



Easy rider

The White Pointer 7m is a high quality aluminium sportfisher capable of serious bluewater fishing, but also well set up for inshore fishing, occasional overnighting and general boating duties. Rough water handling and ride are exceptional and build quality is first-class.

“AS LONG AS THE SEA DOESN’T CHANGE, White Pointer hulls will remain the same.”

Rex Briant was responding to a question about the future of his best-selling White Pointer 700 model.

“There’s always scope to change the topside layout and cabin design – we’re a semi-custom builder and we enjoy the challenge of meeting the needs of our customers – but our hulls are good and they don’t change,” says Briant.

He rates White Pointers as “right up there” with the best aluminium boats anywhere. So does Aron Henley, owner of *Good Vibes*, his second White Pointer and the subject of this review. He’s a typical White Pointer owner, says Briant: experienced, passionate about boats, with high expectations.

“I bought the boat for its ride,” said Henley, “which I think is better than any other aluminium boat I’ve tried. The construction’s first-class, too, but it’s the ride that really blows me away.”

Out in the North Channel between Kawau Island and Tawharanui Peninsula, a stiff south-east wind and an outgoing



spring tide conspired to build a messy sea. It was hard to argue with Henley's assessment of the boat's ride.

We put the boat through its paces running angles into, across and down the waves at various speeds. A keen angler, Henley has owned the boat for several months and knows exactly how to coordi-

nate throttle settings, engine trim and trim tabs to get the best ride in any conditions. I was less competent, but with Henley and Briant offering advice when required, I was able to extract comfortable progress from *Good Vibes* in fairly short order.

The 7m Sports Hardtop hull is impressive on every quarter, going where it's

pointed and softening out the bumps to a remarkable degree. This model has an 18-degree deadrise at the transom for improved stability underway and at rest. Henley's last White Pointer, a 6.6m model, had a 20-degree deadrise. It was an even softer riding boat, according to Henley, but more tender, less spacious and trickier to drive.

Good Vibes is reasonably dry – anyway, wetness is not really an issue with a hardtop – and it feels stiff and well put together. There are no rattles, very few thumps or bangs and minimal hull noise. White Pointer uses 6mm aluminium plate for the boat's hull, a comprehensive stringer and sealed bulkhead system and 4mm plate for the deck and topsides. She's no lightweight, but weight is a blessing when the going gets rough.

Vibra-Stop contributes to the boat's quiet operation. Vibra-Stop is a system designed to isolate the engine from the hull to eliminate harshness and vibration, so often a feature of aluminium boats. Henley developed Vibra-Stop and his company, Henley Marine and Electrical, markets it for marine use – see sidebar.

The 7m Sports Hardtop is available with rear curtains as reviewed or fully enclosed. Henley opted for clears aft, which seal off the hardtop and cabin from the elements. They're also useful for overnighting, for which the 7m with its generous V-berths and chemical/ electric toilet option is well suited.

The Frontrunner-lined cabin has a rat-

VIBRA-STOP

Aron Henley at Henley Marine and Electrical developed Vibra-Stop with White Pointer Boats to reduce engine noise and vibration in aluminium boats.

The Vibra-Stop system isolates the outboard from the boat's hull using urethane bushes, urethane backing pads, stainless steel cup washers and aluminium tubes. Vibra-Stop bush kits can be retro-fitted to existing boats, but it's easier to specify them when the boat is being built.

Vibra-Stop has been commercially available for over a year and has been used and tested extensively for almost five years. Vibra-Stop has also been fitted to fibreglass boats with excellent results.

The Vibra-Stop system isolates the outboard from the boat's hull, forming a semi-flexible mount between the motor and boat. With the Vibra-Stop system there are two mounting options.

Option One: the Vibra-Stop Bush Kit fully isolates the outboard engine. Four aluminium tubes are welded into the transom of the boat, through these tubes four urethane bushes are inserted. The bushes are then retained with stainless steel cup washers, while the mounting bolts pass through the cup washer and bush. Between the boat and motor two urethane backing pads are bolted up to form the mount.

Option Two: the Urethane backing pads are bolted up between the boat and the motor. While this is only about half as effective as the full Vibra-Stop Bush Kit, it's an easy and cost effective solution.

With Vibra-Stop Henley has managed to keep engine mount distortion to a minimum while reaping the benefits of reduced vibration and resonance.

The Vibra-Stop bush kit retails for around \$360 plus GST. Retro-fitting is likely to cost around \$700.00 with new boat installation around \$500, including the price of the kit. The Urethane backing pads are around \$120 per pair.



tle-free, sliding aluminium door, which can be locked for security. Inside is a step-down platform, full seated headroom, an infill squab to make a double berth, side shelves and a large Weaver hatch providing access to the anchor-locker. *Good Vibes* is fitted with a fully automatic Muir 600 rope-chain, free-fall winch. This has the advantage of dropping the anchor quickly, rather than winding it down. Getting the anchor down fast so as not to drift off the spot can be vital for fishing success. With 15m of chain – more than is necessary for a boat of this length – there was a tendency for it to bunch and jam in the anchor locker. A little less chain would rectify the problem.

