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# trailer BOAT

ISSUE 293 \$6.95 (inc GST) March 27 - April 23, 2013



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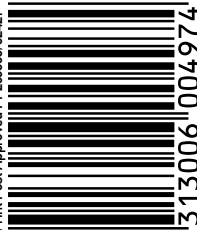
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# FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

Force has just released the most versatile boat ever seen in its arsenal. Jack Murphy launches the manufacturer's F14 and lights up the afterburners on NSW's Hawkesbury River.



## WEATHER CONDITIONS

Wind: 0-5kts  
Sea: N/A





**B**ased on the NSW's Hawkesbury river, Force Boats is the proud owner of a well-deserved reputation as a manufacturer of quality ski and race machines forged in the cauldron of the tournament trail. The lovechild of Rod and Kelly Bickerton, Force has been racking up the accolades and filling trophy cabinets since the first hull popped out of the mould 18 years ago.

The manufacturer's hyper-powered machines offer breathtaking performance with capabilities that would have most of us peeing our pants before we reached them. They're loud, brawny, muscular and intimidating. Its new F14 is none of these, yet promises so much more.

### NOT THE FORCE WE KNOW

When our editor Angelo first mentioned he'd like me to test a new Force, I quickly retreated to my secret lair to retrieve my Kevlar underpants and genuine imitation NASA space helmet. I'd heard of Force

## "It started to look familiar, more Force-ish; almost like a two-thirds scale model of a real one"

and, more importantly, had met some of the guys who drive them.

Its boats have names like *Burnin'*, *Hellrazor* and *Pigs Arsenal*, and they don't fish. I began to think Angelo didn't like me and was plotting my watery demise (suck it up, princess — Ed).

Ever the professional, I steeled myself, hitched up my fire-retardant britches, rocked up for the review, and was more than a little surprised by what I saw. There before me, piggybacked atop a Riviera Cruiser, was my ride for the day. And it was naked. No wrap or decals proclaiming a fiery end. Just a pretty little white boat with a 50hp outboard. I was confused.

After several minutes taking in the lines of this fun-sized Force, it started to look

familiar, more Force-ish; almost like a two-thirds scale model of a real one. The next thought that popped into my head was, "I'm going to get wet today". Low to the water and with little protection, I thought myself lucky to have brought my board shorts. But boy was I wrong. After five minutes it became obvious this wasn't just an F21 that had shrunk in the wash — it was the real deal. And I certainly let rip.

In a departure from traditional ski-boat hull architecture, the F14 is blessed with a deep 19° deadrise. The sharp hull entry sliced the water like butter and the aggressive front reverse chines pushed spray away like a 'roided-up bouncer at a (s)wanky nightclub. I didn't get a single drop on me, but more on that later.

### SWISS ARMY BOAT

As I soon discovered, the Force F14 is really several boats in one. One day you could be flying up river with a boat full of bikini-clad babes while towing a tube or skier, and the next day you could be running tender duties or even having a fish. The boat will thus appeal to a broad market, not just watersports enthusiasts.

When I quizzed Force's Kelly Bickerton on the subject, she said it was an opportunity to explore new markets and reach out to customers who didn't need a big boat or uber-horsepower to get the job done. And since the company was considering a tender for its own cruiser, Kelly's husband Rod — the creative influence behind Force Boats — decided to create one of his own. I reckon these guys might be on to something.

There are two hull options available, Tender and Social Boat. The main differences between the two are weight and price. The Tender configuration is vacuum-bagged and 75kg lighter than the

Clockwise from right: Boats don't come any sleeker than the pint-sized and super-low profile Force F14; the well-appointed bow is a stylish and comfy place to be; it excels as a family runabout, but it's so much more.

- On the plane...*
- ✓ Planes instantly and is very responsive to trim
  - ✓ Under-floor submersible hull makes the boat incredibly stable for its size
  - ✓ Deep seats and a well-designed driver's side footrest keep you locked in place
  - ✓ Extremely versatile; the perfect cross-over tender / fun boat
- Dragging the chain...*
- ✗ No room to flush-mount a sounder / GPS on the driver's dash
  - ✗ No navigational or anchor lights as standard
  - ✗ Towing skiers scares the fish

The boat you want is now easier to find



As a tender, the F14 will be stronger,  
more durable and, in some cases, actually

Up for a spot of fishing? No problem. The F14's versatility belies its diminutive physical size.

A full-page photograph showing two men fishing from a small white boat on a lake. The man in the foreground is wearing a white t-shirt and bright green shorts, holding a fishing rod. The man in the background is also wearing a white t-shirt and a cap, also holding a fishing rod. The boat is white with 'F14' visible on its side. The background features a blue sky with clouds and green trees. The water is dark blue, and the overall scene is bright and sunny.





lighter than RIBs (Rigid Inflatable Boats). And there will of course be none of the air-pressure hassles that commonly occur with these blow-up rivals.

The standard bow-mounted tender cradle on the mothership Riviera did require a few adjustments in order to fit the F14, but nothing major. Rod also added a resting platform for the bow to sit in. The guys at Force can customise your existing tender cradle to fit a shiny new F14.

However, the F14's breadth of scope is far more than "just a tender". Whether by design or fortunate fluke, Force has created a compact boat that makes a fair fist of just about any pursuit you're likely to tackle in sheltered water. More expensive than the ubiquitous tinny but blessed with an uncanny ride and a sexy internal layout reminiscent of a jet sportsboat, the F14 sets out to carve its own niche and will appeal to boaties who would never have previously considered a Force.

## THE WRAP

The Force F14 ticks all the right boxes as a fun, social day boat. The cheapest offering in the Force range with almost miserly power requirements, it has the potential to coax buyers at the expense of other small boat manufacturers.

Like all Force boats, F14s are built to order and almost everything can be customised. Bling her out as a luxury tender, add a casting platform or whack it on a trailer and have a fishy ski boat that's a cinch to tow and store. The only limitations are your own needs and the staying power of your credit card.

May the Force be with you (sorry, I couldn't resist!). 🍀

## FORCE F14

### HOW MUCH?

**Price as tested:** \$31,014

**Options fitted:** Fuel gauge and sender; trim gauge and sender; three LED lights; stainless steel LED navigation lights; electrical stern LED light; three rod holders; stainless steel propeller

**Priced from:** \$29,322 (with 40hp Mercury two-stroke and galvanised single-axle trailer)

### GENERAL

**Type:** Fibreglass monohull

**LOA:** 4.4m

**Beam:** 1.9m

**Deadrise:** 19°

**Draft:** 300mm

**Weight:** 280kg (boat and engine)

### CAPACITIES

**People:** 4

**Max. HP:** 60

**Min. HP:** 25

**Fuel:** 42L

**Water:** N/A

### ENGINE

**Make/model:** Mercury 50hp

**Type:** 3-Carb two-stroke

**Weight:** 93kg

**Displacement:** 967cc

**Gear ratio:** 1.83:1

**Prop:** Not yet specified (still testing)

### MANUFACTURED BY

**Force**

608 River Road

Lower Portland

New South Wales 2756

Tel: (02) 4575 4038

[www.forceboats.com](http://www.forceboats.com)

(Limited lifetime structural warranty to first owner.)