

BOAT REVIEW

McLay 591 XL Sportsman

SAME *but* BIGGER

Following the popularity of the McKay 591 Sportsman, you can now get an extended version in the form of the new 591XL Sportsman. Barry Thompson went South to check out the new model.



The Mercury 115 Pro XS was ideal power.



The 591XL Sportsman is an enlarged version of the popular 591 Sportsman.

We even managed to catch a few Blue cod during the test.

After a couple of McLay dealers mentioned to Steve McLay, owner of McLay Boats that while they loved the 591 Sportsman, they would like to see a little extra room, especially in the cockpit. Steve was confident he could extract around 200mm more from the current design without compromising the boat's profile and performance.

"We built a prototype and it worked extremely well, so we then added it to the range and it's now available as another model alongside the 591", says Steve.

In fact, Steve remarked that he feels the boat actually goes a little better with the extra length and it the balance has been retained. Standard power range for

both the 591 Sportsman and the 591XL Sportsman is 90 -150hp and while the XL is around 30kg heavier than the 591 Sportsman, there is little difference between them for speed and performance.

Our boat was powered by a Mercury 115 Pro XS and it proved a perfect match. Top speed on the calm waters of the Taieri River was 36 knots (41.5 mph) @ 6400 rpm. Fuel consumption was 46.8 lph, but when I dropped back on the throttle to 5500 rpm, the fuel cut to 30.5 lph and the speed to 30.5 knots (35 mph). Based on the standard 135-litre fuel tank the range (with 10% margin) was 110nm. If you are going to be using the 591XL Sportsman to tow lures offshore, then you'll have somewhere in the 110-120nm range. Like the 591 Sportsman the XL model is based on the same 17 deg variable deadrise hull, with a maximum beam of 2.30m and 25" transom height. Construction is as good as you can get, with McLay using only the highest quality marine grade allows. It's 5mm on the bottom, with 4mm transom and motor pod, plus 3mm in the sides, deck and wheelhouse to keep the top weight down. There is also a serious amount of internal structure under the sole, which reflects on the boats rigidity and sturdy solid feel when underway. Air buoyancy runs around each side and forwards of the underfloor fuel tank.

CALM BAR

Not having done a lot of river boating, I loved the fact we launched 10km upstream in the freshwater and spend the first part of the day cruising through farmland and the Taieri River Gorge, before heading across the bar and into the open sea. The gorge offered us an excellent backdrop for the photos and



videos and made a change from being out in the open ocean. A big plus is when we came back into the river the boat and engine got fresh water wash down.

I was interested in seeing the bar as I have images from the past of a bright green McLay B1800 surfing in a 2m wave. It's the sort of place that you don't cross without an experienced skipper like Steve, who has plenty of local knowledge. However this time it was calm, really calm.

Although we did find a few low waves, needless to say, the 591XL took them with ease. Certainly not rough, but I have heard from some owners that the 591 is a great boat in the moderate to rough water. I'll have to take their word for it. I was impressed with the acceleration of the hull and how quick it got onto the plane and achieved top speed. The 115hp Merc was enough power and while I am sure a 150hp would be great, you don't need it.

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Everything from the cockpit forward is identical in the 591 and 591XL, from the cabin top to the squabs, helm to the seating. The only difference is the length of the cockpit, which has been done to give more working space for fishing. It's not until you compare the 591 and the 591XL cockpits side by side that the extra 200mm (7.8") is really obvious.

The standard seating is twin swivelling bucket seats on alloy pedestals, with cantilevered single bench seats aft. This means that you have maximum cockpit space for fishing. However, you also have the option of different seating, such as full king/queen with storage under, big enough for a couple of cooler bins and even bench seats across the transom. If you are going to be using the 591XL Sportsman mostly for fishing, then the standard seating is ideal. McLay provide handrails off the rear of the hardtop so any passengers standing have something to hang onto.

The 591XL is offered as a three-sided hardtop and due to its size, it's not available with a full rear enclosure. You can have either fixed Perspex or sliding glass windows either side and if you want the added protection of a rear enclosure, then a drop-down curtain would be a good idea. I wouldn't bother unless you wanted to cover in the entire cockpit with a camper pack.

It's a simple flat dash in the 591XL Sportsman, with plenty of space for our Lowrance 7" Elite TI MFD and a couple of Mercury Smartcraft gauges. However, if you want to fit a larger MFD, you can get the dash custom made to suit. Being alloy, almost anything's possible!

The forward cabin is more an area to stow gear and individually the twin bunks are a bit small for overnighing. If you do plan to stay out, then an optional infill turns the whole area into one reasonably substantial berth. The interior is fabric lined, so you don't get a hint of the alloy. It adds warmth and a pleasant atmosphere to the cabin. Storage is available in the usual side trays and under the squabs.



The extra 200mm has been added to the cockpit

Not really an overnigher but great for stowing gear.



Solid handholds are great for passengers.



The large bait board is for the serious fishermen.



BOAT REVIEW *McLay 591 XL Sportsman*

There's an extra large deck hatch for easy access forward, which is quite common in the South Island, where a lot of McLay boats are sold with bow ladders. Something that works exceptionally well when you bring the boat to a beach with a steep drop off, such as in the Southern Lakes or Marlborough Sounds. McLay favour Sav drum winches in their boats, although capstan winches are still available.

Across the transom, our test boat was fitted with a double size bait board (owner's choice) that took up 2/3rd of the space. Storage lockers below look after items such as the batteries and there is a wide walkthrough (optional) with alloy drop down ladder to port. Flat coamings covered with tough Ultralon U-Deck and high toe-kicks have been designed for fisherman and there are ample rod holder options in the side decks, tray storage

and overhead in the rocket launcher. The owner of our test 591XL Sportsman chose not to fit a live bait tank, which would normally go at the base of the step or in place of the walkthrough. This is another option, as are tuna tubes and a freshwater washdown.

OBSERVATIONS

The extra length does make a difference, and it's easy to imagine the 591XL Sportsman very quickly outselling the existing 591 Sportsman. A little extra length for only \$1,254 more for the base boat. Makes sense.

With the addition of the 591XL Sportsman, there are now three hardtops in the six-boat Sportsman range, which are all built on the premise of large cockpits and great offshore handling abilities at very realistic prices. The 591XL certainly meets all the criteria. 🌟



Optional walk-through with drop down ladder.



Basic dash but room to add all your own gear

Strong, solid looking features and ready for the bluewater.

McLay prefer Sav drum winches so the foredeck deck is kept clear..



SPECIFICATIONS

Model: McLay 591XL Sportsman
Price as tested: \$73,187
Priced from: \$60,665
Type: Hardtop
Construction: Aluminium
LOA: 6.15m
Beam: 2.20m
Deadrise: 17 Degree
Height on trailer: 2.80m
Trailerable weight: 1400 kgs
Test Power: Mercury 115 Pro XS
Propeller: Laser II 20"
Power options: Outboard
HP Range: 90-150hp
Fuel Capacity: 135L
Trailer: Toko

Contact: www.mclayboats.co.nz

FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA

McLay 591 XL Sportsman

Fuel capacity: 135 litres

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range (NM)
1000	4.3	2.5	0.590	200
1500	5.0	4	0.800	150
2000	6.0	5.6	0.940	120
2500	7.0	8	1.200	100
3000	11.0	9.3	0.850	140
3500	17.3	12.2	0.710	170
4000	21.6	16.5	0.770	150
4500	24.5	21.5	0.880	130
5000	27.0	24.3	0.900	130
5500	30.5	30.6	1.100	110
6000	34.0	41.2	1.300	93
6400	36.0	46.8	1.300	93