

Tournament 2000 Bluewater



Few boats bridge the gap between genuine offshore fishing machine and family needs like Tournament's 2000 Bluewater. Test report by JAMES HILL.

Tournament is a brand that grew out of the well-known Mustang. However, that's now history and Tournament has become a well-known brand in its own right. And arguably a better product through expensive improvements to the model line-up of this Aussie fibreglass boat range.

Recently, we caught up with the Tournament 2000 Bluewater, arguably the pick of the bunch if you're after serious offshore fishing without going too big on tow weight, or dollars.

We tested the previous Mustang version some six years ago, however, this is a totally new boat not just an improved standard of finish but also an improved hull with wider chine that deliver better performance.

Tournament has also incorporated a more advanced construction approach into this boat starting with a fibreglass stringer system in the bilge area that gives a stronger, rot-proof hull.

But what really ticks the box for many buyers about this boat is the nice balance between family cruising and serious fishing. Thanks to a cuddly design and comfortable interior the 2000 Bluewater meets both fishing and family cruising potential.

The Bluewater has a proper lock-up cabin with decent headroom and decent sleeping berths. Hey mum, there's even space for a chemical toilet to keep yourself and the kids happy. There's even the option of a galley unit within the

cockpit, though most mums these days will prefer to go to the waterfront café than cook a meal.

The lock-up cab is a huge benefit for fishing because it provides a safe place to dump your valuable tackle gear. We all know of the problems of having tackle gear being nicked during overnight stays at camping grounds, or motels. That's why the lockable door is such a great feature of the 2000 Bluewater.

The door is a moulded Perspex unit that slides neatly within the bulkhead and provides a much safer solution than the usual bi-fold doors you see on trailer boats. The latter can create an edge on which passengers can hurt themselves if the boat falls off a wave.



The sliding door also matches the attractively curved bulkhead that forms the division between cabin and cockpit.

Overall, this is quite an attractive craft and fulfils the role of 'pocket cruiser' without being excessive on price. You can get this cuddy on the water with 150hp Evinrude for \$66,900 ex-Gold Coast, which is pretty good value. The boat we tested had more bells and whistles so the price came to \$75,000 but you don't have to spend that much.

Design: You've got to like this classy Queensland boat. It's a modern classic with those curved, aerodynamic cabin lines, curved windscreen and contemporary oval cab ports.

The fastback transom neatly matches the lines of the Bluewater too besides delivering a practical, recessed landing cum-swimming platform within the stern.

Hull length is 6.25m not counting the moulded bowsprit, while hull width remains at 2.34m. This ensures the 2000 Bluewater is a genuine six-metre craft with plenty of hull volume to be handle offshore trips.

The hull is a classic deep Vee with flared bows flowing back to a constant 21-degree deadrise. This ensures the 2000 Bluewater can really handle the rough stuff and owners will be confident about getting home.

The Bluewater also provides quite generous freeboard with enough cockpit depth (78cm) to allow comfort fishing position against the side coamings. This is an important point about the 2000 Bluewater and something you really appreciate when you're outside in a bumpy seaway.

Construction is impressive with plenty of 'meat' in the fibreglass layers of the hull and deck. As noted, the chines have been widened to ensure the boat gets onto the plane quicker. It also makes it better suited to heavier four-stroke motors.

Tournament builds its boats in SE Queensland and backs the product with a five-year hull warranty, which is also reassuring for the boat buyer.

For trailing purposes you're looking at a load around the 1900kg mark. This is beyond car-towing range, however, perfectly good for popular SUV vehicles like the Nissan Pathfinder, Jeep Cherokee and new Mitsubishi Challenger. All these are rated to tow over 2000kg quite comfortably.

Performance: Conditions were picture perfect the day we took the new 2000 Bluewater for a spin on the Gold Coast Broadwater. It was one of those days when you do believe Queensland is perfect and perhaps you should migrate. However, we weren't just on the water to enjoy Queensland weather and so we headed offshore to see how good the new hull would perform.

Being a true deep-Vee it was no surprise the ride was extremely smooth and comfortable as we sped along the Broadwater. In essence, the 2000 Bluewater just glides over the typical bay chop we encountered and it wasn't until we popped through the Seaway that we had to back off the speed.

Even outside the boat handled nicely coming off waves in a neat, level fashion and landing cleanly. There's no doubt the wider chines make the boat ride better in wave conditions because you can hold the mid-range cruising speed much easily.



I was surprised to find the ride actually softer, not something you'd expect with wider chines. Obviously, in changing the bottom geometry they've come up with a boat that planes more easily and yet doesn't slam too hard.

Behind the helm I enjoyed the drive, thanks to very comfortable bucket seats and the light feel of the hydraulic steering.

The curved windscreen is a high quality, toughened glass panel unit that ensures visibility will remain good even as the boat gets older. You also find moulded footrests at the driver and passenger position to ensure you are always comfortable in rough water.

Not surprisingly, for a boat of this size, stability is pretty good at-rest, even offshore. The previous boat had a bit more roll in a swell but this has been dampened by the wider chines.

The boat doesn't have a self-draining cockpit, however, the benefit of a lower cockpit floor means better depth for



fishing safety. The boat is also fitted with a stern drain sump and electric bilge pump.

Power: The Bluewater 2000 is rated to take single outboards between 140-200hp, but typically will be rigged with motors around the 150hp-175hp mark.

Our test boat was rigged with an Evinrude E Tec 200hp, a highly impressive motor but really over-kill and not necessary for what most people will need when fishing offshore.

