



New fishing dory packs **SOME PUNCH**

BY KEITH INGRAM

After only a few months on the water flounder fisherman Brendon Taylor still loves his new 6.9m dory but he knew it needed something more.

A *imee Marie's* been running good but we're now in the process of increasing the power and putting on another 150hp beside the 150 we've already got there," he says.

Brendon is particularly safety conscious and his decision to increase power so early in the piece had as much to do with safety as it did about improving operational efficiency.

"We need the power, especially when we're getting 1.2 to 1.5 tonne of fish and we need to get the vessel up to plane. On a single 150 we can get up and go with about 750kg of fish in it but from time to time we're getting up to 1.5 tonne and if you're 14 or 15 mile from home it's a long steam back doing only 10 knots."

Brendon says they haven't had any scary moments so far but they have had a couple days with the winds at 50 knots.

"We've actually worked in it but we were in the lee of the land, we were not exposed to it as such but we've had to go through it to get there and we were getting up to 1.5m wind waves.

"For us it is a safety issue. When I first started there were plenty of other fishermen around. You could call on each other if you got into trouble or needed help to get fish home or broke down and needed a tow. But now we're at the mercy of the Coastguard and with some of the way out places we go, and if we're broken down close to the rocks..."

The twin outboards will add that additional feeling of security therefore and the extra power will make for a quicker trip home, especially when the weather cuts up rough.

Aimee Marie, gives special meaning to dory fishing with its enclosed front and hard, shelter top. Not designed to be working the shallow flats but still target flounder, Brendon's latest vessel easily allows him to work in all weather. This is a serious advantage when night setting for flounder because of an MFish imposed maximum soak time of 18 hours. You have to check and recover the gear the next day. There is no longer the excuse that it got rough as modern met forecasting is now quite reliable and fishermen, when setting, have to consider the recovery of the gear as well. The other option, if you are unsure, is to



The options are covered by two boats when working either the deep or on the flats



Brendan and Granny gutting flounder



The functional hydraulic net hauler meets with OSH requirements

stay with your gear. So there is a responsibility to check the gear, and or recover it, within 18 hours.

Besides this, driver working comfort and safety have a different meaning for Brendon, especially when your deck hand is your mum. It would not be a good look to read in the papers “Fisherman loses mum at sea.” And yes mum, Elda Taylor or “Granny” as she is affectionately known, is the full time hard working decky on both of Brendon’s vessels. One who can hold her own, from slinging nets to clearing them and she can gut a bin of flounder as quick as anyone, much to the envy of many other local fishermen.

Brendon’s been fishing for around 10 years. He is one of the typical new breed of fishermen who do not own quota and must therefore lease their annual catch entitlement (ACE).

“I focus on flatfish because that is where I started on the Manukau, chasing flounder for another fisherman. Plus, if you do it right, you can make a quid out of it,” says Brendon. The trick is to pick a reasonably valuable fish, with an affordable lease price, that will give you sufficient

margins for profit so you can invest in the business.

It’s a different story for snapper fishermen. With the way snapper quota owners keep hiking the ACE price to meet seasonal changes, these fishermen can never make enough to cover costs, let alone get ahead. In Brendon’s case, he leases over 40 tonne of flats made up of a combination of dabs (sand flounder) and yellow bellies (yellow belly flounder) the primary target species. He also carries some by-catch quota to cover the small number of other species they encounter.

But what’s with this night setting for flounder we enquired, and how do you deal with the incidental mortality of eat outs by lice? “We only night set in the deep,” he responded. “You cannot night set in the shallows because you are asking for trouble with lice-outs giving high wastage. We are fishing for flounder in up to 20m of water with larger mesh size and the nets are tied down in pockets. Small fish pass through and the larger fish lay in the pockets and stay alive. Our lice-out rate is very small and nobody likes to untangle liced, dead fish frames.”

Clearly Brendon has two fishing activities, one ▶

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The catch of the day – flounder



working the flats and shallows during the summer, January to April, and the other working the deep in winter, June to December. May is a bit of an odd month. By managing both he has a year round business maintaining supply to Auckland's fish shops at a premium dollar. Good prices require good fish, we noted. In the old days, none of the dories carried ice and the fish suffered until it got back to the truck or base. These days, boats are set up with two large, built-in slurry bins and carry ice. The fish are unmeshed and graded as they recover the nets, yellow bellies one bin, the dabs and by-catch the other. Once back at base, the fish are immediately processed by gutting and packing in ice for the markets the next day.

The long days are rewarding for this family who are making it happen and, through hard work, are gaining good returns on their investment. But for Brendon, it hasn't been an easy ride to get where he is today. From building his first dory, Brendon knew he had to keep pace with the times and as the fish moved, so did he. It was important to remain as maintenance free as possible and the wooden dories were losing favour in preference to alloy. Other fishermen were using Blue Water Boats, another custom boat builder, to good success and so he sea trialled a number of designs available on the market. He liked what he saw in the allencomarine design, even

though it was more expensive. The seller was a boat builder who was prepared to listen and change their design to suit, while still ensuring stability and performance.

