

# Boat REVIEW

SAM HITZKE

**H**ead down to your local boat ramp on virtually any day of the week and you're likely to cross paths with at least one vessel proudly bearing the Savage name. It's not surprising either seeing as it is the longest standing brand of alloy boats made in Australia, releasing its very first model way back in 1898. Brands like Savage don't just stand the test of time by chance.

So when Savage Boats announced it was releasing a new range of tinnies to replace the old Jabiru series, a long

standing estuary and freshwater favourite, it definitely created some attention among the boating fraternity.

Introducing the new Raptor and Raptor Pro series, destined to become a firm favourite within Australia's growing band of estuary/bay and freshwater anglers, the Raptor boats leave no stone unturned. These new models are laden with new innovative features and a state of the art hull design, thus I'm certain it won't be long before we hear the first "Jabba-who?"

Built in six sizes: 355, 395 and

425 in the Raptor and 405, 425 and 445 in the Raptor Pro, there is no shortage of variety. From the weekend warrior all the way to the tournament fisherman, there's a Raptor to suit your needs. Let's take a closer look at what Australia's most respected name in boating has brought to the table this time around.

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

For two models sporting the same name, the internals couldn't be more varied. The Raptor range presents itself as the stereotypical, basic open



**THE NAME 'SAVAGE' HAS LONG BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH 'TINNIES' IN AUSTRALIA, AND TO MAKE SURE IT STAYS THAT WAY THEY HAVE JUST RELEASED TWO NEW RANGES OF BOATS. SAM HITZKE SHARES ALL THE DETAILS.**

tinny, whereas the Pro range has been spec'd up to transform into the ultimate calm-water fishing weapon.

Starting with the Raptor, it's a no fuss, low maintenance, budget friendly and hugely versatile tinny, kitted out with everything you need to get the job done without a drama. It sports two bench seats that house under-seat floatation, a glove box/ drink holder for storing all those important items and row locks in case outboards aren't your thing. The deck offers truckloads of storage space between the two

seats for large items that can't be tucked away. The anchor, chain and rope sit conveniently out of the way in an anchor gusset under the bow, while behind the rear bench there is plenty of room for any battery boxes or fuel tanks to keep them out of harm's way.

The Raptor Pro starts to get a little fancier, and by little, I mean a lot. The Pro range comes decked out from front to back making the whole vessel one big fishing platform. The bench seats have given way to 360 degree swivel pedestal seats



for maximum comfort on long days afloat and the gunnels have been upgraded to be extra wide to house the two flush mount rod holders which are included as standard. As far as storage is concerned the Pro range boasts a massive amount of underfloor storage beneath the front and rear casting decks to ensure there is minimal clutter and maximum fishing space onboard. All matched with the hull painted inside and out and you have yourself a very smart looking piece of aquatic machinery.

Both ranges have the option of getting an electric motor bracket mounted to the front for those wanting to really get stuck into their fishing, and as far as additional features, that's just the tip of the iceberg.

### HULL PERFORMANCE

As a calm water hull the Raptor is outstanding in its stationary stability, as well as the ease at which it jumps onto the plane and how it handles at speed. The two smaller sizes wouldn't be terribly comfortable navigating through areas of high chop, but that in itself would be well and truly outside their design brief.

The Raptor Pro's on the other hand, are set to be one of the softest riding tinnies on the water for their size. Any model from this range would be equally at home fishing large freshwater impoundments and rivers as it would be spending a day out fishing one of the many bays that litter Australia's coastline. Its exceptional performance is largely due to its wide chimes cushioning the landing from any chop as well as also being the key to its undeniable stability

when at rest, even with two or more people moving around the decks.

### FISHABILITY

From a glance it's easy to distinguish the two different markets Savage had in mind when creating the Raptor and Raptor Pro range. The Standard Raptor range fits the bill perfectly as an entry level tinny, lending itself to anglers who only get out during the school holidays with the kids and don't want to blow the budget on a boat.

Being low maintenance means less hassles and more time out on the water spending time with friends and family. They would also make the perfect addition to anyone planning a long range/offroad trip in need of a car or caravan topper. The hull in the 355 model weighs just 76 kg, easily manageable by two people or a purpose-built winching system. The same applies for being a suitable tender for larger vessels where it's necessary to tow the tender or winch it onto the deck.

Being both unpainted and uncarpeted (flooring is available as an optional extra) the Raptors make the ideal vessel for doing all the dirty jobs, such as setting a few redclaw or crab pots, or chucking the cast net for prawns or livebait. As soon as you get home, a quick wash with the hose with the bungs open and your boat is clean as a whistle.

The Pro series was built more purposefully with anglers in mind. Being completely decked and carpeted the Pro range boats are the perfect vessel to flick a few lures from, or if optioned up with a livewell, fish competitively



in the tournament scene.

The two casting decks offer massive amounts of underfloor storage ensuring a clutter free boat with maximum fishing room. Being heavier and larger than the standard Raptors, the Pro range offers versatility to its owner, comfortably fishing rivers and impoundments for barra one day, yet out chasing snapper in the bay the next. They also come standard with a large transducer bracket welded into the transom to ensure you have plenty of room to kit up the new rig with all the latest Lowrance fish finding technology.

The boats in the Pro range are serious fishing platforms, not to mention easy on the eyes as well.

### WRAP UP

If you're looking at getting your first boat or keen to upgrade your old one, you'd be hard pressed not to find the perfect fit from the new range of Savage Raptor and Raptor Pro boats. They're perfectly suited to cater for the freshwater and inshore saltwater fisho's, coming in as basic or as spec'd up as your heart desires.

For any more information on the Raptor or Raptor Pro range of boats jump on the Savage website at [www.savageboats.com.au](http://www.savageboats.com.au) or check them out in person at your local Savage dealer. You won't be disappointed.



### FWF Fact Box STANDARD FEATURES - RAPTOR

- Glove box/drink holder fitted
- Anchor gusset
- 2x handles
- Rowlock blocks
- Under bench seat floatation

### FWF Fact Box OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

- Electric motor mount
- Transducer bracket
- Bimini kits
- Rod holders
- Casting platform

### FWF Fact Box STANDARD FEATURES - RAPTOR PRO

- Front & rear casting platforms
- Pedestal seating
- Transducer bracket
- Bow and side rails
- Painted hull
- Carpeted fuel tank rack

### FWF Fact Box OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

- Electric motor mount
- Side console
- Vinyl wraps
- Casting platform livewell
- Side pockets
- Additional rod holders
- Bimini kits