



Triple times

WE WANTED TO TEST ONE OF SMARTBOAT'S GREAT LITTLE FISHING CRAFT BUT ENDED UP WITH THREE VARIANTS, AS **NORMAN HOLTZHAUSEN** EXPLAINS



The new Smartwave 4200 has proved exceedingly hard to test. Several times we lined one up for our review only to have the dealer sell the boat before we could get our hands on it. Finally we managed to pin one down that had been prepared for the Hutchwilco New Zealand Boat Show, and sneaked it out on the water straight after the show before it could disappear. We also managed

to grab two of its siblings, the bigger Smartwave 4800 and the smaller Smartwave 3500, at the same time. It was a very interesting exercise to compare three very similarly configured boats, but of different sizes.

But it was the new model, the 4200 centre console, that we had primarily come to test. Moulded out of linear medium density polyethylene (LMDPE) all Smartwave boats are UV-stabilised, exceptionally strong

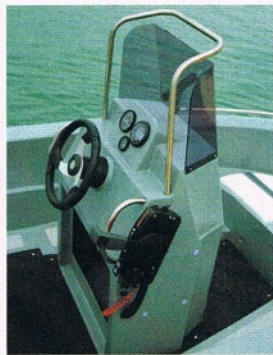
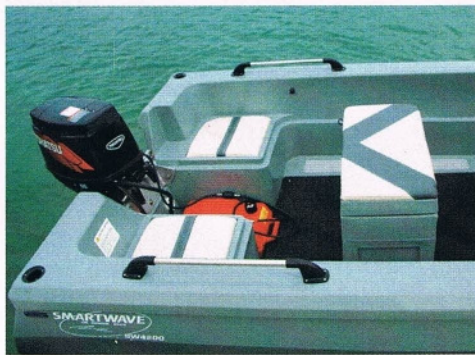
and durable. LMDPE itself floats, and the double-skinned hull is foam-filled – so, even if the boat were to be cut in half, both parts would continue to float. All models of Smartwave have undergone CE certifications, so these are phenomenally safe boats.

Our 4200 came in a serious-looking but sensible battleship grey, but is available in eight different colours ranging from white through to bright primary colours. The boat



“Moulded out of linear medium density polyethylene, all Smartwave boats are *UV-stabilised, exceptionally strong and durable*”

ABOVE The 4200's gullwing hull provided the best ride of the three.
BELOW L-R Aft seats are moulded in and there's space for an extra tote tank; stainless rail on the helm provides good support when underway; the rugged Smartwaves are an easy and lightweight trailering option.



was configured as a centre console, with a large chilly bin camouflaged as a bench seat providing seating for two amidships. A tiller-steered configuration is also possible for this hull. As indicated by the model designation, the hull is 4.2m in length, with a maximum beam of 1.93m.

Passenger seats are moulded into the stern corners, with another double-width seat in the bow. All the seats hide further storage lockers and are topped with padded squabs. Grabrails are mounted along the gunwales and, on the review boat, a couple of Railblaza

rod holders had been mounted to these.

In the bow area, a moulded anchor well holds the anchor and rode when not in use, with a roller to safely feed it over the bow. A cleat at the rear of the well provides a place to secure the rode. The flat floor inside the boat hides all the steering controls and cables, and is lined with marine carpet to ensure a secure footing even when wet.

The wide console unit sits exactly amidships, providing great stability even when lightly laden. The review boat had the engine gauges installed in the middle of the dash, but moving

these to either side would create enough dash space for a reasonable chartplotter or fishfinder to be fitted. A windscreen is topped off with a stainless grabrail all around its edges, with two further handles on either side of the console to provide security when throwing the boat around.

