



Spellbound

No sooner had he heard the golden words “game fishing” and “Dickey Custom 800” and **Matthew Jones** was packing his bags for Whakatane, where a hearty, trailerable treasure awaited him



Images by Matthew Jones

Innovative custom boatbuilder Dickey Boats has cleverly taken big-boat construction and downscaled it to create its acclaimed range of boats. It is not cost effective to apply these uncompromising construction techniques under 7.5m, so that's as small as Dickey Boats go.

Jason Dickey decided early on that he wanted to build exclusively in aluminium due to his commercial boating background, which stipulates it's not a matter of "whether" you will hit a rock in the middle of the night, it's only a matter of "when". Aluminium offered the safety factor that Dickey was looking for, but you can be forgiven for thinking his boats are made of anything but – finish is taken to a whole new level in the Dickey Boats factory.

Tailor made

Customer demand for the outstanding Semifly hull design and build quality in a smaller trailerable and more affordable package brought about the introduction of the Dickey Boats Custom range.

"We wanted a boat that was tailor made to every customer and that we could offer with a serious amount of customisation, without serious costs, too," explains Dickey.

The Semifly design, which took two years to perfect, has been downscaled to create three new commercially-built hulls in 750, 800 or 900 lengths, while still retaining fuel efficiency, performance, stability and ride.

"We've still got the plumb bow, although it's not as plumb as the Semifly range, with a sharp entry, and when combined with the relatively light weight for the exaggerated waterline length, it gives excellent performance and ride.

"To compensate for the reduced waterline length in the Custom 750 and 800 boats, we've increased the vee to 20 degrees. To ensure fuel efficiency and comfort at rest, we opted for a full-length flooding keel and big turned-down chines, which also provide exceptional dynamic stability.

"We use the customer's chosen hull length as the platform and everything else can be customised. We sit down with each customer and involve them fully in the design process from the outset. Thanks to the use of 3D modelling software, we're able to take them on a virtual walk-through of their boat before production starts, opening and closing each door, hatch and cupboard to ensure the layout will function for them and that it's exactly what they want. In a nutshell, we work with them to build their dream boat," explains Dickey.

As a nice touch, Dickey Boats also gives each customer the opportunity to design their own

bait board and provides photo updates as the build progresses from the factory in Napier.

Motutere Magic

Dickey Boats customer Lance McNicholas took delivery of *Motutere Magic* just two months prior to my arrival in late February, and in that short time he has already put a staggering 120 hours on the clock.

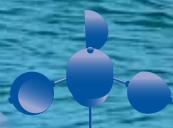
Economy, speed and comfort were his top priorities, which is why he opted for a Dickey boat partnered with the new VW TDI diesel. The performance figures recorded on our test day speak for themselves, and McNicholas tells me that he wouldn't change anything

about his boat – herein lies the beauty of buying a custom-made package.

Once you climb on board, via the stylish boarding ladder, you're greeted with an abundance of Tek Dek synthetic teak, precisely laid anywhere that you might need to step. To limit the intrusion of the engine bay into the cockpit, it has been cleverly moved back onto the duckboard and doubles as a seat. Access to the spacious cockpit is available through twin removable doors on either side.

McNicholas loves his fishing and his personally-designed bait board is certainly impressive. All bases are covered, with twin

“Once out past Whale Island, heading for the trenches, the messy beam-on swell did it's best to smash us off course”



Weather conditions

Average wind speed	20kts W
Sea state	Rough easing to slight

tuna tubes in the gunnels, a live-bait tank, 21 precisely-positioned rod holders, game poles, a self-draining cockpit and a saltwater washdown pump to keep the vessel looking magic.

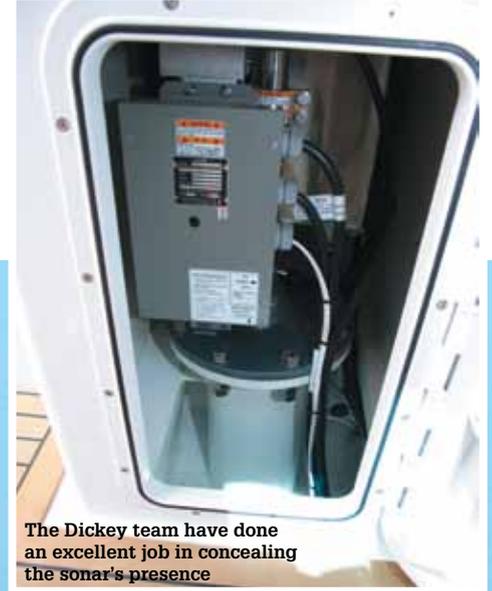
No fish will go unseen thanks to an insane Furuno electronics system (including a chartplotter, depth sounder, sonar, radar, autopilot and tow camera) dominates the dash, without encroaching too much on available space. The sonar installation required some serious design work to accommodate and, as expected, Dickey and his team have done an excellent job in concealing its presence.

Even though it's been set up purely with fishing in mind, the quality of the interior fit-out

is of a high standard and reflects McNicholas' personal tastes, which I certainly agree with. Seating underneath the hardtop has been arranged to create a social atmosphere, with all the luxurious leather seats able to face each other. A large and comfy rear-facing corner seat lies forward, with two single seats aft. The rear seat backs pivot to allow a view forward to chat, or out back to keep an eye on the lures. The seats dish out plenty of "aaah" factor, although there are no locking catches to secure them in place when travelling at high speeds in rough weather.

To make sure all the crew are kept as comfortable as possible, footrests are provided for everyone, whichever way they're sitting.

