



## TRADER – A – BOAT Australia December 2002

By David Lockwood

### ‘Galloping gourmet’

## *GENESIS 400 Targa*

**For years, Kiwi horses have been making off with Australian loot. Now another 'thoroughbred' is launching an assault — on the gourmet end of the Australian marine industry...**

Friendly rivalry is the reason Australians so enjoy the sport of Kiwi-kicking. But the fact is we have more in common with our trans-Tasman neighbours than any other country. Heck, New Zealand could be Australia's eighth territory or state.

What do Kiwis and Aussies have in common? There are the obvious things like an appreciation for fine wines and gourmet produce, a love of sport and a will to travel. But most of all, there is a passion for the great outdoors, a sense of unbridled adventure, if not mateship, that unites us.

This Kiwi born and bred sports cruiser is another link across the Tasman. Genesis Marine, which builds about 20 boats a year, is out to nab a fair old slice of overseas boating markets. First released more than a year ago, the 400 Targa sports cruiser is one of the best of the four Genesis models.

Now that the bugs on the first 400 Targa to land in Australia have been ironed out, Aussie boat builders beware! The company has had 16 boats imported into Australia in just two years. This 400 Targa was the first into Oz with stern drives.

### All – Weather Sports Cruiser

To use the vernacular, the Genesis is a bloody fair dinkum boat with good build quality, exceptional mouldings and good attention to detail. The 400 Targa I drove on the Gold Coast proved to be a summer-friendly sports cruiser with real ingenuity that I haven't seen in other boats.

Buyers of these boats tend to be 50 to 60-year-old baby boomers approaching retirement. These are the kind of people who identify with the sports cruiser layout, who aren't transient boaties looking for a quick ego-booster.

A thinking person's boat, this particular 400 Targa was owned by a Gold Coast couple with a deep-water frontage. They went for Volvo diesel engines with G-series stern drive legs — the latest hydrodynamic designed legs — for sneaking into skinny anchorages and passing over the Broadwater's ever-shifting sandbanks. The boat comes with V-drive options if you prefer. Either way, the boat's sensible semi-enclosed sports cruiser layout works all year round. It's a best-of-all-worlds design in so far as you can enjoy protection from the elements with the sunroofs closed or enjoy the wind in your hair and sun on your legs with the hatches open.

While the first 400 Targa worked well when I tested it on a chilly winter's day in Sydney, the design proved equally at home in perfect Gold Coast weather. Moving about the decks, I noted improved stainless-steel work, stronger hinges and new locks on the cupboards to stop them falling open.

The boat is a walk around design, so I strutted up front to watch the anchor splash overboard and grab in the clear water around Wave Break Island. Once anchored, I spent a good few hours going through the Kiwi cruiser with a fine-tooth comb.

## **Summer Decks**

The boat is made using modular construction and a combination of solid GRP and cored decks. The windscreen is, of course, safety glass and all the deck gear is through-bolted solid stainless steel.

Up front, the boat has a trick in-house-designed bowsprit with a canting roller mechanism to keep the chain clear of the deck. There is a deep split chain/rope locker and a Maxwell 122 windlass with bow and dash controls. I also noted an optional raw-water deckwash.

The stainless bow rail (with fender baskets) rakes outboard and the decks are cambered on the sides. These features add to the boat's style. Thankfully, there is a good grade of non-skid, two central grab rails — to which you can attach the optional sun pad — and wide side decks and grab rails to help your passage from the cockpit.

Twin cockpit doors allow the cockpit to flow through to the big teak-topped boarding platform and aft amenities centre. This way, you can increase the boat's usable space when at anchor.

The boarding platform has stainless clips for toting its 2.5m Kiwi-built Aquapro RIB (the 8hp outboard is kept in the test boat's engine room), a concealed swim ladder and two built-in bait or wet-gear bins. There are rope lockers and a shorepower connection.

A mighty amenities centre, which you operate while standing on the boarding platform and facing back into the cockpit, includes a moulded sink with hot/cold tap and handheld shower, soap dispenser, food prep space and a terrific Magma gas barbecue.

The gas bottle was in a cockpit locker along with a raw-water deckwash. But as the boat comes with a 6kVa Lombardini generator, you could run an electric barbie if you preferred.

## **Sun and Shade**

I liked the convertible side seats in the cockpit. These seats double as covers over the big side pockets, which have room for fishing rods.

When assembled with the stanchion in place, the seats make handy spots from which to wet a line. There was sufficient floor space for a teak table and chairs and courtesy lights for night cruising.

Beneath the two big teak-topped floor hatches is an open-plan engine room, which contains the Volvo KAD300s, genset, fuel filters and strainers where you can see them, 2500W Dakar charger/inverter, hot-water service, hydraulic steering gear, batteries and heaps of sound insulation. A utility room forward of the engine room has space for holding the outdoor setting, outboard motor, hoses, buckets, landing net and suchlike.

A step leads to the raised social seating area, protected by the hardtop which has twin sliding sunroofs. There is a six-seater lounge, topped in UV-resistant marine-grade vinyl, set around an oval table with a carbon-fibre inlay. With optional infill, they convert to an outdoor double berth or daybed.

The sunroofs and sliding side windows direct plenty of fresh air and natural light inside. Should you find yourself looking for refreshments, no worries, because opposite the lounge, within arm's reach, is an amenities centre with a 65lt 12V fridge, a sink with hot/cold water, and optional icemakers. The Corian counter doubles as a servery.



