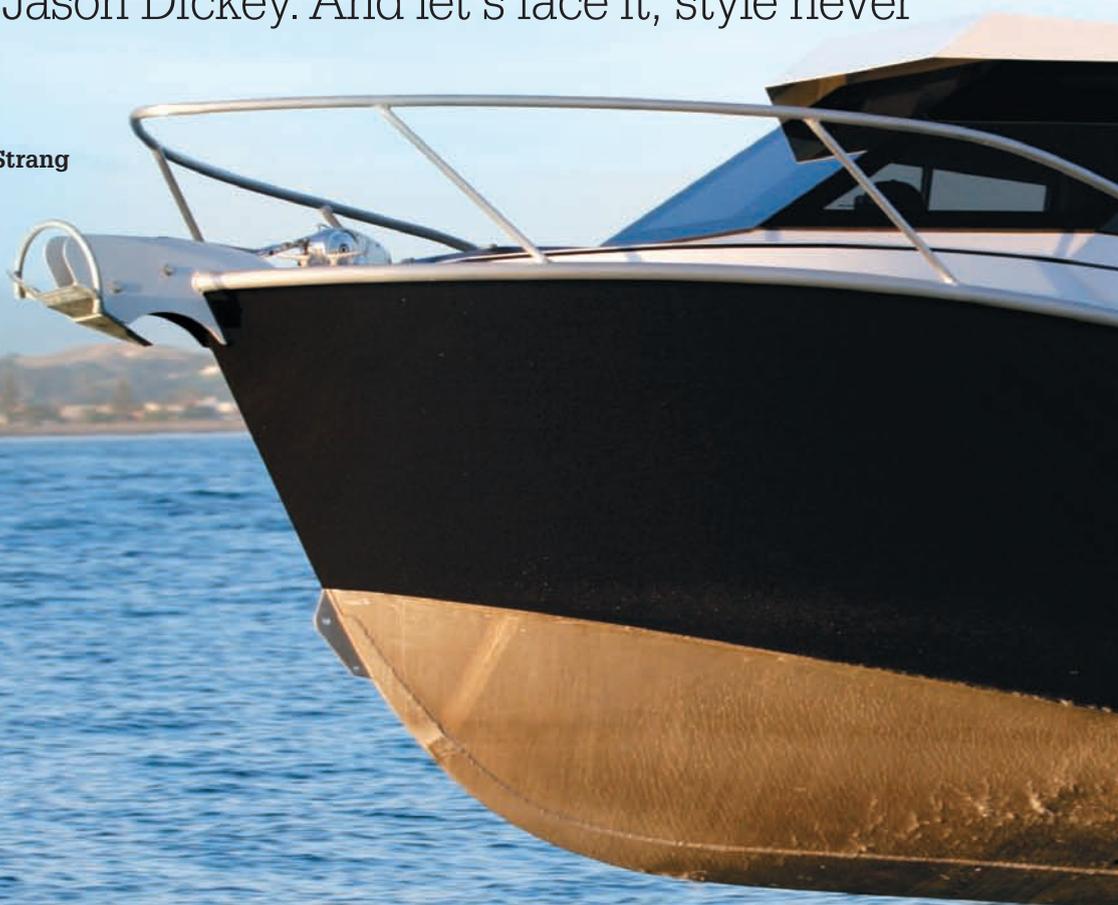


Smoke on the water

I believe it is fundamentally against the laws of nature to build ugly boats. Clearly, so does Jason Dickey. And let's face it; style never goes out of fashion...



Words and images by Jeff Strang





Weather conditions

Average windspeed	10-25-knot W
Sea state	Calm turning to rough





Any choice of electronics will look great in front of that custom wheel

It would be fair to say my first impression of this Napier-based custom boat builder was a good one. I had seen its boats at a couple of shows in 2010 and they are most certainly head-turners. The Custom 800, a hull based on the 750, took out the “All Purpose Open Boat of the Show” at last year’s Hutchwilco Boat Show. But there is a big difference between what is judged “good” on the hard stand and what performs well on the water – where it counts.

I caught up with Jason at the company’s sheds in Ahuriri, Napier, and it was with great enthusiasm that he gave me a tour of the facility, including a detailed description of the construction process and the philosophies behind the engineering. What I saw was the sort of attention to detail and dedication to quality at every stage of the build that one

comes to expect from a high quality custom boat builder. More importantly, I got a chance to speak to members of the Dickey Boats team who work in the trenches. There can be no higher praise of business than meeting skilled people like Alex, who would clearly apply their not inconsiderable skills for free if that was the only option.

What is Dickey Boats?

Jason spent his early years as a marine technician specialising in powerboats before heading overseas and into the superyacht industry. Those years in an industry so driven by the need to perform to the highest standard fused his inherent technical abilities with an appreciation of the importance of quality workmanship at all times. Returning to New Zealand with an understanding of design, a deep love for boats, and a Class

3 engineering ticket to raise a family with his wife Tristin, he suggests the founding of Dickey Boats was inevitable.