Based on a 6m hull design, Brendon drew up what he wanted. A key point was shelter from the elements. Dry storage space up front. Separated deck spaces for nets, large insulated slurry bins and a rear space that was safe for setting nets and dry transom stowage for batteries, etc. The small hydraulic pump and motor had to be built into the transom with its exhaust discharging downwind, over the stern. The wheelhouse and net hauler had to be as far forward as possible to prevent it dragging the boat sideways when hauling.

"The unique thing about Allenco boats is they are built to suit the owner," says Allenco director, Harvey Allen. "It does not take any more time for us to design the boat to suit the owner's needs and wants. This also offers the client the knowledge that their boat is custom built to what they want and is one of a kind."

The hull, constructed in marine alloy plate, is protected by Nyalic coating. The deck is 6mm and the sides and coamings are 5mm. Under the floor there are three separate air-tight compartments and the coamings and hull sides also have built in buoyancy to make the vessel positive buoyant, even when loaded with nets and fish. The coamings are higher to give added protection from the sea, making for a dryer vessel and adding to the overall buoyancy. The under floor construction features a full length bar and full length girder construction with cross frames. The deck is fully welded and tested to ensure air tightness.

There is also huge storage in the forward cabin under the deck. The rear of the instrument and wiring panels are easily accessed. Access to the anchor rope hold can be via a hatch from the forepeak. The anchor is operated by an auto anchor winch. The pods under the outboard motor

are also sealed. The large built in slurry tanks are a main feature of the cockpit, double skinned with insulation material and covered by two sliding white polycarbonate lids. This is one very large, well proportioned 6m boat, one built with a specific job in mind. Powered by a 150hp Evinrude ETEC two stroke petrol outboard motor, was a bit of a surprise. "No way would 150hp four stroke motor do the same job," said Brendon. "Because of the heavy loadings we carry at times, we need the top end power to get the boat moving and up on the plane as quick as we can. Four strokes of the same size just don't have the zing," he said.

The net hauler is powered by a 6.5hp Honda four stroke motor, coupled to an hydraulic pump driving a horizontal net split drum. Apart from the engine instrumentation, small fish finder and sounder, VHF radio and small car radio for music and news of the world, the electronics package could be regarded as functional and basic. Onboard safety gear includes life jackets, flares and EPIRB to Maritime NZ safety standards. The fact that the vessel is positive buoyant is an added feature. In the cockpit sump there is a 3000gph bilge pump. Brendon resisted the urge to put in large self draining scuppers due to the problems associated with back flow when laden or shell getting in and holding the scupper flaps or duckbills open. Given the positive nature of the buoyancy, he opted to go for a large bilge pump in an equally large sump and one in the sealed floors. So-Pac hatches keep the watertight stowage compartments dry and provide ease of access.

When not on the water *Aimee Marie* sits snugly on her purpose built Allenco Marine alloy tandem trailer giving an all up on the road weight of just under 2.5 tonnes.

Once at sea, we found *Aimee Marie* to be soft riding and easy running. Although the work deck area is divided by a high, dwarf bulkhead behind the helm area, there is space to allow the skipper to operate the vessel and net hauler. The top, wide beam of the bulkhead, also doubles as a bit of a bum rest when underway. Next is the larger, central net space, where Granny lives as she removes fish, cleans, separates the ropes and stacks the net ready for resetting. The large built-in slurry bins are next and then a smaller space is clear inside the transom, giving access to the transom lockers, bilge pump and auxiliary hydraulic pump motor. When hauling gear, it was surprising how quiet this motor was.

The one question that still burned was, what is an old chook, nearing sixty, doing at sea in small boats most days of the week. Granny responded saying that yes she got some looks when she first started seven years ago. "It keeps me fit and I enjoy the challenge of fishing," she said. "We sling all our own nets and I get to see them work and how we might improve on them. I have always maintained an interest in what my children are doing and working for Brendon works for all of us." As Brendon had suggested, good reliable crew are hard to come by. "Granny works as hard as the rest," he said. "She can clean a bin of flounder faster than most and may be the envy of some skippers. But the leveller is, she keeps me safe, makes me think and we work well as a team." It was nice to hear because this would be one of the few mother and son fishing crews we have met in recent times, and a successful team at that. ■



specifications

LOA	6.9m
Beam	2.5m
Draft	600mm
Power	2 x 150hp two stroke outboards
Construction	Marine alloy plate
Deadrise	20 degrees at transom
Builder	Allenco Marine Ltd
Fuel	380 litres underfloor
Hydraulics auxiliary	Honda 6.5hp four stroke

Auxillary motor and hydraulic pump

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