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Flawless

After this exceptional boat won both the Aluminium Fishing Boat Open and Overall Winner awards at the 2013 Hutchwilco Boat Show recently, Matthew Jones couldn't wait to test it. After a near perfect day on the water he walked away extremely impressed. But what makes it so good?

Words and images by Matthew Jones

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Weather conditions

Average wind speed 15 knots NW
Sea state Moderate 1m chop

Innovation isn't a word taken lightly at Dickey Boats – in fact, the Napier-based company, led by Jason and Tristin Dickey, pride themselves on it. "We don't like looking to the left and right," says founder Jason. "We like looking at solutions for people and that's where the innovation comes from. It's a driver for the company, there's no question about it."

With their brand new model, the Custom 750 XS, Dickey Boats won the Overall Boat of the Show award after winning the Aluminium Fishing Boat Open class at the 2013 Hutchwilco New Zealand Boat Show. Anyone who viewed this boat at the show will appreciate the reasons behind the judges' decision. The superb attention to detail, outstanding quality and clever, innovative features are obvious as soon as you step on board, but the performance is a treat you only get to savour once in open water, as we

Ergonomic, spacious and easy to operate. Comfortable soft-rider helm seat



Helm loaded with toys, including 15.4" Raymarine HybridTouch with Chirp technology for crystal clear sounding. Enclosed toilet was a must



Rear seat backrest flips and faces either way. Front seat extends out to seat two, allows four people to dine

were fortunate enough to in Napier soon after the show.

While not giving away too many secrets, Jason Dickey says, "Our hulls ride so well because of our focus on build quality. Everything we do is for ride, performance and economy – everything. At every step in the design and build process we strive to improve those three key characteristics." The Custom range is built using the same construction techniques as the larger Dickey Semifly range – basically, they're all built like ships using Dickey Boats' trademarked space frame interlocking structure, which creates an unyielding, quiet and superb-riding hull.

The stand-out ride is a culmination of multiple factors, with the internal structure, finish, layout, centre of gravity and the bow/hull design all playing a part. The relatively plumb bow, with its fine entry, parts the wave before the boat rides over it, considerably smoothing out the ride. Dickey hulls also exhibit impressive dynamic stability, allowing their boats to run at 28-30 knots comfortably through a messy beam-on sea. The large downturned chine and balance of the boat ensure it maintains a level attitude and grips exceptionally hard in tight turns.

Dickey Boats offers a full custom in-house design service where your imagination can run wild. They fabricate as many components



- Superb ride
- Stunning finish
- Great fishing boat
- Great family boat
- Stable and soft-riding



- 60-litre water tank may be a little light for some families (fully customisable)

in house as possible, for two reasons: quality control and assurance of parts in the future. Every Dickey boat built is kept on file so owners can be sure that if they do manage to break something, Dickey Boats can make them a new one.

Following the company's first sale to Switzerland, both Dickey Custom 750s and 800s will soon be CE certified, with the full range to follow suit.

PERFORMANCE DATA

DICKEY CUSTOM 750XS WITH 250HP HONDA
FOUR-STROKE OUTBOARD

RPM	SPEED* (Kts)	FUEL BURN* (L/Nm)
650	2.8	0.81
1000	4.0	0.91
1500	5.6	1.00
2000	7.1	1.20
2500	7.7	1.56
3000	11.2	1.49
3500	17.4	1.21
4000	22.5	1.22
4500	26.3	1.30
5000	29.5	1.58
5500	33.0	1.80
6000	35.8	1.99
6200	37.5	2.29

* Performance data has been averaged between
upwind and downwind figures.Table and rear seat easily fold to
make way for double berthRear seat flips up to reveal
gas cooker and sink under
shelter of hardtop

Extended stay

The new Dickey Custom 750 XS (XS stands for extended stay) is based on the acclaimed Custom 750 blueprint, with cleverly added features to allow four people to enjoy comfortable, prolonged good times on the water. No one likes having to pull up the bedding in the night to use the toilet in full view, so an enclosed toilet was a must. The infill for the front berth has been skilfully designed so it can stay in place when the toilet door is opened.

In the cockpit, the front seat extends out to seat two. The seat extension is strong

enough that you can sit on it while underway — this also allows four people to dine at the table, which easily folds down so the double berth can be made up. A sociable seating arrangement is a Dickey Boats hallmark. Comfort is also paramount, and everyone gets a footrest whichever way they're sitting.

Clever engineering sees the rear seat (whose backrest pivots to allow either front facing to eat or rear facing to watch the lures) flip up to reveal the gas cooker and sink, or flip down to form a double berth. The position of the galley remains nicely situated within the hardtop so you can cook or make a coffee while remaining protected from the elements.

The multi-purpose road cover allows tent poles to fit into the angled transom rod holders, transforming the centre piece into an awning for added comfort at anchor. Classy LED side lighting creates a relaxing ambience after sunset. A pull-out fresh-water shower retracts neatly into the transom with 60 litres of fresh water on board.

Another requirement for staying away at sea is storage, and there's plenty on board. The Dickey's recently got to enjoy the fruits of their labour, spending five nights on the Hauraki Gulf with their two young children. Jason says that even with all the water toys and extra luggage requirements of small children, storage was never a problem.

The helm provides an entertainment hub, and this talented boat is also a wireless hot spot allowing tablets and smart phones to tap into internet access and remotely control the intelligent electronics package (Fusion stereo system and Raymarine HybridTouch screen).

