
review

**Buccaneer
Six Fifteen**

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HARDTOP HEAVEN

Putting a hardtop on a boat can significantly impact the overall experience of passengers and crew – and improve the functionality of any vessel.



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rom providing shelter and protection to enhancing aesthetics and adding value, installing a hardtop on a tried-and-tested hull design makes good sense. It's what the team at Buccaneer has done – and very well – for a category of fibreglass trailer boats that usually sold with open cockpits or bimini tops at best.

Based on the well-known Buccaneer 605 hull, the Buccaneer Six Fifteen has increased the 605's waterline length and buoyancy to accommodate the additional weight of the hardtop. The sheerline has been raised slightly to ensure the hardtop looks right and sits well. The transom angle has also been increased to 19°. Overall, these changes have enhanced the boat's visual appeal and helped ensure it handles and performs as it should.

Creating a new fibreglass GRP design requires time, effort, and investment. Led by Gerry and Wade Gerrand, the Hamilton-based Buccaneer crew calculated that the Six Fifteen

model would require 5% more buoyancy. Increasing buoyancy helps the boat support more weight and adds stability. Any potential performance and fuel consumption penalties, particularly at higher speeds, resulting from increased drag were not apparent during our testing session.

PERFORMANCE

Powered by a performance-orientated Mercury 150hp Pro XS mated with a four-bladed stainless-steel Revolution 4 propeller, the boat has plenty of grip, strong acceleration, and an appropriate top speed. It leapt out of the water onto the plane and carved up the turns very well.

The engine delivers smooth and responsive power, allowing for confident manoeuvring. Overall handling is good. According to the manufacturer, the Mercury 150 Pro delivers competitive fuel economy compared to other outboard motors. The fuel usage data feed wasn't working during our testing session, so we could not verify it.

This 207kg 3.0-litre outboard motor incorporates advanced technology features. These include SeaStar hydraulic steering for effortless manoeuvring, and smart gauges for monitoring engine parameters – all of them enhance performance, convenience and safety. During our run, with four adults aboard, the boat easily powered to a cruise speed of 50kph at 4,500rpm. It felt like a lot of performance from a 150hp outboard.

FEATURES

The Buccaneer Six Fifteen is a multi-purpose trailer boat. It can be used for watersports, cruising, overnighting, or fishing. Various features and layout elements cater to each type of activity. Personally, I would have liked to see more 12V outlets through the boat (there is only one as standard). These could be used for phone chargers, electric reels, or electric air pumps for the water toys.

The helm-operated Maxwell anchor winch has decent fall into the moulded locker for the warp and chain, which will help reduce any bundling. The helm station also has a rode counter – a great feature on any vessel.

The helm station is clutter-free, with Smart gauges nicely arrayed above the Raymarine



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Weight: Under 20kg

Power: 1kW

Battery Size: 1270wh

Running Time: 5hours*

*Running time at economical speed



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RIGHT The Six Fifteen is supplied on a good quality tandem-axle trailer braked by stainless steel calipers.

RIGHT Fittings and fixtures are good quality, including the capstan, fairlead, anchor, and cabin-side rod racks suitable for trolling.

multifunction display (MFD) unit. The MFD has both touchscreen and traditional button functionality. The conventional button option is much easier to use when underway. A slightly larger screen or a pair of smaller screens would further enhance the dashboard.

The drinks holder is kept to the right side of the area, so it doesn't get in the way of seeing any of the gauges or screens, the Lectrotab trim control panel is positioned nice and high, so it's easily accessible when trimming adjustments are required when underway. With the new transom angle, these trim tabs were very effective, needing only the smallest adjustments to trim the hull.

I found the helm seat comfortable to sit in and drive or to lean against the bolster while standing. The seat position and the glasshouse design provided excellent visibility. The windscreen is split in two, with the starboard side having a wiper blade.



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- Fishing Orientated
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A wiper on the port side would also be helpful – this option can be accommodated upon request. Sliding side windows are standard. The windows are from Sandbrooks in Auckland, the marine glazing experts that have been putting windscreens on boats since the 1970s.

The hardtop roof has two optional LED spotlights, one facing forward and the second aft facing into the cockpit. Accessing the internal area between the roof and ceiling lining is relatively easy, making additions like roof racks for stand-up paddle boards, or a radar unit easier to fit. A set of triple cabin-side rod racks on either side are incorporated onto the hardtop's structure. These are angled for trolling.

The hardtop comes standard with a track for the road cover

This new addition to the Buccaneer fleet will appeal to many boaties – and so it should.



WHY A HARDTOP?

