

TEST ROLCO TSUNAMI

TEST: Story & Photos: John Willis



HERE'S A HOME-
GROWN CROSSOVER
BOAT THAT WILL BLOW
YOUR SOCKS OFF

Every now and then, we all need a wakeup call! We all tend to get stuck in the mainstream humdrum of daily life routine, often forgetting just how beautiful and refreshing a simple escape to the countryside can be. Especially when teamed with a magnificent freshwater lake surrounded by mountains, hospitable company and topped off with a powerful, comfortable boat to blow out

the cobwebs in our minds.

Such was my recent sojourn to Lake Eildon, Victoria, to meet Tania and Lloyd Brewer and their four kids. The Brewer family own Melbourne-based Rolco Boats and have married their obvious love of boating with their business life by producing a tremendous range of ski and wakeboarding craft, each capable of unclogging the arteries!

In true form, Victoria showed its



beauty and fury, all in one day. Periods of brilliant sunshine between heavily-rolling thunderstorms, lightning and squalls. There was a certain hint of anticipation that was enhanced while motoring through the Yarra Valley and Central Highlands, past picturesque wineries, exquisite cottage-style bed and breakfasts, and a multitude of old-style country bake houses, produce stores, pubs, antique and bric-a-brac shops.

WATER, WATER...

It's hard not to feel a pang of concern when crossing the Bonnie Doon bridge with barely a drop of water to be seen of the main Eildon Lake. Even with above-average spring rains the water has only returned to approximately 30 per cent capacity. However, it's a huge lake and even at low levels there's still plenty of water to play in!

I took a right turn just after the bridge

and followed the track to the deepwater launching ramp at Lakeside where the whole Brewer family awaited with a rather striking looking Tsunami, the mothership of the Rolco range.

Obviously the first thing you notice with this terrific 6.1m (20ft) wake/skiboat package is the colourful, yet almost characteristically dark colour scheme. The graffiti artists were given a blank sheet to create a masterpiece



The Fluid Core tower, fitted with optional racks and Clarion speakers, rises above the sumptuously upholstered Tsunami.



The Rolco Boats family. Company owners Lloyd and Tania Brewer, and their offspring.

of modern art on this demonstration package. It may not be to everyone's taste, but I reckon it looks great and it certainly turns heads.

The Rolco Tsunami principle is very simple really. They set out to produce a high-quality ski and wakeboard package that would rock the socks off all that know her, but without many of the bells and whistles that blow the price out on many of its competitors. In fact, the Tsunami is approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000 cheaper than many of its rivals, while still presenting a basic package that will certainly please the whole family, from radical teen wakeboarder to the more sedate cruising, or social ski enthusiast.

FAMILY PACKAGE

This is a family package from top to bottom and the internal layout supplied

plenty of space for the seven occupants on this excursion. Make no mistake, it's no slouch either! The Indmar 325 fuel injected V8 rockets you out of the hole with smooth transition and plenty of raw grunt. It supplies the power, and the interior layout to carry its recommended maximum of 11 adults. That's a party!

On-water performance is controlled, but exciting. It was big, billowing smiles all round from the Brewer family, and me! Lloyd likes to fit the smaller 16in CNC machined propeller to boats fitted with the ballast option, or the 17in to the more social beginner and intermediate ski/wake package.

Underway, there is little noticeable bow rise and very direct control through the rack and pinion steering and Morse throttle/gearshift. In fact, the feel of the whole boat is effortless, solid and

dependable power with a great attitude for fun. I guess it's mainly a wakeboard boat, however, it will serve very well for ski enthusiasts alike.

The fine entry and sloping sheer to the bow give a soft, dry ride through chop or wakes, but still provides plenty of lift to carry ballast and passengers in the bowrider. With a half-full fuel tank (140lt capacity), full ballast of around 800lt, three adults and four kids onboard, the Tsunami still featured terrific on-water performance. The big, flat rear end and two full-length strakes give the hull excellent lift and the design provides



Trick helm has every control and instrument within easy sight and reach of the skipper.

exhilarating handling at all speeds. The Tsunami also turns very well at low speeds for picking up skiers, docking and trailering.

OPTIONAL BALLAST

The optional ballast tanks will certainly aid the transition from one style of watersport to another. Rolco have had the package Tournament approved by creating a large, workable wake at around 20mph (17.4kts). Just empty the ballast, throw down the throttle and the boat produces a nice flat wake for skiing up to a top end of around 46.6mph (40.5kts).

This is a very comfortable boat for all. The horseshoe-shaped rear lounge extends right through the port side to the observer's position. It is all nicely upholstered, and while this boat has already done many miles, countless demonstrations, and been the Brewer

family boat for quite a while, the upholstery is performing well. The fully adjustable helm seat is richly upholstered and a very welcome footrest gives great security in high-performance turns.

WELL LAID OUT

While the helm itself is fairly simple in its appearance, it is well laid out and every control and instrument is within easy sight or reach of the driver. The new model has a brushed stainless steel finish, a follow-up from consumer concern that the polished stainless steel of the demo boat may be too reflective on bright sunny days. We obviously did not have that problem on this day of thunderbolts and lightning.

The dashboard features a 12-gang waterproof switch panel with the ballast that's optional at approximately \$3000. There are none of the electronic presets that are utilised by many competitors as

"THIS IS A FAMILY PACKAGE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM AND THE INTERNAL LAYOUT SUPPLIED PLENTY OF SPACE FOR THE SEVEN OCCUPANTS ON THIS EXCURSION"



The Rolco Tsunami is a dedicated ski and wakeboard boat, but she's also a sociable craft and one the whole family will get to enjoy.



