

PHOTOS JOHN FORD

FLEET O' FOOT

It looks like an Arvor, feels like an Arvor but unlike an Arvor it goes decidedly quicker. **JOHN FORD** investigates this new Quicksilver 640 Pilothouse on its maiden voyage



THE 150HP MERCURY FOUR-STROKE IS A FAVOURITE OF MINE AND IT DELIVERED POWER DOWN LOW AND REVVED WILLINGLY TO GIVE A TOP-END SPEED OF NEARLY 36KTS – AROUND 16KTS MORE THAN THE DIESEL VERSION

Minimalist dash is a carryover from Arvor, however the helm seats are surprisingly comfortable and V-berth seating (with chemical loo) converts to bunks for overnight stays and weekends away.

There are many nice things you could say about an Arvor: roomy, stable, practical and versatile are all appropriate descriptions. However, to describe the company's rock-solid perennial performers as pulse-quickeners would be a stretch. It's just not what they are about.

All this is relative of course and Arvor's many owners enjoy the leisureliness – embrace it even. The payback is a seaworthy boat that runs on the smell of an oily rag. Some would argue that in a seaway it's not often that speeds of more than 20kts are attainable anyway and an Arvor could chug halfway to New Zealand on a tank at such a pace you could comfortably nibble daintily on French pastries and sip an early morning latte.

Peter Collins has been importing Arvor boats for years but even he confessed quietly that people at boat shows, enamoured with the Arvor concept, have asked if he had something just a little bit faster. Well hello Quicksilver!

Arvor is now part of the enormous Brunswick Corporation, which also owns Mercury (and lots more), and has an R&D budget bigger than the Gross Domestic Product of plenty of small countries. It didn't take long for someone to suggest sticking an outboard on the back of an Arvor

and seeing how it went.

The trials must have been fun. Suddenly the boat we thought we knew so well has taken on a whole new personality. It's like when your parents were away and you and your mates stuck a turbo on the family 120Y. But the conversion from Arvor 215 to Quicksilver 640 Pilothouse has a happier outcome – as we shall see.

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

From the front the Quicksilver looks the same as its 215 donor. It isn't until we look astern that the difference becomes apparent. Where a shaftdrive diesel engine protruded into the Arvor cockpit, a huge flat hatch, with enough room underneath to store almost anything you could imagine for an extended voyage has materialised. Oh, and over the back there's a 150hp outboard as well.

With the change of power source we lose the swimplatform but there is a super-lightweight, removable door to starboard and a folding ladder that affords easy access to and from the water. It does mean, though, that boarding from a dock will be over the side rather than from the handy platform, but you get a more fishing-friendly stern and that's important to Peter as he feels the Quicksilver will be popular with fishos.

IT'S FOR FISHING

Every promotional photo for the 640 Pilothouse shows someone with a rod in their hand suggesting that Brunswick also expect this to be a boat for fisher folk. We followed this lead and even convinced Peter and his sales assistant Nick to pose for some fishing shots (after pointing out which way was up on an overhand setup).

Against the stunning backdrop of the sandstone cliffs wide of Sydney Heads the boat certainly looked the part and it impressed with great stability at rest in very joggling conditions.

My immediate impression was the Quicksilver has retained the Arvor's purpose and presence –

[HIGHS]

- › Big-volume cabin for its size
- › Walk-around layout allows more fishing room
- › Self-draining deck
- › Big under-deck storage
- › Good performance
- › Well-finished mouldings
- › Great all-round visibility

[LOWS]

- › Fuel tank could be bigger
- › Some banging in a big sea



[tradeboat SAYS...]

According to the specifications the Quicksilver 640 Pilothouse should work with power down to 115hp, which will save a few dollars, but at \$63,681 with the mighty 150 as tested I think it represents excellent value. Bolt on some gamepoles, install a sounder and it's ready to get among the serious fish. And you can still bring the croissants and coffee.

of acceleration at the very far end of the rev range, a small amount of trim required to optimise the ride.

Steering through the Ultraflex hydraulic system is light and the large diameter stainless steel wheel is well positioned and easy to use from either a seated or standing position.

The boat runs flat into a turn, which can be slightly intimidating and daunting at first, but as my confidence grew I was happy to throw it around at speed into sharp turns. And while it's not a racy sportsboat, it feels safe and predictable and not likely to get anyone into trouble. Across half-metre harbour chop the boat rode evenly and without any undue jolting – even at full noise – the big flared bow and aggressive chine lines sending spray wide of the boat.

