

Meet the FOCKERS



190

Words and Pictures by Vince Warriner




Well, the Brazilians sure have a sense of humour! The Directors of the Fibrafort Boat company in Itajai, a southern port city in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil, went to see the Ben Stiller movie "Meet the Fockers". They were so taken with the film that they decided to name their leisure boats "Style Focker".

Fibrafort is presently the largest boat builder in South America in the category of sport, leisure and sport fishing boats classified from 15 ft – 25 ft (4.55 m – 7.58 m). There are four models in the Style range – the 170/190/222 and 232. In this issue we feature the 190; reviews of the others will follow in the months ahead.

On the 11th March I made my way to Hazelmere Dam on the outskirts of Verulam on the Natal North Coast for the review. Dead on time I was met by Nathan Munthree, owner of Boat-A-Rama. We had previously reviewed the Fisherman 190 in Durban Harbour and were looking forward to putting this leisure boat (with the same hull as the Fisherman) through her paces.

Conditions for test

Durban and the North Coast had been through a spell of intense heat and this day was no different. Conditions were ideal for boating with a hot, blazing sun (30 degrees), very little wind and flat water. The dam is very picturesque and is an extremely popular boating venue, especially on weekends, but as this was a Tuesday we virtually had the water to ourselves. 



Showing off stunning lines and finish and comfortable seating for three in the bow area.



General impression

Always a good test of the appeal of a classy boat is to watch a prospective buyer walk into a full showroom and to immediately be attracted to it. This is that sort of boat. Who would not be impressed by the modern shape and sleek lines of the Style 190, complete with Mariner 125 HP motor, on a well-finished galvanised trailer?

The turquoise striping from bow to aft separating the deck and hull is colourful and easy on the eye. The beautifully curved, walk-through windscreen adds to the contemporary look of this boat. The step vee hull design is also conspicuous, and I was interested to find out whether or not she would perform as well as the 190 Fisherman.

Launching and trailering

The dam was 100% full and launching with Nathan's double-cab was very easy. It only took three minutes to line up on the slipway and reverse into the water (without putting the trailer in too deep), and she slid off the bearers with ease.

Deck layout

The Style 190 comes with a comprehensive array of standard equipment. The pilot seat and upholstery in attractive light grey with a turquoise stripe is UV-ray resistant and anti-mildew. The pilot seat is adjustable and swivels, as does the co-pilot seat, which is great for observing what goes on behind the boat when towing skiers. (This should be standard in all boats, as it is a safety feature).

There is storage space under the bow seats and under all the seating in the rear of the boat. There is no excuse for clutter when all equipment such as ski vests, life jackets, ski ropes and safety equipment can be easily and safely stowed away.

The centre of the port console stores a 24-litre cooler box, a huge bonus that boat owners and passengers will appreciate on a blazing summer's day. There is a stainless steel deck sink with a tap fitted on top of the port console



Quick planing and thrust from the Mariner 125 outboard motor gets you going in a jiffy.

behind the walk-through windscreen and the water tank holds 28 litres of water for washing up and drinking purposes. Cup/drink holders are well positioned around the boat.

The bow cleats are cleverly recessed both port and starboard, and stainless steel prow railings are positioned just inside the gunwhales for passengers to hold onto. Navigation lights are standard.

The windscreen is made of tempered glass with a solid aluminium surround and has a swept-back look that adds to the boat's streamlined appeal.

The well-mounted stainless steel ski pole is easily accessible for retrieving tow ropes. There is a swim platform on the starboard side of the motor well and a folding stainless steel ladder sits on top of the port platform – no more struggling to get back into the boat from the water.

The non-slip floor is a big plus feature as it can easily be washed or scrubbed, but carpets can be fitted as an optional extra if desired. One small drawback to me is the absence of a ski locker, but with so much space aboard the skis can simply be stored along the interior sides of the boat.



Unique features include a handy water tap, sink and drink holders for convenience.

On this model the centre hatch houses the built-in fuel tank but this can be removed to accommodate skis. Should this be preferred, 25-litre fuel tanks can be fitted behind the rear seat in the transom area. With a 2.2 m beam, the interior is really spacious and can accommodate seven people.

Motor and controls

The Focker Style 190 was fitted with a two-stroke 125 HP Mariner motor. This 1 732 cc option with a 13 x 19 pitch propeller certainly gives you grunt out of the water. (This boat can take up to 135 HP and a minimum of 90 HP). While a four-stroke motor can also be fitted, ☒



The stylish helm has full instrumentation and a modern, slim side-mount control box.

they are heavier and do not react as quickly as the two-stroke to throttle response.

The control box is side-mounted into an upholstered panel next to the pilot seat. It not only looks contemporary but is a great space saver compared to the standard box-type control box. A built-in 100-litre fuel tank allows considerable distance to be covered before refuelling, especially when travelling at tubing and waterskiing speeds. The urge to hit "full taps" is there because the Style 190 has the potential, but then you can't worry about fuel consumption.

The smart-looking steering wheel is comfortable to hold, particularly when negotiating hard turns. The dash is fitted with an array of attractive gauges including speedometer, rev counter, fuel gauge, hour meter, trim gauge and a blank gauge which could be used for a volt meter. An electrical switch panel with key is to the right of the steering wheel.

Handling

After photographing the features, it was time to capture a few shots of the boat on the water. The only way I could get the appropriately elevated viewpoint was to climb a tree, something I'd given

up years ago. After some manoeuvring I finally managed to get the water in my sights and Nathan's skilful driving set the scene for some great action shots. Getting down out of the tree was another matter – all in a day's work.

When I took the controls I opened her up to full throttle. At 5 000 rpm we got to 80 km/h, which is really good for a 19-footer. No question, the step vee hull really helps to get the boat planing in seconds and keeps her utterly stable at all speeds. I simulated being on a slalom course towing a skier at 58 km/h and after a straight run (as though through slalom course buoys), I put the Style 190 into a tight turn and back into my own wake in nanoseconds, and she sat on the water as if on rails.

One does have to control the power trim button and trim in on the turn as some cavitation creeps in, and then trim out on the straight again to get to the optimum planing angle. The Teleflex steering was a little stiff unless one trimmed the motor up, reducing drag, and given the monetary investment needed for such a craft, it might be worthwhile to fit hydraulic steering.

At wakeboard speeds, she held her own without me needing to fiddle too much with the throttle. Barefooters will

love the wake, and with an average male weight of 85 kg, one only needs 65 km/h. There is more speed to be had if one-foot wake crossings are to be done.

We did not open the fitted canopy (which was neatly folded away) as it is not advisable to do so at the speeds at which we were travelling. However, this canopy is a standard feature on the Style 190 and is perfect for escaping the burning sun at cruising speeds or when at anchor.

Moving around the interior, I found her very stable, more so than the Fisherman 190, which was a bit weight-sensitive.

Conclusion

While there are many different and beautiful pleasure craft available in the country, the Fibrafort Focker Style 190 will appeal to boat buyers with her sleek lines, attractive colours complementing the swept-back windscreen, high quality finish and comprehensive fitted features. The total package as tested is R225 000 (incl VAT).

We look forward to testing the Focker Style 222 and 232 models in due course; the 170 has not yet arrived in South Africa.

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At a glance



Length:	5.70 m
Beam:	2.20 m
Draft:	0.50 m
Weight:	640 kg (no motor)
Transom height:	20"
Fuel tank:	100 litre
Water tank:	28.0 litre
Hull material:	Fibreglass – foam-filled
Passengers:	Seven