The very first hull to roll out of the yard was a Semifly 28, which promptly won the open class for Fishing Boat of the Show at the 2007 Hutchwilco. There was really no turning back from there.

If you think the Semifly range has a distinctly Scandinavian look, particularly in their near plumb bow sheer lines, then you would be right. In-house designer Dennis Harjamaa is Finnish and does an exceptional job of blending classic northern European styling with Jason’s no-nonsense Kiwi need for practicality on the job. The Finnish finish is outstanding as well.

More recently, and in response to customer demand, Dickey Boats launched its Custom range. At first glance they have a more familiar



The aft facing seats can be switched to face forward and lifted to reveal a hob and sink



look to Kiwis than the distinctly European Semifly boats but in reality the lines are a step above the standard Kiwi fisher in this class. The accentuated curves of the bow flare work nicely with the harder lines of the cabin top, giving a slightly retro look. As I have said, style never goes out of fashion, and it really is quite hard to put a date on this design.

The layout

Internally the boat is still nicely styled, but it was more the little innovations and the

practicality of the layout that got my attention.

The forward cabin has full-length bunks, plenty of storage and a built-in head, but it is outside in the cabin where the features that put this boat in a class above become apparent. There is high quality seating in the open cabin for four passengers. The helm seat is fully adjustable – as you would expect. The shotgun seat is complete with retracting foot rests and ample hand-holds. Behind this forward passenger seat is a two-seat independently reversible couch. Two passengers can comfortably sit facing forwards enjoying the ride, or reverse the seat backs and recline, watching the lures in the sunshine. Flipping the couch up and locking it back reveals a gas hob and wash-down sink. Directly beneath is the built-in tackle locker. So many requirements covered off in a relatively small space.

The dash is dominated by a massive Raymarine C140 W multi-function system. The unit performs well but Jason is happy to install whatever unit is preferred by the customer.

Breakout box

RPM	Speed (knots)	Fuel L/h
1150	5	5.4
2100	7	10
2800	9	20
3200	15	22.9
3900	21	30
4100	23	33
4500	26	39
5000	28	48
Top speed	34 knots	
Most economical planning speed: 23 knots @ 1.5L/h		

Classy Mercury analog gauges are in keeping with the overall styling as is the chromed steering wheel – complete with a palm grip for single-handed operation. I found the helm position to be very comfortable either sitting or standing and would be more than happy ▶▶ to put in the necessary hours as skipper on a day's gamefishing.

Plenty of thought has gone into the cockpit as well. Jason's real experience on the water is evident, as much in the things he has done away with as in what is included. For example he no longer includes under-floor fish storage in favour of extra fuel capacity and buoyancy. The under-floor storage has been replaced by an Icey Tec bin, which slots away into a recess in the transom. As a cooler they are much more effective, easier to clean and double as a seat when required.

Even more thought has gone into the bait-board set-up. The cutting surface sits on top of the bait tank but it slides nicely out of the way without spilling any mess whenever access to the tank is required. The bait-tank is augmented by a self-flooding (and draining) well in front of the outboard. From a working point of view all of these features are easy to use. The access is good and the heights are all comfortable so there are no sore backs to be had after a long session at the filleting station.

There are many other features of note on this vessel including removable steps under the gunnels to aid those disembarking the vessel, a large number of rod holders, including an eight-holder custom rocket launcher, and a large service space under the rear of the cockpit floor to allow easy access to the bilge pumps and trim tab cabling. The thing to remember here is that Dickey Boats is a custom boat builder so if you want it, and it's doable (and sensible), you can have it. For ▶▶



1. Recessed space for cooler.
2. The cutting board slides to allow access to the bait tank (3). 4. Removable steps



Good service access is a feature

example Jason uses a really good quality stick-down deck tread on the gunnels and bow area but you could do it in teak or one of the artificial equivalents. Actually I thought the cabin wall would look great in some sort of synthetic leather and I am sure Jason would be happy to oblige.

