

Barra Bass & Bream Rigs



GS Marine's new pressed plate Xtreme 480 is a beautifully finished boat and it displayed very impressive performance with the 90 Suzuki Four Stroke on the back.

Xtreme 480

By Chris Makepeace

The Xtreme 480 is one of a new range of top-class pressed plate boats from the GS Marine stable in the Northern Territory. Their design, build quality and superb finish put them right up there with the very best Aussie-built alloy boats and so does their performance.

Xtreme alloy boats are designed and manufactured by GS Marine in Darwin — a company that has already earned an excellent

The Xtreme's SportzBack transom with its folding boarding ladder provides easy access to the boat and it adds to the hull's stability both at rest and on the plane.



reputation with its Aquarat and Hydracraft ranges of plate alloy boats that have become favourites of a number of Top End barra anglers and fishing guides. Xtremes are available from 3.9 m right up to 6.0 m but it's boats like the 4.8 m 480 and the 5.0 m 500 that will probably have most appeal for everyday anglers.

GS Marine isn't a huge factory but I can assure you that isn't reflected in the construction quality and absolutely first-class finish of the 480 we tested. This boat will hold its own with the best from the major Aussie manufacturers. The two-pack paint job is all class and every detail you look at has been well thought out and executed.

Take the winch cleat below the bow for example. It's a tough piece of thick alloy

plate that looks like it would outlast most boats but the boys from GS Marine have applied stainless steel inserts in both the winch and safety tie down holes to reduce wear. Other really nice touches that are standard in the 480 are the vertical rod rack on the front of the console and the horizontal rod rack below the gunwale so you can store rods out of the way when you're fishing tight to the trees.

Other standard items with the 480 include the 100 litre under-floor fuel tank located towards the front of the boat for forward balance; the front casting deck that is raised sufficiently to fit a generous-sized ice box or portable fridge/freezer, a second battery, safety gear and all necessary ground tackle under fully-carpeted hatches; three comfortable padded fold-down seats with five seating positions; four rod holders in the gunwale; and navigation and anchor lights.

The standard console is spacious and can be located to buyers' requirements (it was set up as a side console in the boat we tested and that worked fine) and it comes equipped with a wiring harness and a switch panel. GS Marine will naturally fit all engine gauges and will mount electronics like sounders as an option. Hydraulic steering and a sports steering wheel are also standard. (Our test boat was fitted with an optional stainless wheel.)

Another nice touch that is standard on the 480 is the added safety of an automatic float-switch-activated bilge pump. A battery, isolator switch and battery box are supplied and a dual battery system is an option.

If all that's not enough for you, other options include a live bait tank, a lift-out kill tank, a rear tackle locker and a stern-

Suzuki's 90 Four Stroke

The Suzuki DF90 Fuel-Injected Four Stroke is a great power plant for boats like the Xtreme 480 and it will provide ample performance on bigger boats as well. The engine produces optimum performance through the rev range thanks to its four cylinders, 16-valve, dual overhead camshaft and digital fuel injection which delivers the exact fuel/air mix the engine needs under all conditions. It has a 2.59:1 gear ratio allowing it to swing a bigger prop than other engines in its class. This means faster acceleration and higher speeds at different points in the rev range.

We ran the 90 flat out in our test and it was quiet and vibration free. The solid state ignition provided first-kick starts and the motor ran low trolling revs (slow like you want them) straight out of the box and without any complaint.

It has a 40 amp alternator to power any electronics you care to run and to keep on-board batteries charged.



The raised front casting platform on the Xtreme 480 is huge. Three hatches at the front give access to a well for ground tackle and to a generous amount of storage space. The larger hatch gives access to more storage that will hold a good-sized ice box or portable fridge/freezer thanks to the height of the casting deck.



The model we tested had two small steps making it dead easy to step up to the high deck.

mounted bait/fish cleaning board.

The SportzBack transom with its folding boarding ladder provides easy access to the boat and it works particularly well on this hull giving it stability at rest and on the plane and allowing it to effortlessly pull itself out of the hole when getting under way.

All of this was very impressive and it was entirely backed up by the 480's on-water performance. With the 90 Suzuki Four Stroke, it snapped out of the hole and moved quickly and effortlessly. The 90 is a great power package but I'm convinced that this hull would still be a great performer with a motor like the Suzuki 70 Four Stroke and that makes the 480 a very economical proposition in terms of purchase price and running cost.

Our test run on Darwin Harbour was in mill-pond conditions but the hull has a fine

forward entry that is well swept back under the gunwales suggesting a dry and smooth ride when a bit of slop is running. We couldn't even get a decent splash or a mild hull thump despite our efforts in running our own wake.

The hull drops back to 11° deadrise at the transom and it was extremely stable, both on the plane and at rest. We did the normal boat-test-silly-

cornering routine and the boat showed no bad habits at all — we couldn't even get the motor to cavitate! This is a boat I'd be very happy fishing from on a billabong, a big river or offshore.

The Xtreme 480 comes with heaps of standard features, many of which are options on other boats. It has three comfortable folding padded seats with five seating positions, a generous console with screen, a vertical rod rack on the console and a horizontal rod rack and side pocket below the port gunwale. A 100 litre unerfloor fuel tank is also standard and it can be rigged for gunwale or deck port filling (below the white access plate shown here to the left of the forward seat).



The side console is standard. It's big enough to easily carry a range of fishfinding and navigation aids as well as all engine indicators. It comes equipped with a wiring web and switch panel. Hydraulic steering is also standard with a sports steering wheel. The stainless wheel shown here is optional.

GS Marine's Xtreme 480 Specifications:

Length bow-transom:	4.8 m
Beam:	2.2 m
Depth:	1.2 m
Bottomsides:	4 mm
Topsides:	3 mm
Recommended Horsepower:	70 hp
Maximum Horsepower:	90 hp
Number of People:	4