The co-pilot/navigator gets a padded seat with a glove box for personals alongside. There is minimum headroom of 6ft 4in and good space above your noggin at the helm, which has a two-seat lounge close to the guests.

Groovy carbon-fibre dash inlays house the engine gauges. I found trim tab switches behind the wheel, EDC controls with a push-button syncro panel, Clarion CD remote, VHF radio, Raymarine RL70C and L760 plotter and sounder, and ST6000+ autopilot — in other words, the goodies for serious cruising.

## **Interior Design**

Down four steps, the boat has a lively atmosphere and the comforts needed for weekends away or entertaining guests. The factory offers three interior soft-furnishing decor packs using fabrics sourced from Warwick in Melbourne and a choice of four timber veneers.

This boat had reddish-hued American cherrywood on the cupboards, US ginger timber trim and galley flooring, and a nice, textured camel-coloured fabric on the lounges. Man-made suede lines the walls, with soft-vinyl on the headliners — all very functional if not almost futuristic.

The boat looks at once smart and casual, with natural light on tap and curved fibreglass furniture modules that can be wiped clean.

The most prominent feature is a six-person lounge set around a high-gloss cherrywood oval table to starboard. This converts to a double berth. With two infills, the boat has four-plus-four sleeping capacity.

As it is, the dinette will best serve two couples dining together. Under the lounges are lots of hatches and storage lockers. A TV/VCR faces the lounges, with a wet bar to port. The boat's four brushed stainless power points are a nice touch.

Also to port, the galley has sand-coloured Corian counters, a two-burner ceramic cook top, a convection microwave oven/grill for making cheese toasties the morning after, and twin stainless-steel sinks. Recessed in the bench top are a bin receptacle and freezer. Under the counter is a 65lt fridge.

The galley return carries the crockery and plates in racks and can itself be used as a servery. Overhead are carpet-lined cupboards, a stack of three drawers is built in, and I found a pot locker, too.

If you're feeling really adventurous and plan to do a week aboard — the boat has the power, water and fuel for it — then you might also use the utility room for storing provisions.



## **Sleeping Pill**

A two-cabin, one-head layout, the Genesis 400 Targa plonks its owners on an island double berth in the bow. A suede-like curtain with battens rather than a door separates you from the saloon. Privacy shouldn't be an issue, given that it's couples who are most likely to use this boat.

The innerspring mattress reminded me of home. I also liked the down lights and reading lights in the cabin, the big opening hatch, solar vent, mirrored bed head, drawers and hanging locker for clobber. Though other 40s have broader bows, there is a useful amount of dressing space and two handy built-in pews that double as steps up to the bed.

A privacy curtain disguises the aft cabin, where two single berths and an infill create a big double on which an adult couple can sleep in comfort. In fact, I found I could have dropped

off to sleep right then and there. Three hatches give cross-flow ventilation, with air-conditioning as an option.

While you expect the hanging locker and storage locker for clothes, the two-person lounge at the entrance to the aft cabin was surprisingly spacious. Even with the generator running, the aft cabin was well insulated.

There was an element of style to the boat's single head, too. The big moulded insert is cream and has rubber flooring and an excellent rubber seal to the door. The head also has cherrywood lockers, a moulded shower seat with curtain, and cool Italian chrome fittings. The Lectra/San loo comes standard; a privacy curtain is needed for the hatch above the loo, however.

## **Drive Time**

How does the sucker go? Well, I did the Australian thing and headed offshore to find out. Genesis claims 37kt and, true enough, I managed 37.2kt on the flat. Comfort cruising came in at 3000rpm and 23.6kt, and 3300-3400rpm for a fast continuous speed of 28.1kt.

With 17.5° of deadrise and a sharp entry, certainly finer than some 40-footers, the 400 Targa runs smoothly at a neutral trim setting. The spray is thrown to the sides and the boat runs nicely in all directions. However, with a touch of in-trim, you can button the bow down, cut through the chop even better and still get a dry ride.

The stern drive legs ensure that the handling is sporty. The boat arcs around sharply. In fact, it almost steers off the bow and can be pulled around quite suddenly, thanks also to the Duoprops. Acceleration is impressive with both supercharger and turbo on the 285hp KAD300 Volvo engines.

Dry and comfortable, the internal driving station offers good views. And because you don't get the full sensation of speed — no wind in the hair or watering eyes — you always feel in control of the boat. With the hatches open, you get good flow-through ventilation for summer boating.

While other 40-footers may be bigger and more accommodating, this is one of the best-riding 40s I've driven. It is a real ocean-going sports cruiser and passage maker, not just a pretty boat with a blue hull.

Even Kiwi-bashers will have a hard time putting this boat down. Wouldn't you rather drink a Marlborough wine, bake an imported North Island snapper or savour a good South Island cheddar than a lot of the second-rate fodder washing up on our shores?

This Genesis 400 Targa (hull number 15) is for those with gourmet tastes.

### **Highs**

Contemporary styling, practical amenities, big indoor/outdoor living areas, all-weather comforts. Functional and almost futuristic finish down below. Terrific seaworthiness thanks to a hull that isn't too full up front. Value.

### **Lows**

Less internal volume than some 40s. Lounge seating can feel a bit too upright at times. Privacy screens are needed on the deck hatches. Cambered decks don't inspire confidence when walking around the boat (an intermediate wire on the bow rail would help).

**Website: [www.boatpoint.com.au](http://www.boatpoint.com.au)**