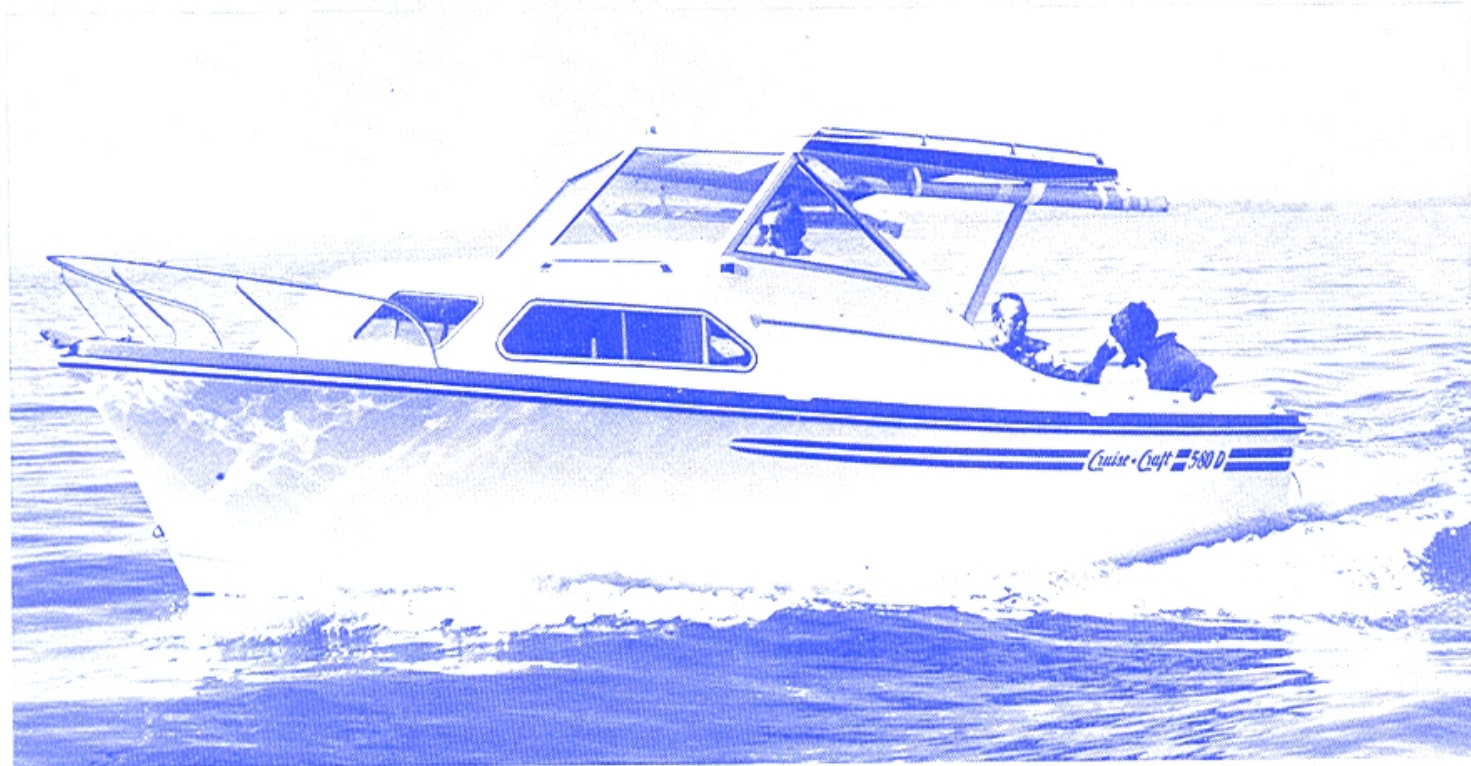


CRUISE CRAFT 580D

Diesel Displacement Fibreglass Cruiser



Hunt's Marine Pty. Ltd.

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Cruise Craft enters the diesel with a brilliant that is versatile, beautiful, and

As beauty is alleged to be in the eye of the beholder, so must suitability for certain tasks be in the eye of the beholder when it comes to evaluating a boat.

