the first 550 Enforcer in the water and would I like to have a look at it.

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BUCCANEER 550 ENFORCER



The Buccaneer 550 Enforcer is a true Kiwi RIB.

The 550 Enforcer is rated from 60-130hp.

Happens that where I was staying at Waipiro Bay was only a short distance across the water to Urupukapuka Island where the 550 Enforcer was moored up alongside Gerry's Formula 4000. As he did last year, Gerry had taken the all new model away to appraise for himself before putting it on the market. "Even before I got the first boat finished we had three orders, so I needed to be sure that when we did start producing them in the new year, they were 100% right, he added.

"This is very much a prototype, but after using it for a few weeks I will not be changing much, apart from the prop size", said Gerry. By utilising the 640 Enforcer as a baseline, the smaller 550 Enforcer encompasses a lot of the same layout and styling, albeit compacted. The tube diameter is smaller than the 640, reduced from 500mm to 450mm aft and from 450mm to 400mm forward. The tubes are supplied and fitted by Southern Pacific and you have the choice of Hypalon or PVC. The PVC is all welded and the only glue is where it joins the 75mm hull flange. Two thirds of the tube is outside the chine which gives you the advantage of maximum internal and external beam.

COMPLETE CONSOLE

While the console is similar to the 640 it is narrower but still has space behind for two people to sit behind a very solid Perspex screen. The dash is the same as the 640, and while our boat had a Lowrance 9" MFD, there is room enough for a 16" MFD. You have the choice of digital or analogue gauges and there is a raised eyebrow to mount either.

We also had a GME VHF and a matching GME AM/FM Bluetooth stereo. Due to a space issue, the engine controls are mounted on the outside of the console. I found them surprisingly easy to use and in the perfect position when driving.

While there was a console opening on the 640, on the port side of the helm for access to a dry storage area inside the console, this wasn't possible in the 550. Some of that space has now been taken up with shelf space. Gerry commented that they may incorporate this in the 640 as there is still plenty of access forward and it makes a better use of the space with the storage shelves. Access to the area in the console is behind the console bow seat where the entire front lifts up for easy entry.



The open bow is perfect for soft baiting.

Under the transom seating is storage and the battery.



The flip back helm seats mean you can have one forward and one aft when towing water toys, or both forward while fishing and waiting for the bite. The overhead soft bimini also offers good shade, which I appreciated as during the test day the temp was up around 28 deg. A sturdy stainless steel Manta fold down T-Top can also be fitted with all-round clears for maximum protection from the weather. It's sturdy enough to tow the wakeboard from. The twin seats are mounted on a moulded storage box with a large rear hatch. Great spot for fenders and your fishing tackle. The 550 in fact offers more seating than the 640, due to the moulded jump seats either side of the engine well. Again, this is something that may now appear in the 640. Under the transom seating is storage and the battery. The stainless ski pole is also used to mount the bait board and there are rod holders built into the rear deck either side. Other rod storage is overhead as being a RIB, coaming mounted rod holders are not really an option, unless you have a Railblaza system.

Centreline under the cockpit sole is a 100 litre fuel tank (optional 130 litre) and a wet locker aft that is large enough for a 25 litre tote tank. Due to the boat being in the water for quite a few weeks and well away from a handy fuel pump, Gerry had the 130 litre as well as a tote tank full. Based on our figures after we got back from the Bay and with the prop changed to a Spitfire X7 19", the standard 100 litre fuel tank provides a 100nm plus range at a reasonable cruise speed. Push the throttle down and the Mercury 90 topped out at 32.4 lph @ 5550 rpm, which is still very acceptable.

I have an identical Mercury 90 4S on my 4.8m McLay Fortress so I wasn't surprised at the grunt this engine has and also how quiet it runs right throughout the rpm range.

The 550 Enforcer is rated from 60-130hp, with the 90hp being the pick of the size for me. Still enough power and torque to tow tubes, wakeboards and skiers and economical. As for the handling, the 550 Enforcer is