

BREAKING NEW GROUND

*Big, bulky and ready for
the rough water.*

While built in Dubai, Ocean Craft Marine's first full aluminium amphibious boat has a solid Kiwi connection. Not only is the wheelie system supplied by Auckland-based Anura Amphibious Systems, but also the layout and concept of the boat are Kiwi inspired.

Ocean Craft Marine is one of the world leaders in manufacturing RIBs for leisure, professional and military applications.

While until now, the only models Kiwis have been exposed to are amphibious RIBs, that has now changed with the arrival of the first Ocean Craft Aluminium 7.1. Local distributor for the brand, Terry Elmsley (Euro City Marine), says that the totally new, full aluminium amphibious 7.1 hardtop has explicitly been designed for the New

Zealand and Australian markets. "Whether you're targeting fish or wanting to cruise the coastal waters recreationally, this beautiful, built tough, plate boat competes with the best and still has all the comfortable trimmings to accommodate the whole family", says Elmsley.

He added that this is the first all-alloy hull by the company. To achieve the desired result, Elmsley spent a lot of time working with the Ocean Craft Marine design team to ensure that the 7.1 was ideally suited to the local

market, not just on-water performance but also what buyers of larger hardtops were looking for.

"While the first model to arrive in the country is amphibious, we can also offer it as a standard hull without wheels", says Elmsley.

GROWTH IN AMPH BOATS

While not so many years back, there was only one amphibious drive system using wheels, today, there are three, and they are all New Zealand companies. The originators of the

wheelie system, Sealegs, now only install their system on their boats. The other two, Tectrax (all electric technology) and Anura (previously Orion), don't build boats and make their amphibious systems available to boatbuilders. So when Ocean Craft was looking for an amphibious system, their choice was Anura.

Ocean Craft has used the Anura system for a few years, with the 7.1 running the three-wheel S25, ideally suited to a boat of this size and weight. Power for the S25 system is from a

28kW (40HP) EFI, air-cooled engine. The engine is operated via Control by Wire (CBW) technology. The combination of EFI and CBW provides the hydraulic power unit's fast starting and instant response. Custom hydraulic motors deliver travel speeds of up to 9km/h, and all models are equipped with Traction Assist, which provides additional drive capability on difficult terrain. The Anura user interface provides an intuitive control-by-wire experience with detailed system telemetry made

available via the LED display linked to the Mercury outboard via NMEA2000. The user interface components are a compact addition to the dash panel and sit conveniently for easy to hand use. Driving the boat to your property on and off the beach or down the road is effortless. As most users will be located at beachside properties, a continuous runtime of up to 1hr should be plenty. It takes between 3-10 hours to recharge the battery pack.



The layout is ideal for fishing and family boats.

FISHING FRIENDLY

The layout of the 7.1 Aluminium AMPH is reasonably traditional and much like you would find in most Kiwi hardtops. However, when you first step aboard, noticeable differences set the boat apart from most competitors. Firstly the finish. It is very appealing and gives the boat a specific style. Elmsley commented that the aim was to offer a layout that suited everyone and wasn't just another alloy hardtop pigeon-holed into the serious fishing market. "My idea was to offer a boat that would suit divers, fishermen, family cruising and a boat that could be enjoyed on the water in just about any form of boating leisure activity", says Elmsley. Hence the cockpit in the first boat has a large engine box in the rear of the cockpit that covers Aruna's onboard systems. The bonus is you get a massive cutting board and a separate drawer for all you tackle. A washdown pump makes it easy to clean up after a day on the water, and four underwater lights illuminate

the surrounding water for nighttime fishing. Fishermen also have the advantage of a 60-litre live bait tank, plus ample rod and drink holders in the flat coamings. The cockpit has two self-draining deep lockers, and the wide side trays will look after your extra rods, gaff and tag pole. Wide side decks are specially designed for easy access to the large flat deck forward. With all the anchoring gear below the deck, the deck is flush, plus with a high solid bow rail, it's a great place for soft baiting. So is the Ocean Craft 7.1 Alloy, a fishing boat. Hell yes.

BRING ON THE FAMILY

But it is also a great family boat with six seats in the cockpit and a few more in the cuddy cabin. Two removable tables can be stowed away when not required. There are seats on either side of the amphibious power system box, with both folding forward to give access to the hydraulics of the Anura wheelie system.