The manufacturers themselves describe the 580D as being suitable for daytime or overnight use, but as we headed out onto that amazing labyrinth of waterways spawned by Moreton Bay, it was much in my mind that nothing more than some basic tucker, a few crab pots and a change of Stubbies would be required to keep me on the go for a couple of weeks.

The state of mind was induced as much by the steady, measured tread of our diesel-propelled progress, as by what I considered to be a nice sufficiency of luxurious appointments about me.

Whether or not you can dig a boat like this will depend largely on whether you are oriented towards the 'being there', or the 'getting there and being there' of boating. As we did our steady thing towards a haze enshrouded horizon at a maximum speed of seven knots, we were passed at great speed by many boats, some of which supported more accommodation and luxuries than our little cruiser, and we would have followed any of those boats around the bay simply by keeping track of the dollar bills spewing out of the exhaust systems.

"Displacement hulls are too bloody slow," they cry, and the words are whipped away in the wind and buried in the roar of the engines as the helmsman concentrates on the rush of water ahead. His passengers stay seated for it is not practical to try and move around in a powerboat travelling at speed.

Our helmsman was very much a part of our conversation, for although the engine lay square between the three of us, it was a muted and rather peaceful throb, and conversation was low keyed and relaxed. He had no need to keep an anxious eye ahead at all times, for at seven knots you have plenty of time to see potential hazards and do something about it.

And so it goes—horses for courses, so to speak. Me, I run a quick outboard-powered fishing boat because I do most of my travelling by road. I run the lightest blue-water boat I can get away with, for that's the boat that fits my life

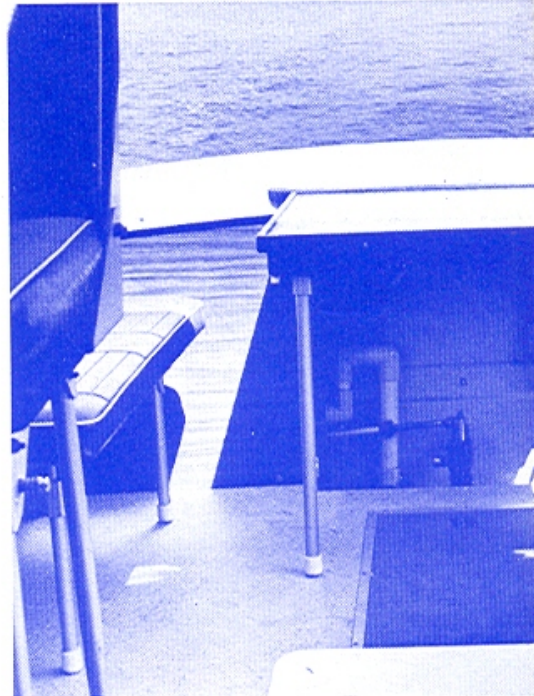


Helmsman's nook is comfortable and practical with excellent vision.

style. But I did a trip once from Cairns to Lizard Island in a seven knot plodder, and I can tell you that it gets right to you after a couple of days. The whole pace of the thing seeps into body and mind after a day or two, and you relax like you have never relaxed before.



Fish spotters, bird watchers and sun worshippers can go aloft through the pop-top hatch and trip the light fantastic with toe to the wheel.



Versatile cockpit can offer plenty of seating and eating lot folds down converting into a huge fishing area. No direct access to



Cabin door swings back to enclose head (right). The door drops in to make full deck

displacement 'plodder' market

5.8m boat

and excellent value for money



space with three lounges and two tables, but the whole boat has access to the shaft through lift-up floor section and steering stern.

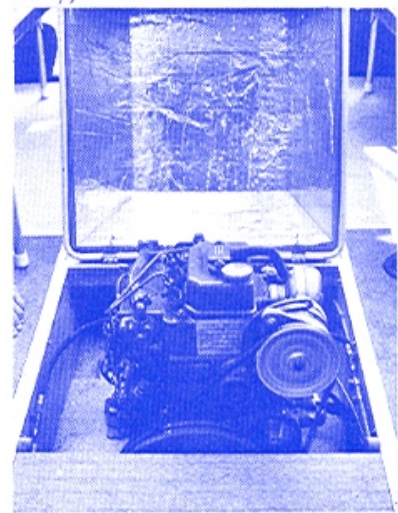


Cabin is well ventilated and comfortable. Centre section is a double bed out of bunks.