Not surprisingly, the boat easily managed a top speed of 40 knots in flat water. That's more than fast enough for most fishing or family cruising boats but I guess some owners will like to go that fast.

Out of interest, the earlier model Mustang got around 30 knots with a 140hp Suzuki four-stroke motor. I'd expect this new Tournament model would do better because of the wider chines. That said, I'd recommend the lowest horse-power suitable for this boat would be 150hp. Either the V-6 150hp E Tec or any of the new and excellent second-generation four-strokes you get at this power band.

Whatever motor you choose the 180-litre in-floor fuel tank gives you



plenty for those offshore day trips. In most instances you should get two days of fishing before needing a refill.

Still on the matter of safety, I was pleased to see the test boat had been fitted with twin batteries and a fuel line water separator.

Deck Layout: The Tournament 2000 Bluewater comes with all the good deck hardware you'd need for coastal boating, including a moulded fibreglass bowsprit, anchor bowroller, split bow rail, Tee bollard and separate anchor hatch.

The bollard and bowroller combination allows you to carry the anchor at-the-ready so there is no problem moving from one fishing mark to the next.

I like the way the hatch cover curves around the front of the cabin. It's not very wide but certainly deep enough to stow an anchor vertically with its line and chain. You can also reach the anchor from the cabin hatch, which is good idea since there are no side decks up front.

As the cabin extends to the hull sides you get excellent sitting headroom over the two vee sleeping berths. There's quite good headroom below, comfortable backrests and space between the bunks to fit a chemical toilet.





Cabin finish is pretty classy for a fishing boat with attractive multi-tone upholstery and a hull liner. There's also an attractive grey flow coat finish, plus cover over the motor instrumentation to keep the area very clean and liveable.

Stepping through the sliding door to the cockpit, you find a modern instrument panel on the driver side and clean bulkhead on the passenger side. There are also drink holders hereabouts as well as a passenger panic rail.

The moulded dash has a separate binnacle for the Evinrude motor instruments and space below this to fit an LCD combo sounder/GPS chartplotter. There's also room to fit a VHF radio and stereo unit as well. However, the stereo is probably best fitted on the passenger side of the dash to free up a bit of space.

As standard you get dual bucket seats atop moulded seat boxes that provide footrests when the seats are reversed into the 'fishing' position. This is a highly practical design feature and gets full marks from me.

The helm/passenger seats have adjustable slides and both seats hinge upwards to reveal quite big stowage bins under the seats. The latter space can be used for lots of things but tackle drawers come first to mind.



Moving aft there's a roomy cockpit area with raised side pockets and really attractive tri-tone upholstered sides. The latter give the angler something comfortable to lean against when fishing.

The rear lounge is a very comfortable padded unit that folds to form a comfortable leg bolster for fishing. Most keen fishos will probably leave the seat base behind because it really isn't necessary for fishing.

Other great features hereabouts include recessed grab rails for safety in rough water. There's also a cockpit floor locker and telescopic ladder on the rear landing platform.

The 2000 Bluewater also comes fitted with navigation lights and four stainless steel rod holders.

Our test boat also had the optional stainless steel targa rod holder, bimini cover and spray clears – and very nice too.



BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

Boat supplied with Evinrude 200hp, dual-axle braked trailer, targa rod rack, bimini top, vinyl clears, rear deluxe lounge, four rod holders, VHF radio, sounder/GPS chartplotter, coloured hull, offshore safety pack price \$75,000. For further information visit the website www.tpboats.com.au

SPECIFICATION CHART

	Tournament	Baysport	Signature	Clearwater	HainesHunter
Brand	Tournament	Baysport	Signature	Clearwater	HainesHunter
Model	2000 Bluewater	620 Offshore	600R	2150 Sport	600 Classic
Material	fibreglass	fibreglass	fibreglass	fibreglass	fibreglass
Style	cuddy	cuddy	cuddy	cuddy	cuddy
Length	6.2m	6.2m	6m	6.5m	6.2m
Beam	2.3m	2.4m	2.4m	2.4m	2.4m
Rated power	200hp	175hp	175hp	230hp	230hp
Power as tested	Evinrude150	Evinrude150	Yamaha150	Yamaha150	Evinrude175
Hull weight	1000kg	950kg	850kg	1020kg	1150kg
Fuel capacity	180L	170L	250L	205L	210L

STAR RATING

Finish	★★★★★	Helm Set-up	★★★★★
Fitout	★★★★★	Fishability	★★★★★
Ride	★★★★★	Safety Features	★★★★
Dryness	★★★★★	Value for Money	★★★★★

*Data ESTIMATED by the TBF team when accurate information is unavailable. Maximum star rating 5 stars.

Despite its pretty face, the 2000 Bluewater lives up to its name as a serious fishing machine. It has a decent, deep cockpit for offshore fishing and practical features like a plumbed live bait tank and a reef anchor holder at the bows. Fishing options include live bait pump, raised cutting board, rod rack and electronic sounder/chartplotter.

Verdict: While the 2000 Bluewater doesn't have a fully moulded cockpit it's still easy to maintain. I actually like the carpeted floor because it provides a good foothold in rough water, besides being easy to replace.

Other good features of this Queensland boat include easy boarding via the folding ladder at the transom, plus plenty of seating for family and friends. Despite the lack of walk-thru access into the cockpit it's actually quite good from the stern. I think family boaties will appreciate the safety of the Bluewater cockpit for their kids. And there's the cabin to escape to when the weather turns cold or wet.

The quality of finish on our test boat was most impressive and shows Tournament is prepared to meet the competition from imported craft. We'll certainly be looking forward to testing some more models from the Tournament stable.

