

# Haines Signature 543F

Lee Rayner | January 2010 » Regular Features / Area Report /

## Another instalment in the very popular Haines Signature Boats is the 543F.

This is a dynamite package that is sure to impress boat buyers who are after a very manageable sized boat that is capable of fishing in the bay and towing a ski biscuit; it's even up to some light offshore work.

The 543F has undergone some minor changes to make it user-friendlier and even nicer on the water. In saying that though the key features that have made these boats so popular over the years still remain the same.

On the trailer the 543F Signature is a very tidy looking package with sleek, smooth and rounded lines that are such a big part of the Signature boats: this model fits very nicely into the range

A quick walk around the outside highlights some of the features that make these hulls a great option for a range of water sports.

Straight away the transom door combined with the rear steps and rails allow easy access in and out of the boat, whether it's loading up for a day out or on the water or getting in and out of the boat for a bit of swimming or water skiing.

The hull itself features the Signature's famous 'Variable Deadrise Hull' that flares from 12-33 degrees, giving it great performance on the water in a range of situations.

### Inside the boat

Plenty of thought has gone into the updated model to make it appealing, from a fold away rear bench seat that covers and yet allows easy access to the batteries.

The rear coaming cushions provide a comfortable backrest, as well as for some cushioning when bracing your legs in a slop.

Speaking of fishing, the transom also houses a neat and functional bait board made by TK Marine in Dandenong that can be easily removed if need be. There is also room to have a set of custom snapper racks fitted if need be.

### Gunnels storage

I really love the clever use of space along the gunnels, with small tackle box lockers located in each corner that will hold all the bits of tackle required in a very handy, easily accessible location.

The side pockets themselves are wide and deep, allowing space to fit a landing net, which is usually the hardest and most inconvenient thing to store in any trailer boat.

The bottom of the pocket has three defined sections with dividers, while further forward there are two smaller shelves that help to separate all your smaller bits and pieces into some sort of order, rather than in a messy wet pile in the bottom of the side pockets.

The carpeted floor is, as always, very comfortable underfoot and hides an ample 100L underfloor fuel tank, while between the driver and passenger seats you will find a very generous ice box/kill tank to store, ice, food, or hopefully fish.

### Helm area

Up in the cabin section there are all the relevant pockets to hold the EPIRB and fire extinguisher in a close and easily accessible location.

The neat looking wood grain console on the 543F has plenty of room for a multitude of gauges and electronics, with space for separate sounder and GPS if required. There is also room on the top of the dash to mount a sounder if need be.

Keeping with the tidy look on the boat, the 27mhz radio is mounted below the throttle control box.

If I had one feature I found a little awkward on the boat it would be that the angle of the console is quite steep, which is fine when driving seated as it allows good clear vision of your electronics, but when driving while standing (which is how I tend to travel) it is harder to keep check on the sounder/GPS.

One of the new and improved features of the 543F is the full glass windscreen, which is a real bonus to any potential buyers, especially if they plan to keep the boat for several years, as the glass stays clear and isn't prone to wear and tear, stone chips while towing, scratching and fading or turning a milky colour as can happen with Perspex windscreens.

### Forward Comfort

Moving forward you instantly see why Signature boats are popular with the families. The padded and very generous sized bunks allow for a real lay down and sleep session, while the front hatch has been modified to make it larger and further forward, allowing easy access to the anchor well and even to the bow sprit.

However one of the great modifications to this boat is a larger anchor well design allowing for the addition of an electric winch – something well worth investing in.

### On The Water

Out on Port Phillip on a cold and very foggy morning it was interesting taking the 543F Signature for a squirt. While visibility was out to several hundred metres the low and very grey light made the half metre chop hard to see and read at any distance ahead of the boat.

However with the very sharp entry on the nose the hull sliced through the waves like a hot knife through butter. In fact there were several waves I was expecting a serious crunch from, but due to the hulls steep and variable deadrise it never happened.

The other notable feature was the powerful 140hp Suzuki 4-stroke engine. Relatively light in weight for a 4 stroke, it made this boat perform like a dream. Off the mark the boat popped on the plane in seconds at 2500rpm. It was noticeable how much torque and full throttle rev range the motor had; the more you pushed the throttle the more the speed noticeably gained. This doesn't always happen on some other 4-strokes, which tend to do a lot more revving for the last quarter throttle rpm for only a touch more speed.

With good engine performance it allowed you to get great results from the hull, in fact the harder you pushed the boat into the waves the better it went, cleanly skipping across the top of the slop with little effort.

The Signature responded well to the engine trim allowing the boat to be thrown into tight turns with full control and very little cavitation from the prop.

While I said earlier it seemed that the dash layout was a bit awkward when trying to drive while standing and trying to read the gauges, the 543F was totally comfortable to drive while sitting down, with perfect visibility over the dash and a clear view of all the gauges.

The Signature crew have done it well designing these boats to be driven in the comfortable manner.

*The Signature 543F is available at JV Marine, so call in and see the great features of this boat first hand.*

## Facts

### Specifications

Beam:	2.13m
Overall Length:	5.53m
Fuel:	100lt underfloor
Deadrise:	Variable 12-33degrees
BMT Height:	2.3m
Tow Weight:	1690kg
Max Horsepower:	140hp
Price as Tested:	\$

### New Key Features

Glass Windscreen

Larger Front Hatch

New Dash Layout

## Images