We measured distances on the chart in terms of so many meals or cups of tea to a particular destination, and detailed observations of our surroundings along the way were every bit as important as the observation of our destination when we finally got there.

Maybe that's a lot to say about the relative speed factor, but let's face it it's the crunch question when a lot of folk give consideration to a boat like this—it is slow, but only slow when viewed with a philosophy that says "fast is better". There is, in my opinion, plenty of scope to argue that "slow is better".

The pictures with this review do most of the describing that needs to be done, and from these you can readily see that Cruise Craft's little plodder baby is indeed a sweet looking boat. More importantly, those sweet looks and lines also work extremely well to provide an efficient and comfortable small cruiser for folk who want to go for a day, a week or whatever.



The miniature Volvo engine room is a genuine fuel miser and a very quite motor indeed.

Borrowing lightly from the coastal trawler concept, hull lines are of the hard chine, deep keel school, which makes for great stability at rest and underway. The MD7A, two-cylinder Volvo diesel swings a 14 x 9 prop to produce 7 knots at 2600 rpm, with a cruising speed around 6½ knots achieved at 2400 rpm. At this pace the engine is sipping around 1½ litres per hour (that's 24 statute miles to the gallon).

The small engine box is placed smack dab centre, right in front of the entrance to the cabin, and that's one of two criticisms I found to level at this boat. But, it has to be a small criticism because it's a small engine box. Most times you have the space to walk around it, but with the bulkhead table up you have to go over it, which is more in the minor hassle league than any sort of real problem.

Outside of that, overall layout and design is brilliant. I have never seen a boat offering better access to ALL working parts, including the whole drive shaft and steering assembly from engine room and control point right through to rudder and prop.

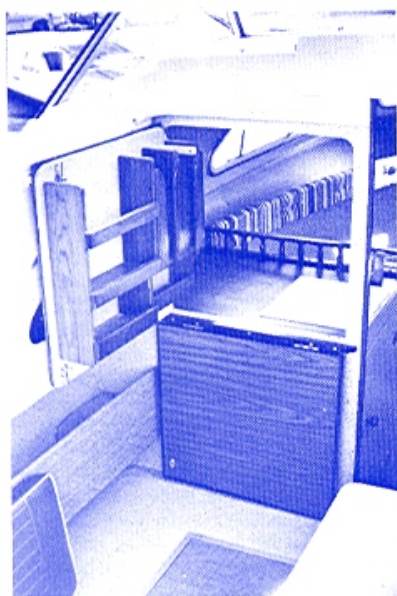
The engine cover swings back to give access to the whole engine. A drop-down table at the transom lifts to give excellent access to steering mechanism and the tail of the shaft. Lift up hatches in the cockpit floor give good access to the whole shaft and fuel tank—which brings me to the second thing I did not like much. The filler sits right on the top of the tank, which means that spilled fuel goes straight into the bilges. Spilled diesel is no real big deal, and you can pump out with a bilge pump, but I'd still rather see that filler outside somewhere.

Interior space has generally been optimised with sound thinking that says "Everything that can fold away will fold away", thus you can go from a fully furnished look to wide open spaces in a matter of minutes. The cockpit, wide and spacious for fishing one minute, quite suddenly becomes a boozy little riverside bistro as lounges and tables appear all over the place. And the seating and tables are actually comfortable as well as being practical.

Our test boat was fitted with an optional hard top, and with no side supports of any kind it provides an ideal cockpit for keen fishermen with full access around three sides of the cockpit. It also makes life a lot easier when people are boarding or leaving the craft. I suppose, when I think about it, that this is probably about the best compromise I have seen for the serious fisherman who also needs to cater for a socially oriented family.

The cabin area is beautifully designed, again maximising the

space available without ever coming up with the usual 'doll's house' feeling where everything is miniaturised to get all the gear in. Bunks are big and comfortable with good storage under, and the whole thing enjoys excellent ventilation via a very large front hatch and sliding side windows.



