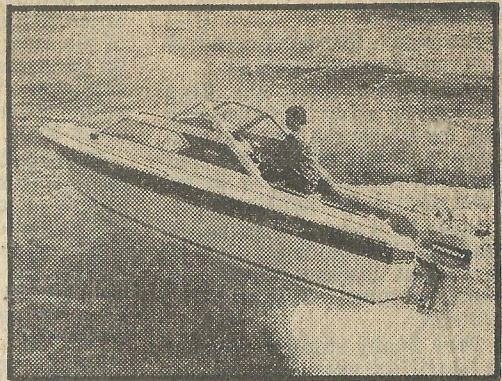


Boating

By BOB CARTER

Half cab with class



Whitley Cruisers' Impala ... loaded with features.

IN the boating industry the very mention of a half cabin is enough to bring a scowl from many manufacturers and dealers.

The get-rich-quick backyarder has been responsible for flooding the market with plenty of potentially dangerous, second-rate rigs.

However, there are a number of well designed, soundly built half cabs on the market, one of which is the Whitley Impala.

Manufactured in Briar Hill by Whitley Cruisers, the Impala slots into the bigger end of the trailerable half cab in market. Measuring 5.3m overall, it can be trailed behind the family 6-cylinder car without too many hassles.

At the same time, it is of ample proportions to carry the family and handle Port Phillip Bay on any day that families would be keen to go boating.

In its general design and profile the Impala's lines look right. It has a solid moderate vee hull with full length strakes and high clinker-style sides.

Above the gunwale the cabin is well proportioned with a screen which is moulded into the structure and not merely bolted on as an afterthought or optional extra.

Throughout the rig the standard of finish is the very best.

Inside the boat the thoughtful design even goes so far as having the carpet attached to the hull liner with press studs for ease of cleaning. It also means that the carpet can be removed for fishing trips when the floor of the boat

tends to get covered in bait, scales and other rubbish.

Fold down seats for the skipper and front passenger are fitted up front with two stern quarter seats provided at the back of the cockpit.

The addition of a full set of storm covers makes a remarkable transformation. The test boat had been used by a couple at Christmas time who lived aboard for three weeks.

POWERED by a pre-VRO model 140 Evinrude outboard with a 43cm prop, the Impala manages good performance figures.

Coming on to the plane the bow tends to rise quite a bit, momentarily blocking forward vision.

In a straight line across Port Phillip Bay the Impala provided a good run, having no difficulty at all with the prevailing conditions. However, due to its moderate vee, I suspect it may pound about a bit in the rough stuff, but

at rest the 18 degree deadrise is responsible for the boat's stability.

The Impala has good performance manners, being responsive to the controls and running truly across the water. The hull is sensitive to trim. It takes a little time to get it right, but once there the ride is good.

Loaded with features and quality workmanship, the Whitley Impala is one of the best half cabin boats going.

Whitley Impala Specifications

- length: 5.3 m
- beam: 2.15 m
- deadrise: 18 deg.
- horsepower rating: 70 hp to 175 hp
- trailer: single axle galvanised
- engine: 140 hp Evinrude
- fuel tank: 72 litre sub floor
- extras fitted: full canopies, fill in bunk cushions, rear table
- Price as tested: \$14,000.
- Test boat supplied by Whitley Cruisers, 24 Simms Road, Briar Hill, phone 434-4979.