First and foremost, a hardtop offers shelter from the elements. A solid roof overhead can significantly enhance comfort on the water, whether it's protection from the scorching sun, rain and spray, or windy conditions. A cosy hardtop ensures a more enjoyable experience for the boat's occupants and can extend a vessel's life by shielding the interior from the damage caused by prolonged exposure to harsh weather conditions.

Moreover, a hardtop can remarkably improve a boat's useability, especially for activities such as fishing or diving. With a solid roof overhead, boaters can mount additional equipment like rod holders or radar domes, which make fishing trips more productive, enjoyable and safe. A hardtop can also serve as a mounting point for speakers, or even solar panels, adding to a vessel's convenience, versatility, and entertainment value.

Regarding safety, a hardtop provides a sturdy structure to hang onto in rough seas or during sudden manoeuvres. It can also serve as a mounting point for safety equipment such as life rafts and emergency beacons, ensuring the boat is well-prepared for unforeseen circumstances.

Furthermore, a well-designed hardtop can enhance a boat's aesthetics, giving it a more polished and sophisticated look. Whether it's a sleek fibreglass design or a rugged aluminium structure, adding a hardtop can transform the vessel's appearance, making it stand out on the water.

Hardtops make sense from a resale perspective, too. For buyers, the added functionality and protection a hardtop provides are very desirable features. Additionally, a hardtop can contribute to the durability and longevity of the boat, further boosting its resale value.

However, adding a hardtop also has potential drawbacks, especially with smaller vessels. The added weight and wind resistance can affect performance, potentially reducing speed and fuel efficiency, and alter a boat's balance and stability.



which fully encloses the cockpit. This is an obvious option for an overnight cover, too. The canvas can be extended to make an awning, providing more shade for crew and passengers. The head can be either a plumbed-in electric unit or a portable all-in-one, and the v-berths forward convert to a double with the infill.

PRACTICAL COCKPIT

The cockpit floor is lined with SeaDek, which looks good and is comfortable underfoot, while the side-pockets provide plenty of storage for gear. A large live bait tank is housed on the port side of the transom – this setup is also designed to be used as a salt-water washdown. When underway, the self-filling live bait tank replenishes the water without using the pump.

The vessel's two batteries – one start, one house – are secured at floor level in battery boxes inside a transom locker; the easily accessible master switches are in a separate locker. Underfloor wet locker storage is ample enough to accommodate a big kingfish or a couple of dive tanks, and there's a large insulated Poly bin that doubles as a seat.

On the transom, a wide, sturdy bait board from Manta drains into the well. It provides three stainless-steel rod holders to complement four through-gunwale rod holders with four more across the transom (two used for the bait table). A rocket launcher is an available option.

The rod holders, bait tank and generous ice/catch storage, combined with the underwater lights, highlight this boat is ready to catch fish.

FAR LEFT The attractive moulded helm console puts everything at your fingertips.

LEFT The Six Fifteen is a versatile model perfect for families or a couple of mates off fishing.

RIGHT The cockpit works well for fishers and divers; Batteries in boxes are tucked away behind a transom door.





EASY TRAILERING

The boat is transported on a tandem-axle Enduro trailer. The steel trailer runs on a set of alloy wheels, with a spare wheel bolted to the frame near the front, an internal freshwater flush system and stainless-steel caliper brakes. The package looks sharp, and with that spare wheel, a puncture won't ruin your day. As expected, the boat was as easy to launch and retrieve.



CONCLUSION

Adding a hardtop to a boat many would consider a classic takes some courage. Why risk messing with a proven design? But in this case, the risk was well worth the reward. The changes have enhanced the boating experience – the boat looks great and performed and handled well.

This new addition to the Buccaneer fleet will appeal to many boaties – and so it should. Overall, the Six Fifteen retains the 'class without the fuss' Buccaneer pedigree and should continue to generate the same timeless appeal. **BNZ**

ABOVE Wade Gerrand explains some of the available options to the writer.

BELOW Based on the Buccaneer 605, the Six Fifteen is an accomplished performer.



Buccaneer Six Fifteen

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HIGHLIGHTS

Hardtop adds weather protection, versatility and utility

Composed handling and accomplished ride

Good-looking hardtop version a welcome addition to the Buccaneer range

Well-equipped and plenty of options

SPECIFICATIONS

loa 6.78m
hull length 6.15m
beam 2.34m
deadrise 22°
trailerable weight
 1660kg dry/1880kg as tested
engine Mercury Pro XS 150hp
fuel 165 litres underfloor
cruising speed 26 knots
max speed 35 knots

