

# A nicely balanced package

## Sea Jay 485 Haven

Words & photos: Warren Steptoe



The Sea Jay 485 Haven has higher sides than most of its genre and the inherent toughness of “plate” aluminium construction.

**W**hen you think about the kind of conditions the average fishing boat faces up north, any boat that can live through them and be as common in driveways up that way as Sea Jay boats are has to be of considerable interest to people who travel to fish. Sea Jay’s 485 Haven is what you might call an industrial strength tinnie,

being built of so called “plate” aluminium rather than the thin skinned hull supported by internal rib construction traditional amongst “tinnies”.

This boat is set up to a concept originated by Quintrex at the behest of fishing writer Alex Julius some 30 years ago and popularised in its famous “Top Ender” line. The idea is to combine a full depth “cockpit” aft with a raised casting

deck in the bows. Originally “Top Enders” were tiller steered, but evolution has seen the tiller go in favour of side consoles – like the boat tested.

A side console means carrying two people to keep the boat trimmed laterally, although most people fish with a friend or partner so this is more an asset than a liability. In fact, the Sea Jay 485 Haven follows the now common

saw the Top Ender’s popularity spread far and wide beyond the Top End and right around the country. Sea Jays happen to be built in Bundaberg, but this is a boat you can fish from all over, including Tasmania where they’ve discovered the fish catching ability of designs from the big island to their north – although we don’t need several layers of thermal clothing to do so!

Another good thing about this boat that can’t be ignored, because it treads on so much new ground, is the outboard powering it, one of Yamaha’s latest lightweight 70hp four-strokes.

By some way the lightest 70hp four-stroke we’ve seen (at just 15kg heavier than their classic three-cylinder two-stroke and a whopping 18kg lighter than Mercury’s classic 75hp two-stroke), Yamaha’s new four-stroke 70, designated the “F70,” is without doubt the most significant outboard released so far this century. So, unfair though it may be to a darn good boat like the Sea Jay 485 Haven, we must shortly devote a suitable amount of attention to how it interacts with the outboard motor powering it.

But first things first. As we tested it, the 485 Haven comes sans many things people who fish would consider essentials, and leaves buyers to make their arrangements after they buy it.

Some might actually prefer things this way, myself included sometimes when a boat comes standard with things like low end sounders and cheap trailers. Choosing a trailer and sounder are critical decisions sometimes best made separately from boat and motor, and the same thing can (perhaps) be said about this boat’s

lack of rod racks. Just remember to add sufficient funds to cover such into the budget when figuring out finances.

Sea Jay’s high standards of build quality are quite evident wherever you look. The hull follows “plate” convention in terms of having relatively high sides and a moderate deadrise angle, although the execution of the transom and motor mount pod and shape of the chine area are a proprietary development unique to Sea Jay it calls “Ultimate Edge”.

Without being outstanding perhaps, the Ultimate Edge hull is amongst better versions of the genre. In other words, if you don’t expect more than a plate aluminium hull can deliver, you won’t be disappointed. Although having said that, when driven sensibly, this boat is about as good as plate tinnies get. That the bare hull weighs 500-odd kilos helps settle the boat down across wind chop, too. Just be aware that this is no lightweight, and that when laden and carried on a quality trailer it won’t get much change from 1000kg, well past the 750kg limit for unbraked trailering.

On the water fishing, those roomy side pockets you find along each of the cockpit do protrude out past the side decks enough for your leg to encounter them before any support from the side decks themselves is reached. If you fish rough water often enough for this to be a negative point, it’s possibly worth noting, although I imagine most people looking at a “Top Ender” style boat would be happier about the amount of loose gear those side pockets can



The 485 has a raised casting deck in the bows only. Underdeck space is used as stowage for anchors and gear.

practice of having several seat mount sockets to allow the passenger’s bucket seat to be moved aft for comfortable travel (important where long runs to reach favoured fishing spots is necessary), forward to face the passenger seat aft whilst trolling, and onto the casting deck for other types of fishing.

The arrangement is a versatile one, which



**Passenger's seat can be located onto the casting deck.**



**Transom offers the safety of a full height aft bulkhead.**



**There's plenty of fishing room once the passenger's seat is in its forward socket.**

swallow than they'd worry about their effect on rough water leg support.

Our test boat had a mounting pad for an electric on the bow and a 60-litre fuel tank hidden away below decks. The filler for this was sensibly mounted high on a side deck and the breathers located outboard on the transom where they keep fuel fumes outboard where they belong.

The side console is so low it's obviously meant for seated driving. A smoked acrylic windscreen to shield the plugs on the back of your sounder from spray has a stout grab bar over the top, which again is too low for much support while standing up. Bar work on the bows and aft end of the side decks has been kept low, too.

Looks are important to some, and the two-tone paint job certainly adds to a neat looking boat anyone would be proud to own. Sensibly, paint had been omitted from the hull bottom where unsightly scratches will happen soon

enough. Practical as well as pretty, there's everything to like about Sea Jay's 485 Haven. It's a fine piece of work.

Which brings us to the motor. This hull is designed for motors up to 80hp weighing up to 180kg, so our 70hp 120kg Yammie is well inside that. With 60kg up its sleeve and 10hp less than the max for which the hull is rated, the Sea Jay was a nicely balanced package indeed. On the water, it trimmed out beautifully, stayed nice and flat across chop and maintained the kind of agility you need for hard turns around river bends and low tide channels.

Swinging a 15-inch pitch prop with only safety gear and two adults aboard on lightly ruffled water, the 485 Haven's top speed was a couple of decimal points under 61km/h, or nearly 33 knots if you prefer, at 6300rpm. People regularly doing long runs on big rivers like the Daly might look for more power.

But more importantly, for those who don't travel 60km-plus to fish, is that the F70 had our

test boat cruising around 30km/h at 3500rpm and 35km/h at 4000rpm. Fuel consumption was a miserly eight litres/hour at 3500rpm and 10 litres/hour at 4000rpm. People talk kilometres per litre a lot these days, so you could call it 3.7 and 3.5km per litre burned. Surprisingly, at 5000rpm the 485 Haven was travelling at 46km/h and burning 15 litres/hour or 3.1km per litre burned. Impressive all round!

**ATA**

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Price:** Pricing ranges from \$30,000 to \$35,000..

**Options fitted:** Lowrance HDS 5 sounder (interfaced w/F70), nav lights

**Material:** "Plate" aluminium

**Length:** 4.85 metres

**Beam:** 2.15 metres

**Hull weight:** 500kg

**Flotation standard:** basic

### Capacities

**Fuel:** 60 litres

**People:** 5

**Max hp:** 80

**Max engine weight:** 180kg

### Engine

**Make/model:** Yamaha F70

**Type:** Four-cylinder in-line SOHC four-stroke

**Rated hp:** 70

**Displacement:** 996cc

**Weight:** 119kg

**Gearbox ratio:** 2.33:1

**Propeller used in test:** Yamaha K series aluminium 15-inch pitch

**Supplied by:** Sea Jay Boats, Bundaberg, Qld, [www.seajayboats.com.au](http://www.seajayboats.com.au)

### Summary

A heavily built well set out "Top Ender" style tinnie well suited to the travelling angler. Impressive performance and economy from the new Yamaha F70.



**Sea Jay's Haven hull has been developed to be as good as moderate deadrise aluminium hulls get these days.**