



# THE 915 XST

## AN EXTREME FISHING MACHINE

Thornton-based boat builders Extreme Boats have recently completed a new model 915 trailer boat, the XST, with a solid transom. As soon as lockdown levels permitted, Sam Mossman headed down to Whakatane to check it out.

When keen father and son fishos Huey and Alan Lean decided to upgrade their boat, there was little doubt who they would ask to build their new battle wagon. Extreme Boats, with their factory just out of Whakatane, is a local firm for them and their previous boat had been an Extreme 840, which had given them excellent service.

Their fishing is at the top end of the – the Bay of Plenty southern bluefin fishery in winter, marlin and yellowfin in the summer, and deep water dropping for hapuku, bass and bluenose in the waters adjacent to White Island. They wanted a boat they could do stay-away trips in for several days at a time but was still trailerable. And one more thing – it had to go fast, backwards. The Extreme 915 XST, designed with a solid, slightly reversed transom, seemed just the job, and although a big rig, co-owner Huey was towing it without issues on its triple-axle GFAB alloy trailer with a 5.7-litre Ram 1500, rated up to 4.5 tonnes.



1) The leg is set into a bay under the transom and allows walk-around space behind the engine; 2) Liquid Asset is powered by a six-cylinder Mercury QSD 4.2 litre, 320hp diesel inboard; 3) The rig produced a remarkable 8.9 knots in reverse! Opposite page: The boat rode softly and could turn on a dime without any concern.



Unfortunately, dad Alan, who works in the oil and gas industry, was stuck in Perth by the COVID-19 quarantine regulations when the Extreme 915 *Liquid Asset* was launched, so fitter and turner son (and partner in the vessel) Huey and Extreme's Mat Cranswick showed me around the big boat.

## Power plant and performance

The Extreme 915 XST's recommended inboard power is 300-400hp, and *Liquid Asset* is powered by a six-cylinder Mercury QSD 4.2 litre, 320hp diesel inboard mated with a Bravo 3X leg. This has three and four-blade, 23" pitch counter-rotating stainless-steel props. The leg is set into a bay under the transom and allows walk-around space behind the engine.

On test day at the Whakatane Bar, strong offshore southerly winds kept us in the lee of the land where conditions were pleasant enough and allowed us to have a good play with the new boat. Mercury's Grant Allen had just commissioned the engine and supplied the performance figures published on page 103.

The underdeck fuel tank holds a massive 600 litres, giving a maximum range of 420 nautical miles (778km); plenty for three days or more of fishing stayaway. The hull was a joy to helm. Counter-rotating hydraulic steering and the Mercury electronic throttle-shift combined with the Bravo 3x leg tilt trim and Zipwake, a Swedish-made, fully automatic dynamic trim control system that corrects pitch and roll for a safer and more comfortable ride, make

for a great driving experience. The boat rode softly and could turn on a dime without any concern.

One of the most interesting performance aspects was how well the boat went in reverse. The owners are keen game fishermen and this aspect is important to them. In calm conditions, the combination of the slightly-reversed counter on the stern, no boarding platform, inset leg mount, and with the leg trimmed up so that it pulled the stern up, rather than down, the rig produced a remarkable 8.9 knots in reverse! This aspect of performance is another reason for going for the Zipwake system – traditional trim tabs dig in when reversing and the water pressure can rip the blades off the rams.

## The layout

The bow can be easily reached by walking around the cabin with the aid of bow rails and non-skid SeaDek panels. Towards the bow, the rails are dissimilar to allow for an electric outboard mount. Although not

fitted yet, it is to be the latest Minn Kota Saltwater Ulterra i-Pilot Link model. This new model is available in 112lb thrust (51kg) with auto stow/deploy and power trim, and shaft lengths from 60 (1.52m) to a massive 72" (1.83m), making it ideal for holding larger offshore boats over deepwater marks. Anchor retrieval is handled by a horizontal Savwinch with a capacity of 130m of warp and 10m of chain, mounted in an anchor locker. Twin fairleads are fitted and there is a hatchway in the foredeck. Another hatchway in the forward bulkhead gives access into the anchor well if required. The fully lined forecabin will sleep three adults with the infill fitted and a fourth in a bunk. A toilet is fitted under the centre berth with a privacy screen at the bulkhead. There is stowage space in four large side shelves. Back in the wheelhouse, two bench seats (with internal stowage) and the table between them can be adjusted to form a berth for a fifth crew member, if required. To further add to stayaway comfort, a 100-litre freshwater system (including a 16-litre hot



1



2

1) The galley includes a two-burner hob and freshwater system. 2) Two rear windows recess into the bulkhead; rear-facing bench seats are ideal for watching lures. 3) A pull out hot and cold freshwater shower is fitted in the cockpit.



