



Off the Trailer



Kiwi company Sealegs has built a solid reputation for its amphibious RIBs – boats that drive over land and straight into the water. Once floating, simply retract the wheels and you've got a high-performance powerboat.

Sealegs produces five models from 6.1m to the 7.7m Cabin on test here. Despite Port Phillip Bay's infamous chop, the latter impressed – both for its versatility and performance.

A cuddy cab like this is essentially a day boat, but it's a good all-rounder for family fun, fishing or diving. The cabin serves as somewhere to keep things dry, a spot to rest, or somewhere to shelter in bad weather.

It's an ideal craft for those with waterfront property; in fact most Sealegs owners don't even have a trailer.

The Sealegs 7.7m is available in cuddy-cabin and centre-console formats and both meet Australian survey requirements. Since the company's launch in 2004, Sealegs has delivered over 650 boats to 40 different countries, including 130 to Australia.

Designed and built in New Zealand, the concept features hydraulically powered retractable, steerable and motorised wheels. It takes about six seconds to extend the wheels and



By John Zammit

Surf and turf

Sealegs's 7.7m Cabin RIB ushers in a new era of boating versatility.





Right: The cabin is a handy retreat and sheltered storage area.

Below: The helm is uncluttered and functional.



on land the Sealegs can attain 10km/h. This model features 'Extended Run Time', allowing 30 minutes' driving thanks to a boosted cooling system.

Power steering is standard while All Wheel Drive (with pushbutton diff lock) is there for rough terrain. The joystick driving control is easy to use and headlights are standard.

At 7.74m and rated for six, it's roomy for a RIB and the outboard sits off the stern on a pod. The extra space aft in the cockpit afforded by this new layout houses the 24hp Honda four-stroke for the hydraulics.

Forward are skipper and companion chairs, with a couple of smaller seats aft. The adjustable sports wheel and bolstered skipper's seat means driving is comfy sitting or standing and there's clear vision over a functional dash.

The cabin incorporates seating and a sizeable overhead hatch that lets in plenty of air and light, while the anchor gear (with winch) is on a bowsprit forward. The cabin is roomy enough, with good storage.



Right: The engine pod allows extra room for housing the engine that powers the hydraulics – a 24hp Honda.

Above right: A sizeable hatch floods the cabin with light.



The deep-vee aluminum hull devoured the chop. The huge Hypalon pontoons remain clear of the water in normal operation, but provide extra stability when needed. It is surprisingly agile and delivered quite a soft ride, despite the conditions.

The Evinrude 200hp E-TEC fitted to this boat saw it shoot out of the hole and perform well – I would think the standard 150hp donk would be perfectly adequate.

The Sealegs maxed out at 5300rpm and 40 knots (74.1km/h). That's handy performance, especially when racing home ahead of the weather. At 18 knots (33.3km/h) and 3000rpm we used 30lt of fuel per hour. Leaving some reserve, that gives around five-and-a-half hours of running time or a range of 100nm (185km).

A Sealegs boat has a multitude of benefits and applications. The concept is simple, but it's been engineered brilliantly, and this cabin version only enhances that versatility. 

PREMIUM *xtra*

To read a detailed review of this boat, go to www.clubmarine.com.au to view Club Marine Premium, the digital version of Club Marine Magazine.

SPECIFICATIONS: SEALEGS 7.7M CABIN

Length overall:	7.74m
Height:	2.55m (wheels down)/ 2.05m (wheels up)
Beam:	2.61m
Weight (no fuel):	1850kg
Fuel capacity:	180lt
Power (as tested):	200hp Evinrude E-TEC (150hp standard)
Price (as tested):	\$199,000

For more information, contact Blairgowrie Marina Services, tel: 0447 120 345 or go to: www.sealegssarge.com.

Clockwise from top: The hull delivers a soft ride while the pontoons provide extra buoyancy and stability; Our test boat had plenty of punch thanks to its 200hp E-TEC. A 150hp donk is standard; Driving on land is a simple joystick affair.