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**REVIEWED**

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# Are You Game?



With a long list of features on a tough plate hull, the Surtees 610 Game Fisher is one serious offshore fishing machine.

**Mark Ward** reports.

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**SURTEES** boats are built specifically to fish the diverse and often very rough conditions found off New Zealand's fish-rich coastline. With its headquarters based in the beautiful city of Whakatane, Surtees are manufactured in the heart of New Zealand's game and sport fishing region. Whakatane is situated on the shores of New Zealand's North Island in the aptly named Bay of Plenty and it's only a short drive to famous trout lakes such as Rotorua and Taupo. Built by anglers who regularly fish these waters – both salt and the fresh – there's little wonder Surtees Boats are one of the toughest and most popular NZ hulls. And they're becoming increasingly popular over

here as well ... Thanks to Bill Hull and the crew at Brisbane's Northside Marine, we recently took the Surtees 610 Game Fisher into the waters of Moreton Bay on a choppy and very cool morning.

The 610 Game Fisher's ability to slice through the chop and still provide a stable fishing platform while at rest is no doubt the boat's biggest asset.

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### **Innovative Design**

Surtees achieves its stability at rest via through the hull's internal ballast system, which fills with water when the boat is stationary. This



LEFT: Hardtops are popular with southern fishos looking for the ultimate protection in a offshore capable hull.

BELOW: Yamaha's latest 130hp four-stroke is a lightweight and economical engine suitable for the 610.



internal ballast chamber, which runs along the keel of the boat, also allows for the use of a deep vee hull, which provides a good ride by "cutting" through chop and swells. If you're new to hull design, the vee or deadrise of a hull is simply the angle of the bottom. A small punt that has a flat bottom has no deadrise or a deadrise of 0°, while a hull built for offshore fishing would have a deadrise of between 16° to 22°. This is measured at the transom and most hulls these days have a sharp entry point at the bow which flattens out to the "actual" deadrise at the transom.

A deep or sharp deadrise will provide a smoother ride, but this angled bottom means the boat will

also tend to lean to one side, known as "listing".

The Surtees 610 Game Fisher has a 20° deadrise and has solved the stability problem through the aforementioned ballast chamber in the hull that fills with water as soon as the boat comes to rest. In five seconds, the hull fills with 300 litres of water. This sits under the waterline of the hull, proving amazing stability. As soon as the boat is powered forward, the water drains from the chamber and the hull is now 300kg lighter.

The chamber can be closed and the water can be locked into the hull to provide extra weight for a smoother, safer ride home. To add extra safety, Surtees has built two large airtight

chambers which run the length of the hull to provide basic floatation, even when the ballast chamber is full. The airtight chambers are part of a six stringer, fully welded hull with a checker plate floor that's also fully welded, making the hull incredibly strong.

### Layout

The 610 Gamefisher has a hard top cab layout with plenty of rear deck space, a glass windscreen and rocket launchers.

The test boat also included a canvas hardtop extension, foldaway rear bench seat and deluxe bait station for the transom. The hardtop also



LEFT: The roomy dash would accommodate a large screen sounder.

OPPOSITE: The deep V and ballast system will keep you dry, provide a soft ride and create a stable fishing platform.

folds down to allow the Surtees to be stored in a standard garage.

The cabin is big enough for two people to stretch out and the large hatch provides access to the bow and anchor well. There's enough room for a portable loo and side pockets for a little extra storage.

At the helm there's a large shelf above the steering wheel, leaving plenty of space for big screen electronics, which is an important feature on modern sport fishing boats.

The seating and feel of the helm is what you'd expect from a larger boat than the 610

and the control box, gauges and steering wheel are all ideally positioned.

The transom and deck space is a real fisherman's layout. Whether you like to troll, spin or bottom bash, there's plenty of space and features to keep everyone happy. And if you're anything like me and like to mix it up a little, the the 610 is an ideal boat capable of a range of fishing pursuits.

The bait station is a good-sized bait board with a tackle tray built in below and a feeder for leader material coming from the wall. I especially like this because I'm always tying

new leader and have a habit of putting my spools of leader in the weirdest places, so this keeps it all neat and ready for action.

I think I counted at least 20 rod holders, so you will never run out of rod storage on this boat. The gunwales are very neat and rounded off on the edges to assist in getting your knees under and balanced when fishing in a rough sea.

Another prerequisite for a serious fishing boat is a good size live well and Surtees has provided one with a clear perspex face to keep an eye on those precious livies.

Also on the transom is a fold-down bench seat which doubles to hide away batteries and switches when folded up for fishing. The Surtees also has transom steps and boarding ladder.

Add to this a range of factory options such as berley pot and muncher and outriggers to allow the 610 to be customised to owner requirements and you have what is a very versatile plate alloy fishing boat suited for hard-core offshore sport and game fishing as well as general inshore angling and laidback family fishing duties. What's not to like?



## Performance

The test boat was fitted with Yamaha's latest F130XA 130hp four-stroke. This provided enough power to effortlessly pop the Gamefisher straight up onto the plane and gave us a cruising speed of 22 knots at a very economical 4200 RPM.

Pushing the Yammy to 5000 RPM had us doing 27 knots in the chop.

Even when we tested the hull with the ballast tanks full, the speeds didn't vary by much at all. Power can be pushed out to 150hp if more ponies are required. If it's a bit more top end speed you're after, the new in-line four 150 Yammy would improve the top speed over the 130.

The F150 would be around 50kg heavier but it's a big jump up in displacement so it's nice to know that option is available.

The hull could be trimmed out with the ballast chamber both empty and full. Control from the helm was simple and all components were well positioned.

The deep V hull likes to list a little and needs some adjustment in the trim to get the boat balanced. It still leans into corners but it's not unsettling. Putting the ballast into the hull does help, but as already mentioned, once the trim is correct the hull is well behaved.

An optional set of after market trim tabs could be fitted to allow the hull to perform to its full ability. If you don't want the expense of trim tabs, all deep vee boats benefit from careful load placement when underway.

The Surtees came with a Redco Surtees special dual axle boat trailer. The trailer has a trailer catch system, which latches the boat onto the trailer making it perfect for a single operator or a driver who isn't keen on getting their feet wet.

I have always been impressed with Surtees boats and this one didn't disappoint me at all. My favourite features are the ballast hull design and big, open deck space. This is a real fisherman's boat that would be just as home in the north of Australia as it would be in the cool, wild waters down south.

*"The transom and deck space is a real fisherman's layout. Whether you like to spin, troll or bottom bash, there's plenty of space and features to keep everyone happy."*



## SURTEES 610 GAME FISHER

LENGTH: 6.1M

BEAM: 2.26M

WEIGHT: 610KG

TOWING WEIGHT (BMT DRY): 1300KG

FUEL: 150L

CAPACITY: 6 PEOPLE

POWER: 100HP – 150HP (AS TESTED, 130HP)

PRICE AS TESTED: \$73,412

More information available at [northsidemarine.com.au](http://northsidemarine.com.au) or [surteesboats.com](http://surteesboats.com).