



CLUB MARINE

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NEW TRIXX FROM SEA-DOO

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Off the Trailer

Wheeled wonder

Stabicraft has added Sealegs's amphibious technology to its renowned hull, adding offroad drivability to its superb fishability.

Kiwi boatbuilder Sealegs and its innovative amphibious boating concept is celebrating its 10th birthday. In that time, it has notched up some 1000 sales to happy boat owners and also, no doubt, heard from lots of grateful folk who were rescued by a Sealegs craft.

The company's amphibious small craft has been revolutionary. A unique folding leg system enables owners to drive in and out of the water and go some distance on land. The obvious benefit to rescue organisations, especially in floods, has also led to numerous deliveries to such organisations.

However, the biggest market so far is for people living on bay or island beaches who have no way to dock or launch a boat easily. The patented folding wheel system on Sealegs craft enables them to launch over a beach and come ashore at other locations. The craft's ability to go over shingle beaches, grass banks or earthen land makes it an off-road vehicle.

To broaden its range, Sealegs has begun licensing a number of boat brands to fit the Sealegs package to their hulls, adding a range of different craft and brands to its fleet of rigid inflatable boats (RIBs).

A great example of this partnership is the Stabicraft 2100 ST Sealegs edition. The alloy



pontoon collar of these New Zealand-made boats makes them superbly stable, as well as very safe and smooth-riding offshore.

OFFROAD BOAT

My first day on this Stabicraft was a real eye-opener. The 2100 ST is a pretty big craft that, when on land, sits impressively high on three mechanical legs. With its 22hp Honda on-land motor ticking away, the boat certainly drew

onlookers as Australian Sealegs representative Peter Sargeant drove around the car park, much to the amazement of the local boaties. He adroitly parked the big red boat and made it bow, with the front hydraulic wheel leg folding up before folding the rear wheels, so the whole craft sat on the bitumen like a big red pelican. Neat trick.

Then we were off again, driving into the water bow-first and underway in less than a minute, with none of the usual chores trailerboats bring

with them, like backing up trailers, winching on and off and getting your feet wet. Access aboard is made super easy by a clever side-quarter folding-step arrangement, letting you step directly into the cockpit and keeping your feet dry.

The Sealegs experience is nothing like driving a car – it's an amphibious boat that's equipped to drive on beaches and off-road areas at a maximum speed of 7.5km/h, which is altogether different. It has a total run time of about 30

By James Hill

It's a real buzz to come ashore like this



minutes on its land power. Those wanting more land-power and owners facing extra-challenging shore terrain can opt for a stronger, 35hp four-stroke motor.

The switch from land to sea power is surprisingly quick. The trick is to have the outboard lowered and running as you enter deep water. Once the wheels lose traction, you switch to outboard power and fold the wheels away.

The engineering quality on the hydraulic, all-wheel drive system is superb. A really helpful feature is a bow camera showing the front wheel on the Simrad dash display, making manoeuvring on land easier.

WHEELS ON WATER

Underway, the 2100 ST handles and feels just like any other Stabicraft hull. There is no noticeable drag from the wheels or adverse effect on helm vision, or fishing access. I suspect performance could be affected by the added 525kg weight of the Sealegs gear, but with a 200hp Yamaha four-cylinder four-stroke on the transom, there's loads of power and it doesn't lack speed. The GPS performance numbers indicated 20 knots (37km/h) at 3500rpm, 28 knots (52km/h) at 4500rpm, and 38 knots (70km/h) at 6000rpm. The top recommended on-water speed is 40 knots (74km/h), which would be more than

adequate grunt for long offshore fishing trips or taking a party around the bay.

At a happy-spot speed of 28 knots (52km/h) we were burning a fairly thrifty 33lt/h. The 200lt underfloor tank enables a range of about 140nm, with optional extra tankage if you want to boost the range further. When calculating fuel usage, keep in mind that the Honda land motor draws from the same fuel tank.

After a run around the bay, we found a nice sandy spit to come ashore. Easing into the shallows, we watched the depth sounder until it was time to lower the wheels. Although our landing was made difficult by a strong sideways tidal flow and a steep gutter, Sargeant had the craft under control as we lurched out of the water using some push from the outboard. We were soon up on the beach and stopped on dry sand. It's a real buzz to come ashore like this – you have the freedom to go for a stroll to get coffee, have a picnic or go for a swim. And there's no mucking about with anchors or docking – the boat is trouble-free and fun to use.

This craft would suit places like Port Stephens or Moreton Island, where people live on a bay beach yet have no ready access into the water, and it's a no-brainer in areas of big tidal ranges, such as Broome. You'd simply park the Sealegs alongside the home as if it were a car.



The Stabicraft 2100 ST comes in a hardtop version for all-weather protection and a comfortable cuddy cabin with three-quarter cushioned bunks. The helm and passenger seats have flip-up bolsters for standing comfort and there's a full array of instrumentation on the dash, including the Sealegs control. A Simrad evo2 GPS chartplotter/sounder, stereo sound system and Simrad VHF radio complete the fitout.

COMFORTABLE FISHER

The deep, self-draining cockpit has raised side pockets for fishing gear and two flip-up quarter seats. The cabin has side sliding windows for ventilation and there are optional cushions to add more comfort aft.

The side pontoons are foam-filled for positive buoyancy and good sound insulation. The checkerplate cockpit floor is ideal for hard fishing work, but I'd be inclined to add optional rubber matting to reduce engine noise, as the Honda auxiliary is a touch noisy. Rubber matting would help in this regard.

Fishos are well catered for, with an eight-pack overhead rod rack, dual rodholders, cutting board and livebait tank. Even the rear engine box could be used as an extra bait-preparation table ... this is the ideal craft for the fishing enthusiast.

With the capacity to beach-launch in remote areas, the Stabicraft 2100 ST opens up all sorts of exciting possibilities in Australia's unexplored waters. And while the technology comes at a price, it is money well spent. 



STABICRAFT 2100 ST	
LOA:	7.7m
Beam:	2.3m
Height:	2.95m (wheels extended) 2.45m (wheels up)
Dry weight:	1890kg
Capacity:	six persons
Fuel capacity:	200lt
Power (as tested):	200hp Yamaha outboard
Price as tested:	\$229,000 (ex-Sydney Boat Show special)
More information: Sealegs Australia, tel: 1300 732 534. New Zealand: 0800 732 5347. Web: Sealegs.com.	

Top: The added Sealegs hardware had no noticeable effect on the performance in the water.

Above: Workman-like cockpit and helm is definitely focused on fishing.

Simply drive up onto the beach and go and get your morning latte ...