Hanging off the back was an electric-start Tohatsu 40hp two-stroke, a modest yet reliable little unit that well suits the ethos of no-nonsense economy and practicality. This motor is right in the middle of the recommended range of 30 to 50hp, but felt just right with



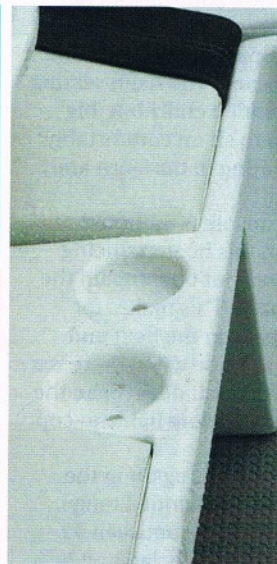
ABOVE The more conventional vee hull of the 4800 tracks flat, while the extra weight helps punch through chop. **RIGHT** Moulded drinkholders are a handy addition; the 50hp Tohatsu had the lightweight polyethylene hull boogeying at more than 20kts.

Highs

- Toughness of the hull
- Great sound-absorption of the hull

LOWS

- These are open boats that get wet in a chop



two occupants. A small boarding step moulded into the hull either side of the motor has a non-slip moulded surface, with a stainless steel boarding ladder on the port side. Rod-holders are fitted into each corner of the gunwale.

Heading out from the ramp and putting the hammer down saw the boat leap onto the plane quickly and easily achieved speeds of well over 20kts. Fuel is provided in a tote tank and there is enough space to store a second tank to extend the range.

The hull is a gullwing design that provides stability and performance. At rest it behaves like a tri-hull, with the waterline width almost the full beam.

This gives enough stability for the boat to be rated for five people, despite its modest size. Yet at speed, the hull lifts enough to smooth out the ride without losing stability. The hull acts to contain the spray generated by the bow, turning it down to create a relatively dry ride.

The foam-filled plastic hull absorbs most of the water noise and the boat feels smooth, safe and remarkably quiet. Throwing it around sharply was comfortable, although you need to hang on tight in a sharp turn as the gullwing does not lean steeply into the turn like a conventional vee-hull.

This is a great, safe family boat at a modest price and well worth a look.

SMARTWAVE 4800

The biggest boat in the Smartwave lineup, the 4800 has a softer, more rounded hull that has less of the gullwing shape and is more like a conventional vee hull.

We again had the centre console layout to have a play with, although this model also comes in a cuddy cabin "offshore runabout" version. This boat was moulded in a pleasant white colour with a slight marble fleck, and this time came with the 50hp Tohatsu motor.

Measuring 4.80m in length, and with a beam of 1.96m, it is the most spacious of the three and can



tradeboat says...

All the Smartwave boats have their strong points, with very few vices. They are extremely well priced, arguably the safest boats you will ever buy and virtually indestructible. Choosing one to suit your budget and preferred style of boating should be an easy decision.

accommodate six passengers with ease. This is the only model that has a built in fuel tank, an 80lt underfloor unit. Due to the lack of tote tanks there is more space under the transom for storage. There is additional underfloor stowage for keeping gear out of the way, while pockets moulded into the sides provide a shelf with integrated rod storage options.

Rodholders are moulded into the boat, and stainless grab handles are again fitted to the gunwales. Up front however, there is no separate anchor well, and the anchor would need to be stored in the under-seat pocket when not in use.

A conventional stainless bowsprit holds the anchor and rode when required, with a cleat fitted out of the way inside the gunwale for tying off.

The same centre console unit as used in the other two boats is fitted, but with more space to move around the sides of this one. The helm seating is again on a padded chilly bin, big enough for two to sit on comfortably, with further seating in the stern and bow areas.

The centre console is mounted well forward on this boat, reducing the foredeck area but opening up the rear cockpit space. This makes for more usable space in the boat and also improves the ride when there is a single occupant, but it does mean the console position is more liable to cop spray in a rough sea.

The 50hp Tohatsu is again in the middle of the recommended range, which for this model is between 40 and 60hp. Unless heavily laden it is

likely, once again, to be completely adequate. The boat tracked flat and held a line easily when at speed. We did not measure top speed, but we easily reached speeds well over 20kts.