3

water heater) has been fitted and is plumbed up to a pull-out shower nozzle out in the cockpit and a stainless sink back in the galley, which sits alongside a two-burner gas stove and three storage drawers. Under the passenger seat is a fridge.

The helm seat is one of Hi-Tech Plastics Comfortable Helmsman Bolster models.

All around visibility is ensured with 5mm toughened glass windows and side sliders. The rear of the wheelhouse boasts two glass windows that

drop into the lower walls to allow ventilation and better communication with those in the cockpit. A locking, bi-fold glass door ensures shelter and security for the cabin and full-on Hella lighting is fitted throughout the boat. This is

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Towards the bow, the rails are dissimilar to allow for an electric outboard mount.

topped off with grab rails in front of the dash and under the roof.

Electronics and controls are extensive, reflecting the build itself. They include Zipwake attitude control, Raymarine autopilot, Victron battery management system, Mercury Smartcraft gauges, two Raymarine Multi-Function Displays (MFDs) (these display GPS plotter, Sounder and Radar), a GME VHF radio, Fusion sound system, two USB ports for charging devices, the Savinich control, leg tilt/trim, the AIS system (the Automatic

Identification System is an automatic tracking system that uses transceivers on ships) and isolation switching for the twin-battery system which is mounted towards the rear of the cabin (so it can be easily reached from the cockpit through the window).

Up on the hardtop, the grab rails that provide security for those climbing around to the bow also act as tiedowns for items like a tender that may be stowed up there. In the cockpit against the rear cabin bulkhead are two bench seats with internal stowage; good spots to

Electronics and controls are extensive, reflecting the build itself.



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watch the lures from. The decks in the wheelhouse and cockpit are lined with faux-teak SeaDek, a closed-cell EVA decking material that is non-absorbent, UV resistant, easy on the feet and provides good footing. The gunwale tops also use SeaDek anti-skid panels.

Side shelving runs around much of the cockpit sides and part of the transom, with flat faces for anglers to lean on and toe space underneath. A decent-sized side opening transom door is mounted on the starboard side. A removable, fold-down boarding ladder fits inside this door.

## Fishing fittings

As mentioned, the owners are year-round game and deep water bottom fishers, and the boats' comprehensive fishing fit-out reflects this. The sounder

is a state-of-the-art Raymarine CP570 Clearpulse Professional CHIRP with a 2000W through-hull transducer for spotting those deep-bottom fish. While on a trip out wide recently, they were reading the bottom and marking fish in 1300m and the sounder was painting a clear picture at 27 knots.

The rod holders, three to a side, were very cool. From US company Exploding Fish, these solidly made through-gunwale Bluewater Sport Series feature gimbal pins that are adjustable in five-degree increments at the push of a button. This makes them infinitely adjustable for game trolling or bottom fishing with electric reels. Four of the six holders are fitted with adjacent ports for electric reels and all have cup holders. Two more rod holders are fitted across the transom and an

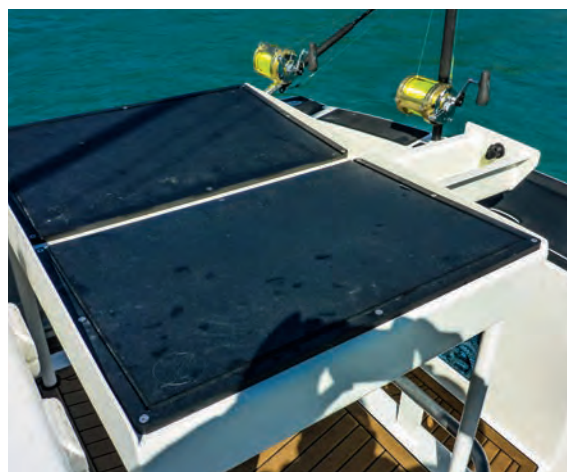


*Bluewater Sport Series rod holders are adjustable in five-degree increments at the push of a button.*

eight-position rocket launcher is fitted on the hard top for a total of 22 rod positions.