Henley loves fishing, including game-fishing in the season. *Good Vibes* is fitted with a Yamaha 225hp four-stroke and a 260-litre fuel tank under the boat's fully welded chequerplate floor. Range is considerable. The cockpit is clean with nothing to get in the way, tangle lines or take up valuable space.

White Pointer fits batteries, isolation switches, a washdown pump and other paraphernalia into sealed lockers across the transom. It's a tidy installation, completely protected from spray. A huge underfloor livebait tank occupies the rear third of the cockpit. Water is constantly



supplied via a clever overflow system that draws water through the hull into the tank, filling it until it overflows into the self-draining sump. The sump, augmented by an electric bilge pump, also takes care of any water that finds its way into the boat.

The boat's hardtop is crowned with a six-rod rocket launcher; there are six rod-holders in the gunwales and full-length aluminium sideshelves either side of the cockpit, plus racks for boat hooks, tag

Features include a Muir free-fall rope-chain capstan for precision anchoring, an oversize White Pointer bait table that drains over the transom and an expansive, uncluttered cockpit optimised for sportfishing.

poles, brushes and other long items. White Pointer offers the walk-through transom as an option. The large bait station is custom-built by White Pointer and the foldaway aluminium boarding ladder is standard.



Good Vibes is unpainted, though paint is an option. The whole boat still manages to look sharp, helped by its immaculate welding and an all-over coating of Nyalic. Finish is first-class throughout. White Pointer doesn't grind back its welds, valuing strength over cosmetics, but they are so uniform and well executed that they become part of the boat's appeal. The hull is fair, though interior welds are visible on the outside as discoloured areas of aluminium.

Henley has fitted an acrylic fascia of his own design, covering White Pointer's conventional aluminium dash. There's enough room for a full range of Yamaha instruments, switches, trim tab controls and a Furuno GPS-Chartplotter-Sounder. The VHF is mounted on the bulkhead inside the cabin and there's room for more electronics on the dash below the windows. Six-millimetre toughened glass is used for the two-piece windscreen and sliding side windows. Windscreen wipers are fitted and proved useful in the conditions.

Fit-out is fairly basic – this is a sport-fishing boat first and foremost – but White Pointer will equip a boat to any level depending on the customer's requirements. *Good Vibes'* hardtop is lined, as is the cockpit interior, and twin pedestal seats are standard, but Henley opted for upholstered Softrider pedestals. There's a powerful, hand-directed spotlight on the roof and the hardtop is well

***Good Vibes* punches through big seas in the North Channel between Kawau Island and Tawharanui Peninsula.**

endowed with handholds, shelves and storage nooks.

Performance with the 225hp Yamaha four-stroke is good. We also tried a 7m White Pointer with a Mercury Optimax 225hp two-stroke. The contrast is interesting. Top speeds are virtually identical with both boats touching 38 knots on the GPS, but the two-stroke was definitely stronger in low to mid-range and felt punchier overall. Noise levels at the helm are similar – both boats are equipped with Vibra-Stop – but the Mercury-powered boat has an enclosed hardtop while *Good Vibes'* hardtop is open to the cockpit, so this likely has some impact.

In terms of smoothness, the Yamaha has the edge and it is quieter at low speeds. Fuel economy is also good, says Henley, especially at cruising speeds with the engine spinning at between 3500 and 4000rpm.

Good Vibes is Henley's pride and joy. He and Rex Briant have become good friends and Briant fits Vibra-Stop to White Pointer boats as a matter of course. It's clear that Briant enjoys the personal contact with his customers and he's proud of the high number of repeat customers for White Pointer boats.

"Based in Gisborne, we kind of do our

SPECIFICATIONS

model	White Pointer 7m Sports Hardtop
designer	Rex Briant
builder	White Pointer Boats
construction	aluminium
loa	7.3m
boa	2.45m
deadrise variable,	18° @ transom
horsepower range	175-225hp
engine options	outboard, sterndrive petrol or diesel
max speed	38.5kts
fuel capacity	260L
length on trailer	8.5m
height on trailer	2.9m
trailerable weight, dry	2000kg
boat supplied by	Henley Marine and Electrical and White Pointer Boats
packages from	\$85,000
ENGINE	
make	Yamaha
type	four-stroke outboard
horsepower	225
cylinders	V6
max rpm	6,000
propeller	stainless steel 19-inch pitch, 13 3/4-inch diameter
TRAILER	
manufacturer	Voyager
braked	hydraulic over-ride on one axle
suspension	leaf spring
rollers	multiple
features	dual-axle, submersible lights. Custom alloy trailer available (200kg lighter).

own thing and don't take too much notice of the rest of the industry," says Briant. "We like to work closely with our customers and we're totally focused on what we're doing. We think we build better boats as a result."

In the course of reviewing *Good Vibes* we met another 7m Sports Hardtop owner, plus the owner of an 8m White Pointer resident on Kawau Island. Between them they didn't have a single negative comment about their boats.

That's got to be saying something. ■■■

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