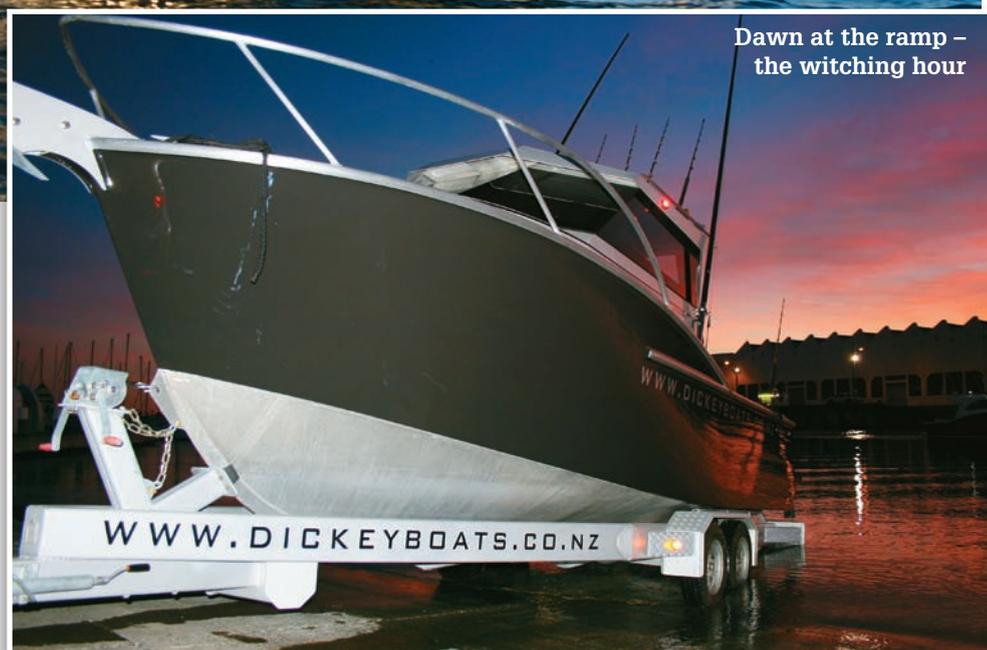
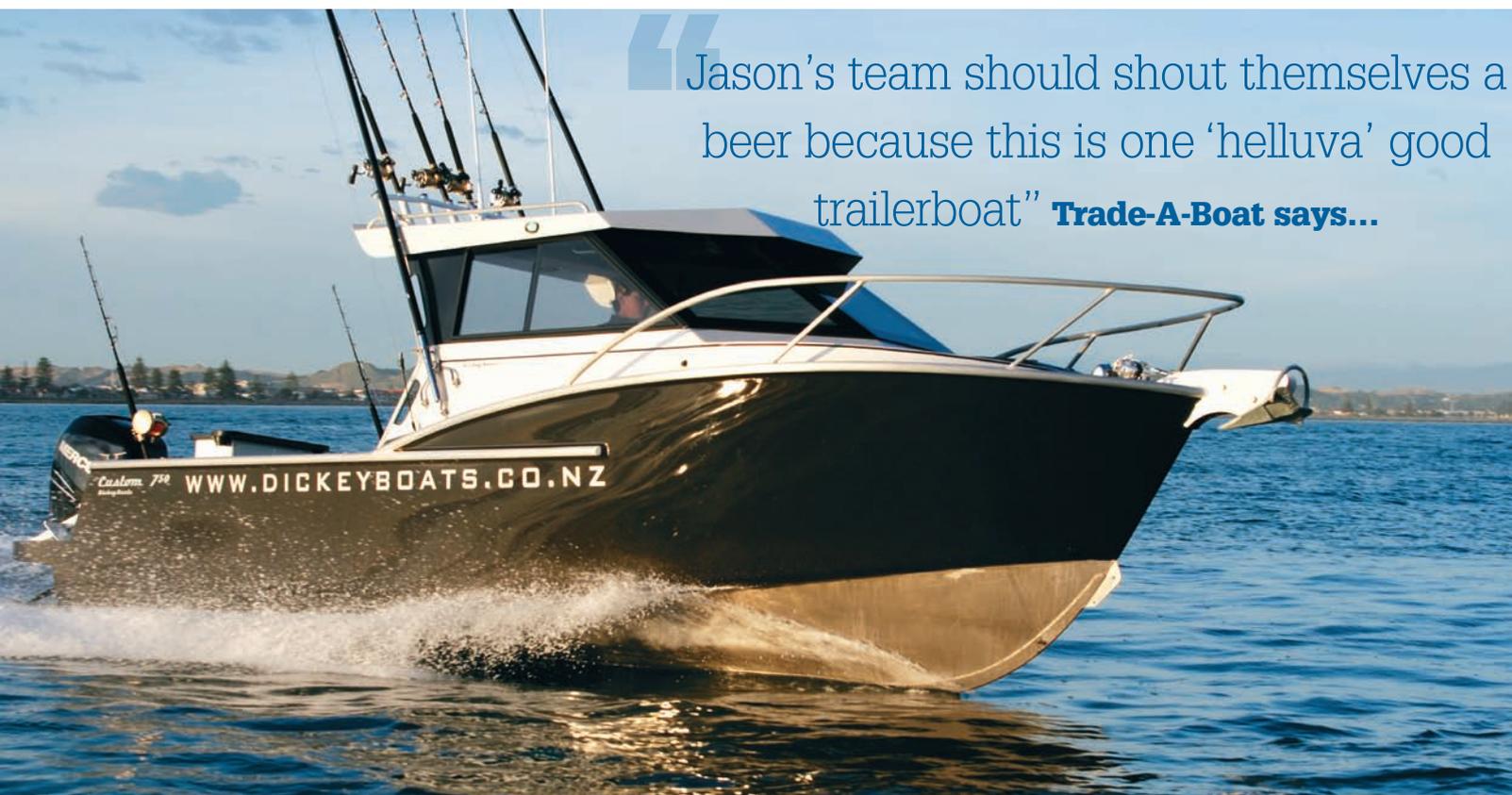
Performance

