

SHE'S GOT THE SMARTS



“ Basically, the boat is doing your thinking for you. ”

Words by **Rebecca Hayter** Photos by **Bruce Jenkins**

The Dickey Custom 950 is one smart boat. A tap on your ipad and it will set its operating systems – water, fuel or power, for example – to suit your desired activity – gamefishing, cruising or even a hot shower. It will even do three at once.

can assure you that *Mātāmua*, meaning First Born, can handle rough water exceptionally well, as we've come to expect from a Dickey design. But let's go first to the really big news: the boat's ability to adapt to selected activities. Say you're ready to start gamefishing. That means switching on the electric reel outlets for the downriggers and underwater lights, circulating water in the live bait tank three minutes before the tuna tubes are activated, turning on the wash-down hose, activating the hands-free wash which spouts on the outside of the boat...

That could have you flicking switches like a 747 pilot on take-off – but not on the Dickey. Jason and Tristin Dickey, managing directors of Dickey Boats in Napier, have brought boating in this size range into the last five minutes. Now, you just tap the

gamefishing mode on your ipad. Thanks to wi-fi technology and a new App developed for the boat's CZone system, the Dickey Custom 950 will automatically activate all required systems for gamefishing. You still need to attach the lures though.

CZone, developed several years ago by BEP Marine in Auckland, features widely on high-spec'd yachts and launches; it is less common on boats under 10 metres. Briefly, CZone simplifies a boat's electronics system, minimising wiring and maintenance, and allowing all systems to be integrated and displayed on-screen.

The skipper can drill down through the menus such as lights, entertainment, anchoring, bilges, tanks and batteries. He can check their status or select a task, such as transferring fuel from one tank to another. It's easy; you don't even need a teenager.



The Dickey takes this even further with onboard wi-fi from Mastervolt and the newly developed CZone App. The owner can select operating modes from an ipad anywhere on the boat or from the helmstation. Soon, it will be iphone-capable as well. Jason Dickey calls it customer integration. "We've programmed logic into this boat," he says. "Now that we've got that platform, it can develop even further without changing hardware."



ABOVE LEFT: The helmstation in metallic bronze features twin Garmin screens which display the CZone modes, plus the digital versions of retro styled gauges and navigation and fish-finding abilities. Also on the dash are controls for the bow thruster and anchor, VHF and Fusion stereo, which links to iphones, and engine controls. ABOVE CENTRE: The twin bolster seat, for'ard in the saloon, flips for forward seating; the saloon table forms a double berth. ABOVE RIGHT: The galley is for'ard to port, with a single berth; to starboard is a single upper berth and a double which extends with a pull-out wedge. The door leads to the head and shower in the bow.

That's where we see the future."

Basically, the boat is doing your thinking for you. Gone are the days of showering in ankle-deep water because you've forgotten to switch on the pump for the shower drain. On the Dickey, you select the appropriate mode and step into the bathroom. The water pumps are on, the bathroom lights are on, the shower drain pump will automatically switch off when the bilge is dry. You just take care of soaping and towelling. Guests unfamiliar with boating systems won't even notice those jobs are done for them.

The five main modes on *Mātāmua*, which can be customised for individual boats, are anchoring, cruising, bottom fishing and gamefishing, and lights. There are more options within those modes, and you can overlay three modes simultaneously; eg, anchoring, bottom fishing and lights.

BOAT HANDLING

When I met Jason and Tristin Dickey at Napier Marina, Jason warned me it was "rough out there". Excellent, because *Mātāmua*'s Volvo Penta D6-370 and long range fuel tanks are fully capable of extended coastal cruising. She can expect to meet some serious seas.

I wasn't onboard for the photo shoot in the breaking seas shown on these pages; my turn came about two hours later and the seas had eased, but we still had swells of one to two metres, with a chop on top.

"It rides unbelievably well," Dickey had promised me. "In the sea trials of this boat we were in three-metre swells and a one and a half metre chop. It was a storm, essentially, and the boat was travelling at 25 knots, with everyone sitting down."

Dickey says the ride of his boats are not dramatic. He believes his customers want to head out, engage the autopilot

and enjoy the experience without bouncing off waves and spray flying – and that's what he's delivered in designing and building more than 50 boats in his Sports range and Launch range.

Like its sisters in the Sports range, the Custom 950 features the plumb bow, a lot of structure and an 18-degree deadrise carried along a straight keel line.

Heading straight into the swells, we rose over each one and landed softly. Some landings had a little more energy to them than others but still well short of what you'd call a slam. The bow spray was quite distinctive; as the hull cleaved the water and sent it wide either side, hardly any touched the windscreens and none entered the cockpit.