The billy lids love riding up front in the hard-to-miss Tsunami with its street art wrap colour scheme.

WHAT WE LIKED
Well priced package
Power-to-weight ratio

NOT SO MUCH
No electronic presets

Lloyd wanted to keep the costs down and believes that the more electronics fitted to a boat the more the long-term problems, especially in saltwater. While there have been huge advances in wiring recently, I still find it hard to argue with his way of thinking, especially when it comes down to the budget.

Rolco manufacture and fit the very sporty brushed stainless steel/leather wrap combination tilt steering wheel, as well as a full array of engine and speed gauges with stainless steel bezels. A GPS/speedo will also be available shortly.

Don't the kids just love the bowrider! I can see my wife up there as well, lazing back with some light refreshments on a sunny afternoon. The whole package enhances that social-boating attitude.

There's plenty of storage to accommodate the whole gang of passengers with cupholders and seating for all. The large, rear sundeck also hides some huge storage areas,

particularly for wetsuits, ropes, towels and all of the paraphernalia a family needs for a weekend on the water.

Lloyd is currently moulding a storage unit for a portable Esky, a feature missing in the test boat.

Sun junkies will love the huge sundeck area and a dropdown swim platform is just the staging ground for all of your watersports. Stainless steel boarding handles are accessible from the water, as they should be. The dropdown idea is a good one. It can be operated singlehanded when the family inevitably leaves you to put the boat away by yourself while they head off to the showers. The towing hitch on the Easytow trailer also folds away to reduce storage length. It is also removable for added security when stored.

FLUID CORE TOWER

The Fluid Core tower looks great and is a very practical asset, not only for the

tow point, but for storage of bulky skis and wakeboards when they aren't in the water. The test boat was also equipped with a Clarion boom box with speakers everywhere including twin pods in the tower that shook the cockatoo's from their roosts.

A curved, safety glass (optional) windscreen protects the cockpit. It is nice and high and gives great visibility. It opens in the centre for bow access. This leads me to a point that I consider a huge boost for this boat. Many competitors in this field give little attention to the anchor setup, especially storage and yet they are marketing to both fresh and saltwater customers in many States where anchors are required by regulation. The Rolco Tsunami has a proper anchor locker in the bow that is big enough for a good-size anchor, rode and chain.

Rolco are producing a very strong unit that incorporates the intricate

deck mouldings to reinforce the inherent strength of the laminates. There are double-bias skins in the topsides and up to four layers of woven rovings in critical areas such as the keel and rudder as well as integrated reinforcing to areas such as seat supports and engine mounts. The unit provides positive buoyancy and very low hull noise, or vibration, even though it isn't foam filled. The package has also been designed have an all-up towing weight under two tonnes to keep it in the realm of a standard family vehicle.

Servicing is a breeze and the bulkhead at the back of the rear lounge is removable for easy access to the ZF reduction vee-drive and shaft coupling. A freshwater flush option is available for saltwater customers and a waterproof glovebox is welcome as standard. As the unit is fully Australian made, Rolco offer a huge list of optional extras including bimini, tonneau covers, upholstery design and power ratings.

Rolco produce a premium gelcoat finish, or opt like many customers do for a custom-design wrap to make the final presentation of your Rolco Tsunami as flexible as imagination allows.

THE RAP

Wakeboard boats have changed the face of inland boating, and they now extend that social ski/wake flexibility into saltwater usage as well. The Tsunami is indeed a really sociable boat. Its comfortable seating and general layout invites fun, and the driver gets that magical feeling of V8 power as the hull confidently performs up to high speeds. Both waterskiers and wakeboard enthusiasts are well catered and the package is produced in Australia for a realistic price.

I think I'll make a point of clearing the cobwebs and rocking the foundations a little more often with the help of the good people at Rolco. 🚤



The large, flip-down swim platform is simple to operate.

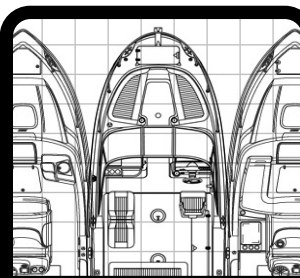


The big, rear sundeck hides some huge storage areas.



Recline or entertain a crowd in the cockpit's wraparound seating arrangement where you'll also find recessed cupholders and speakers.

ROLCO TSUNAMI



HOW MUCH?

Price as tested:\$63,445
Options fitted:Tower racks, Clarion stereo and speakers, vinyl wrap, and ballast system
Priced from:\$54,990

GENERAL

Type:Bowrider
Material:GRP
Length:6.1 m
Beam:2.3m
Weight:1900kg (dry)
Deadrise:Variable

CAPACITIES

Fuel:140lt
People:11
Rec. max. HP:340hp

ENGINE

Make:Indmar
Type:Fuel injected V8 as standard, carburetted as tested
Rated HP:325hp
Displacement:5.7lt
Gearbox ratio:1.46:1
Propeller:Four-blade 13.5 x 17

SUPPLIED BY

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TO OWN THIS BOAT

Price as tested.....\$63,455
Weekly repayment.....\$158.19 TAP
Deposit.....30% = \$19,036.50
Final Payment.....30% = \$19,036.50
Term60 mths

* Customer rate is 8.84% comparison rate is 10.92% for all of the above payments.
See rear of magazine for conditions



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