Offshore easy

I met the Dickey Boats team in Napier, where Jason and Tristin were treating their staff to a day's fishing. Due to great customer relations we had use of privately-owned *Jack*, a stunning Dickey Semifly 32, as a photo boat. On board *Jack*, all eyes were on the Dickey Custom 750 XS as the early morning light danced around its super-yacht-like hull finish.

At 30 knots, both boats comfortably sped through two to three metres of swell and a

metre of opposing chop. We were on course to the Lachlan Ridge some 43 nautical miles offshore. Once at the ridge I jumped off the 32 photo boat to join Jason and test the Dickey Custom 750's fishability first hand. The 15.4" Raymarine HybridTouch with Chirp technology did a superb job of locating the ridge rising out of 130 metres of water (it also gave a crystal clear reading of the 130m bottom while travelling at 30kt).

We spent an enjoyable few hours bottom fishing baits with mixed results before Jason dug into his tackle box and handed me a jig. No sooner had I joked, "this is how they do it on TV" I was being railed by a solid kingfish peeling line from 75m down below.

The 750 XS made the ensuing battle relatively easy. Anglers can brace themselves hard against the thigh-height gunwales, while the flooding keel and large downturned chines provide excellent stability — even with a two to three-metre swell beam on and three excited blokes on one side.

Multiple line-peeling runs later, the gaff went in, a 17kg bad boy was landed, and kingfish steaks were on the menu for dinner. We tail-wrapped the kingie and safely bled it in the outboard pod live-bait tank before placing it in the icebox under the transom. Underneath the excellent swivelling-lid baitboard is a second live-bait tank, which we used for dead-bait storage on the day. As a nice touch, Dickey Boats custom makes each baitboard with high-quality, food-grade plastic cutting boards.

The deck tread provided good grip, was comfortable underfoot and also proved easy to clean, even when covered in fish blood — thanks also to the saltwater wash down system and self-draining scuppers.

Jason is somewhat of a game fishing fanatic, so a game chair bolts to the floor and there's no walk-through transom on his boat — for both serious fishing and child-safety reasons. There's a clever removable step that attaches to the parcel shelf for an easy step down into the cockpit.

RATINGS

Fishability	★★★★★★
Innovation.....	★★★★★★
Design and layout	★★★★★★
Ease of towing.....	★★★★☆☆
Handling and ride	★★★★★★
Stability	★★★★★★
Ergonomics	★★★★★★
Finish	★★★★★★
X-factor	★★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★★



Custom 750
DickeyBoats

“ Feel the responsiveness of the big V6 Honda outboard combined with the slippery, soft-riding and unyielding hull. Then push the throttle past your usual comfort zone, relax and try to stop the grin from forming. ”

A seriously cool hand-wash system is located on each side of the hull, which is simply operated by leaning on a button with your knee — very clever indeed. It saves having to lean perilously over the side with passing waves soaking your sleeves.

Surreal experience

With the sun getting low we called time on a thoroughly enjoyable day's fishing and engaged the Lewmar windlass,

letting it do the hard yards with around 100 metres of anchor warp to retrieve — it didn't miss a beat.

Relaxing back into the comfortable soft-rider helm seat puts a whole lot of toys and a seriously capable boat at your fingertips. The driving experience goes something like this: put the throttle down, feel the responsiveness of the big V6 Honda outboard combined with the slippery, soft-riding and unyielding hull. Then push the throttle past your usual comfort zone, relax and try to

stop the grin from forming. It really is that good.

For most of the 1.5-hour trip home we had a metre of chop on the front quarter with rolling two to three metre swells and comfortably sat on 25-30 knots the whole way. Jason says he chose the Honda 250hp four-stroke outboard for its superb fuel economy — it's also quiet, smooth and very responsive. Helming the Dickey Custom 750 XS back to Napier into the setting sun, surrounded by dolphins with

Honda 250hp four-stroke outboard offers superb fuel economy — quiet, smooth and very responsive



Two live-bait tanks, custom baitboard, easy wash-down, clever fresh water hand washing, game chair mounting, thigh-height gunwales

Jack to our stern quarter was a truly surreal experience.

Dickey Boats manufactures their own high quality alloy trailers fitted with rubber skids to provide a secure cradle. We launched at dawn and retrieved at dusk by simply driving off and then back on again.

The last word

The Custom 750 XS combines clever innovation, great performance, a superb ride and a stunning finish in both a family and fisherman-friendly package. Its superior versatility means you can take

the family away one weekend and the boys offshore the next — either way, it's equally capable and fully customisable.

Even though this is the third and smallest Dickey boat I've had the pleasure of reviewing, I'm still extremely impressed. It's certainly in my top five, along with a couple of other Dickey boats...

For more information contact Dickey Boats on (06) 834 1310, info@dickeyboats.co.nz or dickeyboats.co.nz

SPECIFICATIONS

DICKEY CUSTOM 750 XS

Material	5083 marine grade aluminium
External finish	Awlcraft 2000 — hull and house Acidwash and Nyalic — cockpit
Overall length	7.9m (25'11")
Overall beam	2.5m (8'2")
Deadrise	20°
Additional stability	Flooding chamber
Towing weight	2300kg dry
Fuel capacity	300L
Water capacity	60L
Engine as tested	250hp Honda V6 four-stroke outboard
Construction	Dickey Boats® space frame interlocking
Vessel scantlings:	480 (each)
10mm	Engine bed for inboard
6mm	Keel panel, hull doubler, girders, anchor cheeks, vertical keel bar, transom and outboard pod
5mm	Transverse framing and stringers
4mm	Top sides, house, decks
Price as tested	\$225,000
Priced from	POA



Custom 750 XS later proved capable of comfortably doing 30 knots through two to three metres of swell and a metre of opposing chop