

Continuing Its Domination





When you've built over 10,000 boats in 45 years, you've earned the right to a lot of respect and when you release a new model, people take notice. Fi-Glass Products Ltd, unveiled its new-look 5.1m Dominator at the Hamilton Boat Show late last year and went on to win not only Best GRP Boat of the Show, but also took out similar honours a few months later at the Dunedin Boat Show. No mean feat for a 5.1m budget priced family cabin boat.

The new Dominator has a number of improvements over the previous model which makes it an even better boat.

There was no glitz added, no extra rod holders, intricate seat upholstery or an electronics package more likely to be found on an 8m hardtop. The boat presented for the judges was a basic totally stock standard 5.1m Fi-Glass Dominator. And that's the way the people at Fi-Glass like to present them – as they sell them! Such was the impression the 'Dom' gave to both independent groups of judges that they looked past all the usual boat show add-ons and found a seriously good package that optimises everything that's right about a compact family cabin boat. The first Fi-Glass to carry the Dominator name was built in 1974 and whilst the hull has basically been retained there have been three different decks over that time. Eight years ago the Dominator was the first Fi-Glass boat to have a foam core transom and a fibreglass stringer system, something that is now

standard construction in all models.

"The Dominator has been a very good boat for us", says Managing Director Griff Simpson. "Over 30 odd years we have built close to 3000 of them, so it has been a significant part of our business".

Griff adds that while the Dominator had always been a traditional family boat, the time came when it needed a new look and total topsides revamp, although the time proven hull needed only subtle changes.

"We made a few small alterations to the strakes and the bow sections, but effectively from the chines down it's much the same as the previous model. It's however all new from there up, with the sheerline and scalloped sides following a similar look to the Lighting and Warrior", said Griff.

"We were looking for a "wow" factor in the new boat and that's something we didn't have in the old Dom", he added.

"In its own way I feel the Dominator has achieved that and reaction to the new look has been very pleasing".

The new Dominator has a number of obvious improvements over the previous model. Firstly, the rear seats are lower making them safer and more secure for small children and a full-width clip-on vinyl screen is run across the back. The port side single pedestal seat has been replaced with a back to back as a standard feature. The dash has been given more angle so you can see the gauges either seated or standing, the forward hatch has been



increased in length and there is now an external anchor locker.

The cabin headroom is slightly higher than in the previous Dominator, although for me it was still a little low and there is more volume forward. To be fair, the cabin is more designed as a place to stow dry gear and the squabs while being a little longer than in the previous models are more suitable for children than adults to lay on. Storage is available in moulded units under either side and with the side shelves extending the entire length of the boat, there is plenty of opportunity to keep your gear dry. A

nice touch is the fully upholstered interior, which extends right through to the cabin top.

Interestingly, the new Dominator has retained the wide sidedecks of the previous model, although it's doubtful anyone would use them to walk forward. Griff says it's a feature of all Fi-Glass boats, and while some may choose to use them he does admit all the anchoring can be performed from the enlarged deck hatch. It's good to see that there is now a dedicated externally accessed anchor locker – the previous Dominator's was inside – and while it isn't large, it's adequate for the tackle you'd need in a boat this size.

I thought the narrow short fairlead was too small for the boat and I'd be bolting on something a lot more substantial that also overhung the belting more. According to Griff one dealer has installed a small capstan off to one side which is operated by a touch pad in the cabin.

Out in the cockpit, storage is confined to the side shelves, available space under the rear seats and in the back-to-back seats. A single swivelling driver's seat is optioned with a Softrider pedestal with fully adjustable seat base. Seating is now available for five with the two rear moulded seats, so it's very much dedicated to a family. The rear seat cushions can be removed so you don't mark them when climbing in and out of the boat. The helm, complete with imitation walnut facing as already mentioned, has been altered so viewing the instruments is better and there is space available for a bracket mounted fishfinder and a flush mount VHF. There is a moulded acrylic top screen with a large-diameter rail for strength and something extra to hang on to.

As the Dominator is foam filled under



Top: The cabin headroom is slightly higher than in the previous Dominator.

Left: Fishermen will appreciate the working space from the uncluttered cockpit.