The starboard seat also folds again to form a flat step, leaving the upholstery underneath and away from being stepped on by wet or sandy feet. It is also a perfect spot to position your bait bin when fishing. I would like a higher backrest in the starboard seat, which could be done by adding a swing door with a cushioned front. I was impressed with the entire blue paint job, which extends from the chines to the interior and even into the lockers. The deep rich blue paint is offset by an eva foam flooring on the cockpit sole and coamings. This classic look is accented with fore and aft blue trim and adds warmth underfoot, and it is also extremely easy to clean. Fish blood and ground in pillies can be washed away, leaving a pristine surface every time. Another noticeable feature is the diamond stitching on all the seating areas, plus the side coamings. Thickly padded and ready for fishing action, with a good height and deep toe kicks. Just bring on the 20-pounders.

SEATING FOR SIX

The king/queen seating style works well with twin swivelling forward bucket seats with bolsters and bin seats aft. Storage is under the starboard seat, with the space below the port seat filled with a pull out 56-litre cooler bin. When you have an amphibious system on your boat, you must allow extra space for the controls and displays on the dash. The dash on the 7.1 Aluminium handles it well, with the controls placed right where I would have expected them (being right handed) and well separated from the outboard steering, controls, MFD and all the other equipment that ends up on the dash. As a driving position, it was comfortable with the ability to stand or sit, a fold down footrest, a moveable seat and an adjustable steering wheel. The hardtop is at a good height for the taller skippers. Seamless forward windows with a trio of wipers to keep things clear ahead. The boat comes standard with a driver's side sliding window and an optional one to port.

The business end with Anura wheels and Mercury outboard.

The boat is fitted with a four wheel Anura amphibious system.

With and without the infill squabs.

The on-land power system is all tucked away under cover between the rear seats.



The aft seat folds out so you don't need to stand on the plush upholstery.

The helm needs to be large to handle all the engine and amphibious system controls and displays.

Storage is under the starboard seat, with the space below the port seat filled with a pull out cooler bin.

Above, the outside of the hardtop is finished with the same foam decking as the interior, plus it comes speced with an airhorn, searchlight, nine rod holders and a pair of hatches. It's more of a large cuddy forward with limited headroom but is still a great place to stow some gear or for the kids to rest while you are busy fishing or entertaining. There is storage under the squabs, plus a freshwater handheld shower nearby. The boat comes standard with a toilet and the option of a courtesy screen or solid bulkhead with a door. I would go for the soft screen as a solid bulkhead interrupts the boat's open feel, giving the interior a feeling of space. A squab infill goes over the toilet, giving you a reasonable size berth. Along with the head, shower and a portable bbq or grill, you have the makings of a nice weekender. Ion the choppy waters off Gulf Harbour. Our power was a Mercury 250 ProXS, which gave a top speed of 35 knots on the choppy waters off Gulf Harbour. We had a half a metre plus swell with a wind lifting off the wave tops. Unfortunately I never got the opportunity to take the boat into the rougher water, due to circumstances, but in the moderate sea it ran well. It's a big heavy

boat that is light on the helm and comfortable to drive. It was hard to find any calm water to record accurate speed and fuel tests but we did the best we could under the shelter of the cliffs between the marina and Weiti River.

PERFECT BALANCE

The Ocean Craft 7.1 Aluminium Amphibious is a complete package with very little you will need to add. If you are a fisherman, a couple of game poles or a big Minn Kota might be worth considering. There is a wide choice of electronics available from the factory, including radar and autopilots. It's a great new addition to the amphibious boat market, providing the perfect balance of luxury, convenience, and functionality. ⚓

SPECIFICATIONS

Design Name Ocean Craft 7.1 Amphibious
Price \$NZ389,990.00
Year Launched: 2023
Builder Ocean Craft Marine
Designer Ocean Craft Marine / Terry Elmsley
Hull Type Hardtop
LOA 7.40m
Beam 2.52m
Max Speed 35.0 knots
Construction 8mm Aluminium
Fuel Capacity 225 Litres
Water Capacity 60 Litres
Engine Mercury 250 Pro XS
Propeller Enertia 16.5 3bld S/S
Power Outboard 200-300hp
AMPH System Anura S25
MFD Garmin 9"
Underwater Lights Lumitec Seablaze
Ent System Fusion
Contact Euro City Marine, Ph 06 8358810
EUROCITYMARINE.CO.NZ

PERFORMANCE DATA : MERCURY 250 PRO XS

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range (NM)
1000	3.0	4	1.4	140
1500	6.0	8.5	1.5	130
2000	7.0	11.1	1.6	120
2500	8.0	14.2	1.8	110
3000	9.0	20	2.3	88
3500	12.0	25.5	2.2	92
4000	16.0	35.5	2.3	88
4500	22.0	48	2.2	92
5000	27.0	55	2.1	96
5500	30.0	62.5	2.1	96
5900	35.0	79.5	2.3	88

Range is calculated on 90% of 225 litres.

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