A livebait tank with two built-in internal tuna tubes sits centrally in the transom. Stern cleats are the recessing style, to avoid snagging lines. Mounted off the cabin sides are Kilwell 19-foot outriggers, and two

knee-switch operated overboard hand washers and two wash-down hoses help keep it clean. The top of the engine box is put to good use, mounting a massive 185-litre Icey-Tek fish bin and a custom removable bait and filleting station that can be worked from both sides of the cockpit. This station



*Left to right: A 185-litre Icey Tech bin is mounted on the engine box for catch stowage; A custom removable bait and filleting station can be worked from both sides of the cockpit and features two removable cutting boards that run off to a central drain, which can be removed for emptying and washing; A livebait tank with in-built tuna tubes is fitted to the transom but still leaves walk-around space.*

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*SeaDek faux teak decking and charcoal gunwale covers add class – and good footing to the boat.*

### Specifications

Material:	Aluminium
Configuration:	Enclosed hardtop
LOA:	9.15m
Beam:	2.80m
Deadrise:	20 degrees
Side and deck thickness:	4mm
Transom and hull:	6mm (8mm upgrade available)
Length on trailer:	10.45m
Height on trailer:	3.25m (incl. rocket launcher)
Width on trailer:	2.80m
Recommended inboard:	300 – 400HP
Test engine:	Mercury 320hp Diesel
Prop:	3 and 4 blade 28" pitch
Fuel tank:	600 Litres
Trailer:	GFAB triple axle
Price:	POA
Boat courtesy of:	Huey and Alan Lean

features incised measurements on two removable cutting boards that are sloped so they run off to a central drain, which can be removed for emptying and washing, a bit like the gunge catcher under your BBQ.

Specialist fishing lights include Hella cockpit floods, under gunwale lights, livebait tank lights and Bluefin LED underwater bait lights at the stern.

Stabilised by a self-flooding keel, with toe room and flat gunwale faces to lean on, and the SeaDek flooring giving good footing, this should be an excellent boat to fish from.

### Trailer and trailering

The big Extreme is carried on a custom alloy trailer from Tauranga-based manufacturers GFAB trailers. Made from heavy-duty C section for easy wash out and gusseted for extra strength, the trailer is designed for drive-on, drive-off retrieving and launching with six keel rollers, bunks and skids. It is a triple-axle model with super heavy duty 5250kg leaf-spring suspension and black allow rims.

Other features are a heavy-duty boat catch, Trailmaxx wireless electric winch, Credo touch screen electric-hydraulic actuated braking, wind-down jockey wheel, spare wheel, submersible LED lights and

### Performance

MERCURY QUICK SILVER DIESEL QSD 4.2L 320HP

Revs (RPM)	Speed (knots)	Fuel (l/hr)
600	4.1	1.42
1020	5.5	3.10
1520	8.0	9.36
2000	12.5	18.50
2490	18.0	28.62
2970	25.5	37.73
3320	29.0	47.90
3490	32.0	54.39
3780	35.0	69.92

Duel props 28" pitch; Fuel 180 litres; 3 pax.

*Figures courtesy of Mercury*






GFAB built the alloy trailer. It's designed for drive-on, drive-off retrieving and launching with keel rollers, bunk and skids.

a 70mm coupling/tow ball combination rated up to six tonnes. A towing weight was not supplied as this is variable, depending on the specifications of the build.

### The bottom line

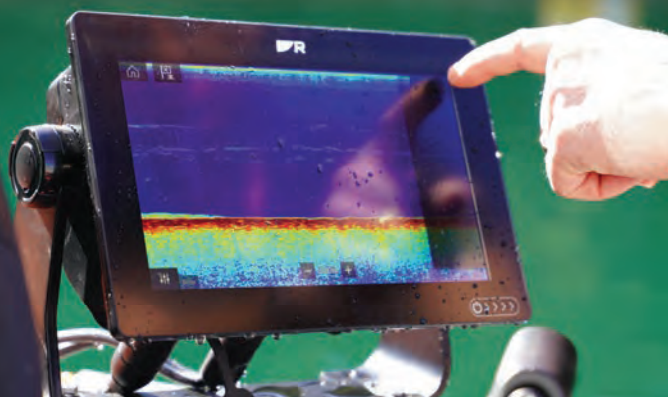
With its fine finish, rising shearlines, big cockpit and built-in stern, this is one

hell of a boat, fitted out for comfortable multi-day stayaway trips and fishing the bluest of blue waters well away from base. With the aid of the Zipwake system, the rig travels very nicely and handles like the trailerable launch that it essentially is. An Extreme fishing machine. 



With its rising shearlines, big cockpit and built-in stern, this is one hell of a boat.

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