To get an impression of the 640P in offshore fishing mode we headed a couple of miles off the coast where we found a short 2m swell with sloppy sea conditions aggravated by a 12-knot westerly – the sort of conditions you would prefer not to encounter on a run to the shelf. At 18kts the Quicksilver Pilothouse was comfortable and relatively bang-free. At rest the boat is stable turning sideways to the wind allowing the whole length of the hull to be utilised by its fish-hungry passengers.

THE WRAP

I think Brunswick has made a good decision broadening the Arvor range. Plenty of people who like the concept of a big-cabin fishing boat with the primary safety of a self-draining deck will be impressed by the added speed of the Quicksilver 640 Pilothouse. It opens up the option of running down a long harbour like Sydney's at speed and then having the benefits of the Arvor design at sea. 🚤

Test day
weather
information
supplied by



[Facts & figures]

QUICKSILVER 640 PILOTHOUSE

PRICE AS TESTED
\$63,681

OPTIONS FITTED
Electric winch

PRICED FROM
\$56,637 w/ 90hp Mercury OptiMax outboard

SEA TRIALS	
Single 150hp Mercury outboard	
RPM	SPEED
1000	4kts
1500	6.4kts
2000	7.5kts
2500	11kts (on the plane)
3000	17kts
3500	20kts
4000	25kts
4500	28kts
5000	31kts
5500 (WOT)	35.5kts

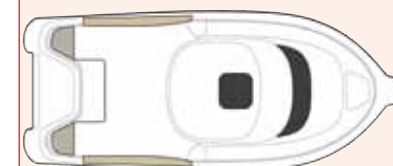
GENERAL
MATERIAL Fibreglass
TYPE Planing monohull
LENGTH 6.52m
BEAM 2.54m
WEIGHT 1060kg
DEADRISE n/a

CAPACITIES
PEOPLE (DAY) 6
REC. HP 90 to 150
FUEL 135

ENGINE
MAKE/MODEL Mercury 150 FourStroke
TYPE Direct injection four-cylinder petrol outboard
WEIGHT 206kg
DISPLACEMENT 3000cc
GEAR RATIO 1.92:1
PROPELLER 15 x 17in Black Max

SUPPLIED BY
Collins Marine,
26/17-21 Bowden Street,
Alexandria, NSW, 2015
Phone: (02) 9319 5222
Email: boat@collinsmarine.com.au
Web: collinsmarine.com.au

LAYOUT



of its life swinging from a mooring.

CABIN COMFORTS

A sliding door and a single step down lead to the wide, open space of the cabin which is surrounded by a two-section wraparound polycarbonate windscreen to give an unobstructed panoramic view.

Head height is well over 2m and although the sidedecks take some space there is standing room for two and seating on fold-down squabs for the skipper and co-pilot. To port, and secreted under the sidedeck, is a gas cartridge stove and small sink.

Seating on V-berths can be converted to bunks and a chemical toilet is secreted underneath. These simple creature comforts contribute to a boat that would be easy to spend extended time aboard – for touring or fishing – well protected from the elements.

Because of its unusual fold-down design I was surprised at the comfort of the helm seat which offers a natural driving position with secure lumbar support. Instrumentation is limited to fuel, revs and speedo, but I would have



liked at least a trim gauge. Some people, though, might like to take advantage of the comprehensive information available with Mercury SmartCraft gauges and they can be supplied as an option when the boat is ordered.

Top: Like the Arvor, the Quicksilver 640 has a fully enclosed wheelhouse, but unlike the Arvor, this outboard-powered model can race to more than 35kts, and without an inboard engine, gearbox and shaft, the space leftover creates massive under-sole storage options (above).

Dash layout is a carryover from the minimalist Arvor approach and there is no space for even small flush-mounted navigation screens, although there is adequate room on the dash top, and in that location they would be in the line of vision for skipper and crew. A neat switch panel controls lights, windscreen wiper, bait pump and bilge, and there is a separate control for the electric winch. Ventilation is limited to small flip-out side windows and an overhead hatch, but with the door open there was a good flow of air even at rest.

ON THE MOVE

After driving an Arvor camera boat for the photo shoot, transferring to the Quicksilver was a revelation. The 150hp Mercury four-stroke is a favourite of mine and it delivered power down low and revved willingly to give a top-end speed of nearly 36kts – around 16kts more than the diesel version.

Cruising at 25kts another remarkable difference became apparent – it's quiet. I buried the throttle and the 640 Pilothouse surged forward, only running out