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**TRAILERBOAT HEAVEN IN NSW MAKOCRAFT'S AFFORDABLE 445 CATS ABOARD  
JETSKI HANDLING TIPS NEW SEAWIND 1170 SANCTUARY COVE SENSATIONS**

Off the Trailer

# SIMPLE PLEASURES

The new Makocraft 445 Commander Pro SC is an affordable, versatile, well-appointed open boat and bay fisher for budget-conscious boaters.



By Jeff Webster



*Above: The boat sits well on a Dunbier Centreline galvanised steel braked trailer.*

*Below: Pair it with a 60hp Mercury four-stroke outboard, the maximum power, to achieve 30-knot performance.*

Gold Coast-based Makocraft has expanded its pressed alloy boat range with the launch of a new side-console open boat and bay fishing rig called the 445 Commander Pro.

The Commander range is also available in larger 460, 490 and 520 sizes. In the overall Makocraft range you'll find all manner of hull types and configurations with more than 40 boats on offer – from car-topper tinnies and vee-nose boats starting at 3m, through to the range-topping 631 Cruiser Cab half cabin.

While the 445 Commander model also comes in a tiller-steer helm configuration, this

review focusses on the budget-friendly, yet well-equipped 4.65m (15.3ft) Makocraft 445 Commander Pro SC (side console). It's paired with a 60hp Mercury four-stroke longshaft outboard engine and a Dunbier Centreline galvanised steel braked trailer.

### SAFE AND SURE

Boats designed to cover a range of boating and fishing activities need to have a safe, conservative, well-mannered hull design that supports versatile use. This compact, easily transportable boat has a modest transom deadrise angle to keep it stable at rest and quick to plane, coupled with a finely drawn bow and stem.

Being light and small in stature, the Makocraft will bounce about a bit in confused sea conditions, but the ride softens into the chop when you drop the nose into the waves. However, it likes to run bow high with the boat trimmed out and skimming along on the hull bottom's last couple of metres.

High topsides and a welded chine rail help push spray and water away from the boat in blustery weather conditions.

### POWER AND PERFORMANCE

Running the 60hp Merc, the Makocraft 445 is quick enough for most inshore, bay and harbour activities.

With two people aboard, our test boat achieved a top speed of 28.5 knots (52.8km/h), across the Gold Coast Broadwater. With just the skipper in the boat, it'll top 30 knots (55.6km/h), which is ample for a small boat.

## safe, conservative, well-mannered hull design





## test boat was optioned with the Makocraft Black Ops pack



Top: There's a carpeted, elevated front casting deck.

Above: The bow deck hides an anchorwell, plumbed livewell and ample storage bins.

Right: The side console offers driver comfort.

The Makocraft accelerates quickly from idle and onto the plane, and responds nicely to throttle input once up and running at speed.

The test boat also proved to be safe, well-mannered through corners, comfortable and easy to drive.

### BLACK OPS OPTIONS

Our test boat was optioned with the Makocraft Black Ops pack, which adds the painted graphite grey topsides, matt black stripes, Black Ops logos and two rodholders.

Other fitted options include a trolling motor mounting platform portside off the bow, a 50lt underfloor fuel tank, and a Garmin EchoMap 95sv multifunction display.

### VERSATILE INTERIOR

This boat is designed for mixed boating and fishing activities. To that end, it's fitted with elevated bow and stern casting decks for inshore anglers, and a deep, high freeboard centre cockpit to increase safety for boating near shore and in choppy water.

The front casting deck is 1.65m long and 1.8m at its widest. This carpeted platform has a socket for a pedestal seat so that you can transfer one of the two included chairs to the bow and fish in comfort.

Beneath the front deck, there's an anchorwell right up against the front bulkhead, a spacious safety gear storage bin that can also stow a trolling-motor battery, and a plumbed 100lt livewell that has a divider board down the middle so your live catch can be separated for competition fishing.

Surrounding the 320mm raised front casting platform are 210mm-wide extruded sidedecks that double as side seats in calm conditions.

The sidedecks are fully welded, adding strength and rigidity to the hull. They can be used to mount flush-fitted rodholders, navigation lights and bracket-mounted electronic gear for inland fishing in combination with an electric trolling motor.



The two removable pedestal helm chairs can be moved between four in-floor sockets – three in the main cockpit and one on the elevated front deck.

You can also sit pretty comfortably on the raised aft fishing platform, which has storage space beneath it on the starboard side and the battery box and more storage to port.

### SIDE-CONSOLE CONVENIENCE

The 445 Commander Pro is also available with a tiller steering, but I'd be opting for the side console with forward controls for the added convenience and driving comfort.

The helm console is simple but practical and quite large for a small boat. Its fascia panel can accommodate one large multifunction display or two smaller ones, with space to spare. There's also ample flat dash space for a compass and bracket-mounted electronic devices.

The sports steering wheel and side-mount throttle are well placed to drive the boat comfortably while seated, sheltered behind the clear acrylic windshield that's secured to a useful handrail.

I also like the helm console's overall design, with plenty of leg and footwell space underneath. And while there's no console glovebox or shelf to stow small items such as car keys, sunglasses case and so on, you can stash them in the elevated side storage pockets, located beneath each of the side coamings.

A small hatch forward of the outboard engine's splash well opens to provide access to the bilge, auto bilge pump and the steering gear.


Other features include a pair of cockpit grabrails, stern carry/drag handles (no cleats), transom boarding steps with rails, and twin transom transducer brackets.

### PRICE AND PACKAGING

The Makocraft 445 Commander Pro SC is a versatile, full-featured, ready to fish, general boating and fishing package.

This market segment includes a broad range of boats from very affordable to more expensive, but I believe the 445 hits the sweet spot. It has a safe, well-mannered, easy handling hull and lots of standard features and equipment – all for an affordable purchase price.

When paired with a smaller 40hp Mercury outboard engine, package pricing for a standard side-console model starts at \$29,880.

Optioned with the Black Ops pack, the Garmin multifunction display, and the more powerful 60hp Mercury outboard, the price rises to \$38,000 – but that still represents excellent value for money. 

MAKOCRAFT 445 COMMANDER PRO SC	
LOA:	4.65m
Beam:	2.05m
Hull weight (approx):	325kg
Towing weight (approx):	820kg
Fuel capacity (optional):	50lt
Maximum power:	60hp
Power (as tested):	60hp Mercury longshaft four-stroke
Priced from:	\$29,880
Price as tested:	\$38,000
More information: Makocraft, tel: 0432 782 853. Web: makocraft.com.au.	

Below: Full of features and affordable, there's lots of versatility in this boat.

## a versatile, full-featured, ready to fish, general boating and fishing package