This is typical of the clever thinking that went into this boat. The cabin can be completely enclosed, or with the cabin enclosed you can use the lift-up table. Alternatively, you can have the whole thing open with table down or up, serving straight from the work bench into the cabin without the cook and bottle washer being cut off from the cockpit revelers. Now that's neat stuff for what should be a small boat.

The galley area is quite adequate with sink and space for a spirit stove. There's plenty more storage room under there, too. A plate and cup rack is just one of many touches that show that this boat got more than the usual share of extra thought at design stage.

As the photographs show quite clearly, the modular approach to the bulkheads and cabin door and hatch allows all sorts of themes and variations from total lock-up through to wide open and airy. The cabin door swings back to act as the door for the head.

The layout is such that a family could get a two-room sleeping arrangement out of the boat by simply closing the cabin right up and enclosing the cockpit with the optional storm covers. The lounge-style seating in the cockpit would be just fine for a couple of kids to sleep on in comfort.

Beautifully designed and extremely well constructed and finished; safe, comfortable, practical, and as economical as a power boat can get. Cruise Craft's 580D is, in our opinion, a completely successful new boat which deserves to be a winner, with or without an energy crisis to give it a shove along.

SPECIFICATIONS

P-poor F-fair G-good E-excellent
NA-not applicable

	P	F	G	E	NA
Ease of launch and retrieve		✓			
Safety gear storage			✓		
Ground tackle storage			✓		
General storage			✓		
Fuel capacity			✓		
Water capacity			✓		
Access to fuel		✓			
Access to battery				✓	
Access to engine/s				✓	
Standard of interior finish				✓	
Standard of exterior finish				✓	
Standard of fittings				✓	
Adequacy of fittings			✓		
Space for instruments				✓	
Space for accessories				✓	
Driver's seat			✓		
Driving position			✓		
Location of controls			✓		
General vision seated			✓		
General vision standing			✓		
General seating				✓	
Sleeping provision			✓		
Standard of bunks			✓		
Stability at rest			✓		
Stability under way			✓		
Willingness to plane					N/A
Sub-plane performance			✓		
Rough water performance					N/A
Dryness					N/A
High speed manoeuvrability					N/A
Low speed manoeuvrability			✓		
Throttle response			✓		
Steering response			✓		
General comfort				✓	
Opportunity for further development					N/A

Overall length: 5.8m (19')
Maximum beam: 2.44m (8.0')
Draft: 0.45m (1'5½")
Cockpit size: 2.59x1.86m
Waterline length: 5.26m (17'3")

Waterline beam: 2.16m (7'1")
Freeboard aft: 0.57m (1'10½")
Height keel to windshield: 2.29m (7'6½")
Weight including 13hp motor approximately: 1200kg (2600lb)

STANDARD EQUIPMENT INTERIOR

Two 6'3" upholstered bunks
Under bunk storage
Cabin accessory shelves
Complete separate enclosed marine toilet
Galley unit including sink and pump
Plate and cup rack
Louvred cabin door
Companion hatchway and hatch
Cabin and cockpit lighting
Cabin floor carpet
Large cockpit side pockets
Three folding cockpit seats
Folding helmsman seat
Two folding tables
Console containing steering, controls and instruments
10 gallon under floor water tank
10 gallon under floor fuel tank
Whale gusher type bilge pump
12 volt 90 AH heavy duty battery
Diesel motor 13 hp with flexible mountings
Copper stern tube
1" stainless shaft and bronze propeller
Flexible exhaust with water lock
Bronze balanced rudder
Sea cock

STANDARD EQUIPMENT EXTERIOR

Heavy duty brass bollards
Heavy duty CP brass bow roller
Stainless steel bow rail
Separate anchor locker with hatch
Large forward cabin hatch
Two fixed front windows
Two sliding side windows
Fly bridge screen armour glass fronts
Cabin hand rails
Non-skid decking
Navigation lights

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Centre bunk cushion
Cabin lambswool lining
Cockpit carpet
Boarding platform
Hard top
Hard top extension