The greater weight of this boat means that the boat punches through the chop better than the smaller models which tend to lift over it, and hence there's a smoother ride over a short disturbed sea. However, due to the more conventional hull design, the boat is not quite as good at turning away the spray as the gullwing shaped 4200 and could be a slightly wetter ride in poorer conditions.

Being a more "conventional" shape, the 4800 is likely to have broad appeal, and the availability of the cuddy cabin also means there are more options for a family boat. The 4800 is still a

How does it rate?

Smartwave	3500	4200	4800
1 SUITABILITY FOR PURPOSE	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
2 INNOVATION	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
3 DESIGN AND LAYOUT	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
4 EASE OF TOWING	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
5 HANDLING AND RIDE	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
6 STABILITY AT REST	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
7 ERGONOMICS	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
8 QUALITY OF FINISH	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
9 X-FACTOR	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆
Overall	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆	★★★★★★★☆☆



LEFT The 3500 is also available as a tiller-steer model, but the console provides a great standup helming position.

ABOVE L-R The 30hp was capable enough on the 3500; The basic helm has space for smaller electronics and storage below; At just 100kg, you could almost throw the 3500 over your shoulder for the trip home.

“The foam-filled plastic hull absorbs most of the water noise and the *boat feels smooth, safe and remarkably quiet*”

very modest towing proposition so, for those with a slightly larger budget, may be a good option.

SMARTWAVE 3500

Making best use of the opportunity to explore the range, we also took a smaller Smartwave sibling out on the water. The 3500 E-Fish model was fitted with a Tohatsu 30hp two stroke, again with electric start, but this time with manual trim and tilt. The E-Fish is also a centre-console layout configuration, with a maximum beam of only 1.7m and overall length of 3.50m. A tiller-steered configuration is also available for this model.

This boat shares many of the design features of the bigger models, including the foam-filled unsinkability and a gullwing hull. The hull also has extra seats in the gunwales and bow, but these are noticeably smaller, with the centre console being the same unit as the bigger boats. The tote tank takes up most of the space in the transom, with fewer options for adding a second tank. The cabin floor is uncarpeted and the control cables run through trunking on the starboard side.

The slightly flatter bottom and smaller size of the 3500 means it is not quite as adept at the rough stuff as the bigger models. While still a great ride, it did not hug the turns quite as tightly and exhibited some side slip. The narrower beam and lower gunwale height also means it is a wetter hull, with some spray coming on board on

the fairly windy review day. This is not a boat you would likely venture out into big seas with, although it would certainly be perfectly safe to do so.

Nevertheless, the 3500 is a great little sheltered-waters boat, and is warmer, quieter and more stable than the equivalent size and cost in aluminium. With a package on a galvanised trailer starting at just \$11,221 this is a fantastic boat for the bach or beach.

It would also make a lot of sense as a coach's boat for rowing or other water sport teams, where the ruggedness but forgiving nature of the plastic means it would not damage other vessels it may come into contact with.

Its incredible hull weight of just 100kg means that any car with a tow hitch could be used to tow it.

CONCLUSION

All the Smartwave boats have their strong points, with very few vices. They are extremely well priced, arguably the safest boats you will ever buy and virtually indestructible.

The new design 4200 with its gullwing hull is the most radical design and has managed to pull that off well, delivering a dry and smooth-running boat. We rated the ride quality of the 4200 as being better than the 4800 although there is, of course, less space. The 3500 is definitely best-suited to sheltered waters rather than open sea, although on a good day could certainly be taken out wider.

All three have the same ultra-safe reliability due to the construction material, and choosing one to suit your budget and preferred style of boating should be an easy decision.. ■

facts & figures

Smartwave 3500, 4200 and 4800

MODEL	3500	4200	4800
MATERIAL	Linear medium density polyethylene, with foam-filled voids		
TYPE	Monohull	Monohull	Monohull
LENGTH	3.5m	4.2m	4.8m
BEAM	1.7m	1.93m	1.96m
WEIGHT	100kg	220kg	325kg
ENGINE HP	30	40	50
FUEL	Tote tanks	Tote tanks	80lt underfloor

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