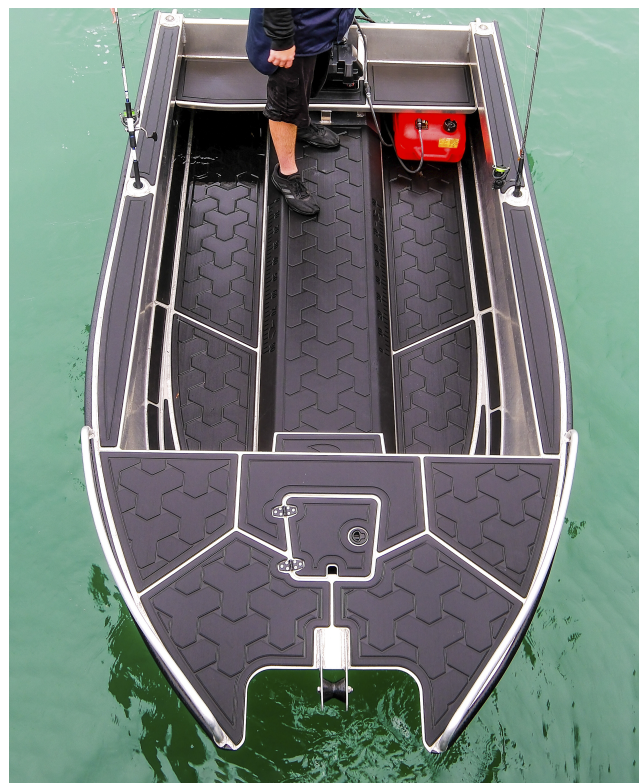




Boat of Interest



# KINGFISHER 390 POWERCAT

Words & Images by Nick Jones

## The backstory

Kingfisher has been making boats in the Tauranga area for over 19 years. The 390 Powercat is Kingfisher's latest production model, devised and built in-house with the same design principles as other models in its stable of Powercats.

## Construction

Kingfisher's intention with the 390 was to design a dinghy on steroids; one that packed a punch well above its modest size. The hull is 4mm marine-grade aluminium, and the construction is backed by a factory structural hull warranty.

Twin hulls focus buoyancy on the outside of the boat, rather than in the middle, creating much greater stability. Apart from stability and ride, the other bonus of the cat design is a larger internal volume, particularly at the bow.

The 390 features a nice casting deck up front, while the reasonably narrow sidedecks and 1.85m beam give plenty of uncluttered space for fishing and storing gear aft. With the engine up, the hull only draws 20cm, making exploring the shallows where other boats can't go very tempting indeed.

## Layout and fishability

The 390 Powercat's casting deck is awesome — a boon for keen casters who value height, visibility, and unrestricted space. There is a step-up that makes for easy access to the platform, and the modest-sized self-draining anchor locker is hatched, so it's hoof friendly. There are dual latched dry storage areas under each side of the casting deck too.

Being a small cat, the 390's cockpit floor is not uniform in height. While this might be an issue for some, I thought the longitudinal raised centre floor made a convenient seat, casting area for a second angler, or spot for bags or tackle boxes.

The built-in rear bench seat offers driving from either port or starboard positions (very handy for trimming the vessel with your own body weight). The battery is centrally located under the tiller handle on the bench seat, which keeps it above any saltwater in the bilge. Divers will appreciate the inclusion of small swim platforms astern.

Four alloy rod holders are set into the gunwales, but keen anglers might want to add internal rod racks. Grab rails are positioned fore and aft, and the rounded rub rails along the outer

length of the sidedecks also provide a good grip for passengers when on the plane. Ultralon Octigrip is found on all horizontal surfaces and is great for those bare tootsies.

## Performance

With some time pressure and a barrage of inclement weather, our allotted test day was truly a test for the 390 Powercat! A northeasterly, gusting 25 knots at the Bean Rock nowcasting station and met with an opposing outgoing tide, greeted us as we headed down the Tamaki Estuary. Logan Howell, from Auckland's Woodbine Marine, opened the Honda 30hp, and we were up on the plane in no time. I reckon the 390 would still jump onto the plane with four passengers and all their gear onboard, no doubt with the Honda still parsimoniously sipping fuel from the tote tank.

As we cleared Browns Island, I braced myself for some tinny bashing. However, the twin hulls and their fine entry either jumped over or cut through the stiff, head-on chop with praiseworthy

precision and aridity. Beam on, the 390 proved stable even when one or the other hulls lost water tension. We did get a bit wet, but you'd expect that when navigating wind-whipped seas in a tiller steer. Access to the bung to ditch any water taken onboard isn't too complicated — however, I would install a small bilge pump or scuppers to make life easier.

On the downwind leg, she was similarly surefooted, although she did occasionally cavitate (not unusual for single-engine cats running down-sea in heavy conditions). Logan, who had been playing around in the boat for the previous month, assured me that cavitation wasn't an issue in less atrocious conditions.

All in all, I was very impressed by the handling and fishability of this pocket-sized vessel. With the addition of a plotter/sounder, extra rod capacity, and perhaps even a small electric trolling motor, the 390 Powercat would be one hell of an inshore fishing weapon.

SPECIFICATIONS	
Model	390 Powercat
Hull design	Kingfisher
Builder	Kingfisher
Construction	4mm marine grade aluminium
LOA	3.9m
Beam	1.85m
Draft (engine up)	20cm
Hull weight	300kg
Transom height	20"
Recommended engine	25-40hp
Price as tested	\$32,000



Kingfisher Powercats are stable & safe with an unbeatable ride and have over 15% more volume than most other monohull boats in their class. Kingfisher Powercats are great for both inshore and offshore boating and great for overnight trips.

[www.kingfisherboats.co.nz](http://www.kingfisherboats.co.nz)
 [info@kingfisherboats.co.nz](mailto:info@kingfisherboats.co.nz)
 07 575 0977