As the images show, the Dickey Custom 750 looks fast and soft riding but there is one way to find out.

The bow line is not quite as plumb as on the Semifly range but is still quite a bit steeper than most hulls. The result is a very fine entry and extended waterline length, which should improve the hull's efficiency. At trolling speed my very unscientific but well tuned ear suggested the engine was under less load than I would ordinarily expect in a hull of this size. In theory that should equate to slightly lower revs to achieve the same trolling speed and therefore less fuel burned at the end of the day. Of course this comes down to prop selection to a certain extent, but waterline length is the most important factor in determining efficiency at displacement speeds.

Putting the hammer down was a very pleasant experience. The transition on to plane is almost undetectable. She just glides up

“Jason’s team should shout themselves a beer because this is one ‘helluva’ good trailerboat” **Trade-A-Boat says...**



Dawn at the ramp – the witching hour



- Classy lines and a superb paint job
- Uber-practical features and layout
- Superb ride
- Almost total customisation offered



- A couple of minor details, such as the tread plate floor are slightly out of character with this first-class vessel, but Jason is already changing that to a stick-down deck tread as standard. And of-course he will option-in anything you want under consultation.

and accelerates away. The 200hp Mercury Verado and fly-by-wire controls are beautiful matches for the 750's hull: Quiet, smooth and delightfully responsive. In calm conditions we recorded the fuel figures presented here and this boat really is deceptively fast.

She is not the nimblest vessel in tight turns but is still very stable and predictable

and trimming the prop down pushed us reassuringly through some fairly tight turns. It was, however, the run home into a building sea that was most impressive. The long waterline and very fine entry produced a ride as good as I have ever experienced in a boat of this class. Quite counter-intuitively, trimming the bow down really improved the ride as it, as stated above, increases the waterline length, allowing the fine entry to penetrate the chop without trying to leap skyward. We ran back to Napier at 30 knots with solid 20 to 25 knots of breeze hard on the nose. To be honest you

could do it all day long if need be.

In a nutshell

Back on the trailer and with time to reflect, it is pretty hard to fault the Dickey Custom 750. It looks stunning and rides magnificently. The attention to detail is at a level we expect from the best custom builders around. I was really impressed with some of the simple and yet very practical innovations. This boat has obviously been designed and built by marine industry professionals who have clearly spent a great deal of time on the water. I really think ▶▶



Nice fish for Jason – we let it go

Jason's team should shout themselves a beer because this is one "helluva" good trailerboat. If you don't believe me talk to some of their existing customers – I did. ↴

For more information contact Dickey Boats, 84 Niven Street, Onekawa, Napier, ph 06 834 1310, 021 577 781 or email info@dickeyboats.com.

BOAT RATING

DICKEY CUSTOM 750

- Fishability ★★★★★
- Ride ★★★★★
- Finish ★★★★★
- Versatility ★★★★★
- Ease of towing ★★★★★
- Build quality ★★★★★
- Design & layout ★★★★★
- Innovation..... ★★★★★
- X factor ★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS

DICKEY CUSTOM 750

LOA	7.9m
Beam	2.5m
Deadrise	20 degrees
Weight	2300kg on trailer
Fuel capacity	250 litres standard
Additional stability	Flooding chamber
External finish	Bare alloy through to heavy duty epoxy paint
Recommended horsepower	200-300hp
Construction	DickeyBoats® space frame interlocking
Vessel scantlings:	
10mm	Engine bed for inboard
6mm	Keel panel Hull doubler Girders Anchor cheeks Vertical keel bar Transom Outboard pod
5mm:	Transverse framing Stringers
4mm:	Top sides House Decks
Priced from: \$130,000	
Price as tested: \$160,000	

Price as reviewed **NZ \$130,000**

TO OWN THIS BOAT:

EXAMPLE BASED ON	
Purchase Price of	NZ\$130,000
Deposit	\$52,000
Final Balloon Payment	\$26,000
Term 60 months	
MONTHLY PAYMENT	\$1420*

PHONE 0800 438 226
www.getaboat.co.nz

*Normal Toyota Financial Services lending criteria apply. Interest rates are subject to change at any time.



we'll get you on the water