Handrails are in good supply, although McNicholas' mates have asked for a couple more, due to his "life is short" driving style. It's for those same mates, who turn green around the gills, that a toilet and comfortable full-length upholstered squabs have been included in the cabin.



The Dickey team have done an excellent job in concealing the sonar's presence



Finish is taken to a whole new level in the Dickey factory



An insane Furuno electronics system dominates the dash

While McNicholas didn't set up *Moutere Magic* specifically for overnighting (which is why he opted for the under-seat live-bait tank instead of a cooktop), she would certainly provide a comfortable night's sleep for two, if required.

Game time

McNicholas was kind enough to invite myself and Dickey out for a day's game fishing, chasing marlin out of Whakatane. Dickey's wife and business partner, Tristin, had packed us a tasty lunch and we really couldn't have struck a better day to put the Dickey Custom 800 to the test, with a 1m northerly swell running combined with a 20-knot westerly, adding some short, sharp chop to the mix.

Once out past Whale Island, heading for the trenches, the messy beam-on swell did it's best to smash us off course. But thanks to the innovative hull design and abundance of torque from the quiet VW TDI, McNicholas was

able to kick back in the helm seat and let the autopilot easily guide the way at 28 knots! The plumb bow came into it's own, holding a rock-solid course as if we were on rails, and I was blown away by the wall of water that was being effortlessly sliced and diverted down the side of the hull, with very little ending up in the cockpit.

WE LIKE

- Wave-defying hull design provides a silky smooth ride
- Handles like its riding on rails
- Quiet, fuel-efficient and almost fume-free VW TDI
- Social, functional layout
- Five-star fishability

WE DON'T LIKE

- Mercury cable throttle was stiff to use
- Lift-up rear passenger seats could use some locking catches for rough weather

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DICKEY CUSTOM 800

Fishability	★★★★★
Innovation	★★★★☆
Design and layout	★★★★★
Handling and ride	★★★★★
Stability	★★★★★
Finish	★★★★★
X-factor	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★

PERFORMANCE DATA

DICKEY CUSTOM 800 WITH 265HP VW TDI 3.0L V6, TWIN MERCURY 24P PROPELLORS

RPM	SPEED (kts)	FUEL BURN (L/hr)	ECONOMY (L/nm)
1000	5.5	2	0.36
1500	7	6.6	0.94
2000	10	15.4	1.54
2500	15.4	22.1	1.44
3000	21	30	1.43
3500	28	46	1.64
4000	33	54.4	1.65

Dickey Boats

INNOVATIVE BOATBUILDING

Custom 750



Custom 800



Custom 900



The Custom trailer boat range

WWW.DICKEYBOATS.CO.NZ

P +64 6 834 1310

TBZ-QPH-5173393-TS-214-X



SPECIFICATIONS

DICKEY CUSTOM 800

Designer	Dennis Harjamaa and Dickey Boats
LOA	8.9m
Beam	2.5m
Construction	Dickey Boats (R) space frame interlocking
Material	5083 marine grade aluminium
Additional stability	Flooding chamber
External finish	Heavy-duty epoxy fair/paint, with 316 stainless steel fittings
Hull weight	2600kg (dry)
Towing weight	3050kg (dry)
Deadrise	20°
Recommended hp	225-370hp
Engine	265hp VW TDI 3.0L V6
Drive	Mercury Bravo 3 sterndrive fitted, with duo props
Fuel capacity	300L
Features, as tested	Turnkey-kitted boat

The owner loves his fishing and his personally-designed bait board is certainly impressive

Price as reviewed NZ \$185,000

TO OWN THIS BOAT:

Examples based on	
Purchase price of	NZ\$185,000
Deposit	\$93,000
Final balloon payment	\$37,000
Term	60 months
Monthly payment	\$1599

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We happily trolled lures all day, with only a few skippies to show for our persistence; hardly the marlin we'd hoped for, but when the ride's comfortable, the air is salty and the fuel guage has barely moved, it's of little consequence.

With beer o'clock calling, we packed the gear away and headed in to shore.

In stark contrast to our trip out, the washing machine-like conditions had eased and McNicholas entrusted me to take the helm for a bit of a play. To say I was impressed with the sporty performance, iron grip, silky ride and meagre fuel usage is an understatement. The view from the comfortable helm seat was a good one, with only a slight intrusion from the window frames. I took great pleasure in throwing the boat through tight turns and did my utmost to extract any sort of hard landing from the hull, even at 36 knots. But to no avail, and I found it hard to hide my grin when reluctantly pulling it back to neutral.

While conditions didn't allow us to engage full throttle on the day, figures from the initial sea trial suggest this magic vessel is capable of 36 knots at WOT (4200rpm).

Dickey Boats manufactures its own classy range of high-quality alloy trailers, fitted with rubber skids to provide a more secure resting place. On arrival back at Whakatane, we were greeted with a brisk outgoing tide running horizontally across the ramp and very little space to manoeuvre. Visions of bent props, red faces and gouged paintwork came to mind, but McNicholas easily drove eight metres of boat straight onto the trailer without a hitch. At three-tonne dry she's a serious towing proposition but partnered with a suitable tow vehicle, the possibilities are endless.

The last word

The team at Dickey Boats have certainly done themselves proud, yet again; *Motutere Magic* is enchantingly stunning, with an outstanding layout and superb finish to match. However, that's not what floored me the most: the silky smooth and assured ride was pure magic. But don't just take my word for it, try one of Dickey Boat's hull designs for yourself. Just make sure you pick a day that's going to cause this hull to break a sweat. ⚓

For more information on the Dickey Custom 800 contact Jason at Dickey Boats, ph 06 834 1310, email info@dickeyboats.co.nz or visit dickeyboats.co.nz.