Fi Glass

EXAMPLE BASED ON

Purchase Price incl GST	\$29,266
Deposit	\$6,800
Balance	\$5,875
Monthly Payment	\$428
Term	60 months

FOR OTHER QUOTES

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the floor, there is no provision for an underfloor fuel tank or storage. Twin tote tanks are carried under the aft deck, as is the battery and oil reservoir if necessary.

90hp Max

The Dominator performed well in the light Auckland Harbour chop with a 15-knot breeze just lifting the tops off the swells. Flat out, the 90hp Mercury pushed the Dominator at 43.5mph @ 6000 rpm, which given the size of the boat is more than enough. In fact if the engine was one hole higher on the transom the GPS would have hit around 45 mph and I felt would give a better overall range of trim use. However, whilst the hull could certainly handle the power, I feel a 70hp would be plenty and somewhere in the 35mph - 37mph speed range would be achievable.

Acceleration is rapid and for skiers there would be no hassle pulling anyone from a deep-water slalom start, especially on one of the new wide-bodied skis.

Stability at rest is good with two people, although it was a mite tender when we both were on the same side. It's a boat that likes to be correctly balanced, weight-wise and that's when it really performs at its best.

I found about 35 mph across the choppy water was the most comfortable speed and I really liked the polyurethane foam filled underfloor as it not only adds buoyancy but also makes the whole boat stiffer and exceptionally quiet. It certainly eliminates most of the chine slapping noise when running across the short choppy water.

Built to a Price

While the Dominator has been built to a price, under \$30,000, it doesn't show in the finished product and although our test boat was the most basic of models, it lacked for nothing that you would need to go boating. Like most boats you can spend a lot of extra dollars adding the options, such as a bowrail, boarding ladder, clip-on carpet, canopy and fishfinder. However, that's your choice. You could save a few more dollars with a 70hp outboard instead of a 90hp. There has to be a reason for existing Dominator owners to change and for Fi-Glass the new Dom offered three good reasons; better seating to satisfy a family, separate anchor locker and the foam filled hull.

Built to CPC standards, the new Fi-Glass Dominator comes with a certification of quality construction and backing this is a six-year hull warranty. It is a genuine Kiwi family cabin boat that is certain to carry on the Fi-Glass Dominator name well into the future.



Top: The rear seat cushions can be removed so you don't mark them when climbing in and out of the boat.

Right: The helm is finished with 'walnut' inset.

Fi-Glass Dominator

Model	5.1 Dominator
Price (Boat Only)	\$14034
Price as Tested	\$29366
Designer	Fi-Glass Products Ltd
Type	Cabin
LOA	5.05m
Beam	2.04m
Height on Trailer	2.10m
Deadrise	17.5 degrees
Trailerable Weight	850kg
Engine Capacity	60hp - 90hp
Power Options	Outboard only
Fuel Capacity	Tote tanks

PERFORMANCE

1000 rpm	3.0 mph
1500 rpm	4.5 mph
2000 rpm	7.0 mph
2500 rpm	9.0 mph
3000 rpm	16.5 mph
3500 rpm	21.5 mph
4000 rpm	26.5 mph
4500 rpm	31.5 mph
5000 rpm	35.0 mph
5500 rpm	39.5 mph
5900 rpm	43.5 mph

All speeds recorded on a Lowrance GPS and rounded off to the nearest 1/2 mph.

Notable Standard Equipment

Six-year hull warranty, foam filled underfloor buoyancy, CPC rated.

Notable Options on Test Boat

None.

Engine

Make	Mercury
HP	90
Model	Saltwater
Cyl Type	In-line 3
Displ.	1386cc
Shaft Length	20 inches
Max rpm	6000
Propeller	17" Vengeance
Retail Price	\$14034

Trailer

Make	Fi-Glass
Braked	No
Suspension	Leaf springs
Multirollers	Yes
Std Features	Sub lights, wind-up jockey wheel, 3:1 winch, and moulded guards.
Price	\$3378

Manufacturer

Fi-Glass Products Ltd, Christchurch, Ph 0800 888199 or www.fi-glass.com

Boat Supplied by

Gulfland Marine Ltd, Whangaparaoa, Auckland, Ph 09 424 5556