The landings were almost soundless, certainly no 'tinnie' sound, thanks to robust structure and linings throughout the boat. It had the manner and sounds of a 45-foot,

"... the Custom 950 features the plumb bow... and an 18-degree deadrise"





RIGHT: Pillar-less windows and bi-fold doors open the cockpit to the saloon. The back of the twin-seater, for'ard to port, can adapt to form a benchtop for sorting lures or serving lunch. The Volvo engine is beneath the large, electrically-operated hatch in the cockpit sole.



composite hull.

Jason demonstrated the effect of engine trim – with the bow up, the ride was noticeably harder; bow-down in those conditions, she was a dream ride. Beam-on, I had expected more drama, but it felt exceptionally stable and sedate. We turned downhill for the ride home, bow trimmed up slightly, this time with me on the helm. Again, I felt totally comfortable in the swells. My only misgiving was the difficulty in seeing over the bow, but a quick tweak on the custom-made helmseat which adjusts in every axis imaginable, and I was happy. The Volvo engine control was comfortable to my right and the hydraulic SeaStar steering was smooth, confident, fabulous.

The powerhouse is the Volvo Penta D6-370 through a sterndrive. It is under the cockpit with full walk-around for easy servicing and, thanks to plenty of sound-proofing, was unobtrusive. It's plenty of power for this boat and gives a top speed of 36 knots, although we were happy to settle for 23 knots on our homeward run. While heading into the seas, the most comfortable ride was at 18 knots at

2250rpm, burning 27 litres an hour.

The boat's operating system looks after the fuel, too. If the main fuel tank reaches the critical low fuel level, a transfer pump is activated that will run until the main tank reaches 90 percent capacity or until the long range tank is empty.

As long as the Volvo Penta keyfob is onboard, starting is push-button. Another keyfob has two buttons. Button one switches on the engine and house batteries without having to physically access them beneath the cockpit sole – it's all done with wi-fi. Button two activates leaving-the-boat mode. This switches off all systems except courtesy lights, which stay on for a minute as you safely disembark.

LIFE ONBOARD

Jason Dickey says that, in recent years, customers have been wanting to push Dickey's Sports range of boats closer to its Launch range, meaning a higher end finish and more features. Dickey has delivered: bench tops are Corian, ceiling and wall panels are vinyl, discreet lighting abounds from toe recesses and in the panels of the

saloon ceiling.

Lighting can be dimmed to suit the mood – it happens automatically on night mode settings – and there are several wi-fi and 12V outlets throughout the boat. There is no 240V power.

Mātāmua will be kept in Orams Drystack in Auckland, so boarding will normally be direct from the marina. Access from the water is via the marlin door on the starboard side; basic steps assist divers and swimmers getting onboard. The cockpit feels spacious, thanks to generous toe room beneath all cockpit structures. It makes for easy cleaning and looks stunning at night, thanks to the LED strip lighting glowing from the recesses.

The tuna tubes are in the livebait tank, to contain overflow. There are storage lockers throughout the cockpit and interior, including under the saloon sole for items such as a barbecue and outboard motor.

The real gem in the cockpit is the pillar-less window and bi-fold doors which provide indoor-outdoor flow to the saloon. Inside, nice curves and all-round windows

The Dickey Custom 950 has a top speed of 36 knots. Tuna tubes are in the livebait tank to contain overflow. There is generous storage throughout the cockpit and interior. Note the marlin door beside the livebait tank.



ensure the table, seating for four and helmstation fit in comfortably; the sliding windows either side seem to disappear by magic into the cavities – a sporty touch.

CONCLUSION

Jason Dickey has been waiting impatiently for the CZone and wi-fi technology to catch up with his vision for developing the Dickey range. "We see that this will be the standard for our Custom range or Sports range of the 750 and up, in about 18 months or two years. We won't be offering the boats without CZone."

The Dickey Custom 950 continues the Dickey sea-keeping ability, with softer styling and a new standard of electronic intelligence. She looks smart – and she's even smarter than she looks. ■



The Volvo Penta D6-370 sterndrive is installed under the cockpit with full walk-around for easy servicing, reflecting Jason Dickey's previous life as an engineer on superyachts. Good sound-proofing keeps its unobtrusive. ABOVE RIGHT: Tristin and Jason Dickey, managing directors of Dickey Boats in Napier, have designed and built more than 50 boats since 2006.

Dickey Custom 950

- **loa** 10m
- **beam** 2.83m
- **draft** approx 0.4m
- **construction** aluminium
- **weight** 4250kg (light)
- **engine** Volvo D6 370hp inboard diesel
- **deadrise** 18° at transom
- **prize package** POA
- **manufactured by**
Dickey Boats, Napier.
www.dickeyboats.com

