



On the fly

Words by **John Eichelsheim** Photos by **Mark Kitteridge**



Although developed in New Zealand, the new Revo 601 Superfly has styling reminiscent of the panga boats in the Pacific Islands – and that’s where it is headed, for charter fishing.

When a boat is specifically set up for salt water fly fishing, it needs to meet three major criteria: it needs to be stealthy and quiet; it needs to be free of protrusions that will snag lines in the cockpit; and it needs plenty of open space for casting because, with fly fishing, the back cast is as long as the forward cast.

The Revo 601 Superfly meets those criteria and is the first boat in New Zealand to be fitted with Suzuki’s new, high-thrust DF60AV three-cylinder, four-stroke outboard. It was developed by a three-pronged team: designer Jim Pauling of Revo Boats; Matthew Von Sturmer of Rod and Reel, an Auckland fly fishing outfitter and guiding service; and Brett Patterson, advertising manager at *Boating New Zealand* and *NZ Fishing News*. Patterson also heads up Sportfish Adventures, hence his involvement in the Revo.

Although destined to charter fish out of Auckland with Von Sturmer and Rod and Reel, the Revo 601 was designed with the tropical Pacific in mind, specifically the vast lagoon of Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, renowned for its hard-fighting bonefish. Bonefish are a fly fishing prize, and Sportfish Adventures sends tour groups

of keen fly fishers to Aitutaki all year round. With the addition of a poling platform in the stern, this boat would be ideal for Aitutaki’s lagoon, or anywhere else this style of fishing is practiced.

The most noticeable fishing feature of the boat is the raised casting platform in the bow. This gives a fly fisher a raised position from which to cast a fly, while the U-shaped backrest provides welcome support and security. This platform is handy for any sort of lure fishing, not just fly fishing.

LONG WATERLINE

The 601’s hull design is long and narrow, rather like the pangas or longboats often used in the islands of the South Pacific. Like a longboat, the 601 is easily driven and an excellent load carrier. The rear half of the hull is rather dory-like but the bow is more conventional, with a steepish forefoot and a modest reverse chine/spray rail. The boat has a long waterline for its 5.99m length, which enhances its ability to plane at low speed and minimises bow lift during the transition onto the plane.

Planing is achieved at around 10 knots, but once on the plane, the hull holds level right down to seven or eight knots. Apply the

“This gives a fly-fisher a raised position from which to cast a fly, while the backrest provides support...”





The Revo 601 has a sealed air buoyancy ring around the boat at gunwale height to ensure she floats right way up if swamped. The boat was developed by fishers for fishers and has plenty of angler-friendly attributes including, from left below, an anchor locker, removable step up to the casting platform and a Railblaza Starport to support items such as rodholders, baitboards and drink holders.



Meeting survey

Super Fly is surveyed for three passengers plus skipper. She is 5.99m long so that she falls under the slightly less stringent survey requirements for boats under 6m, particularly regarding the skipper's qualifications. To meet NZ survey, the Revo had extra buoyancy built into the gunwales to ensure the boat floats upright in a swamp test. She also carries twin batteries, has designated seating for four, structure approval, stability approval and carries the requisite electronics and safer equipment.



power and the boat instantly slides onto the plane. Acceleration is strong but performance tapers off towards the top of the rev range. We saw around 27 knots maximum during our sea trial, which is ample for this style of boat. A proposed propeller change may add a couple or three knots, but there could be a trade-off in acceleration and/or time to get onto the plane. According to Jim Pauling, this hull will perform adequately with just 40hp.

The Revo 601 has a sealed air buoyancy ring right around the boat at gunwale height. The foam is part of the structure, added during construction. It helps the Revo 601 to pass survey, ensuring it floats right way up when full of water, as well as providing welcome stiffness to the hull. The HPWPE material is buoyant, so the boat has plenty of reserve buoyancy.

SWEET HANDLER

The Revo 601 handles nicely. The throttle-gear shift is a little stiff, a fault many centre-console boats share with their convoluted cable

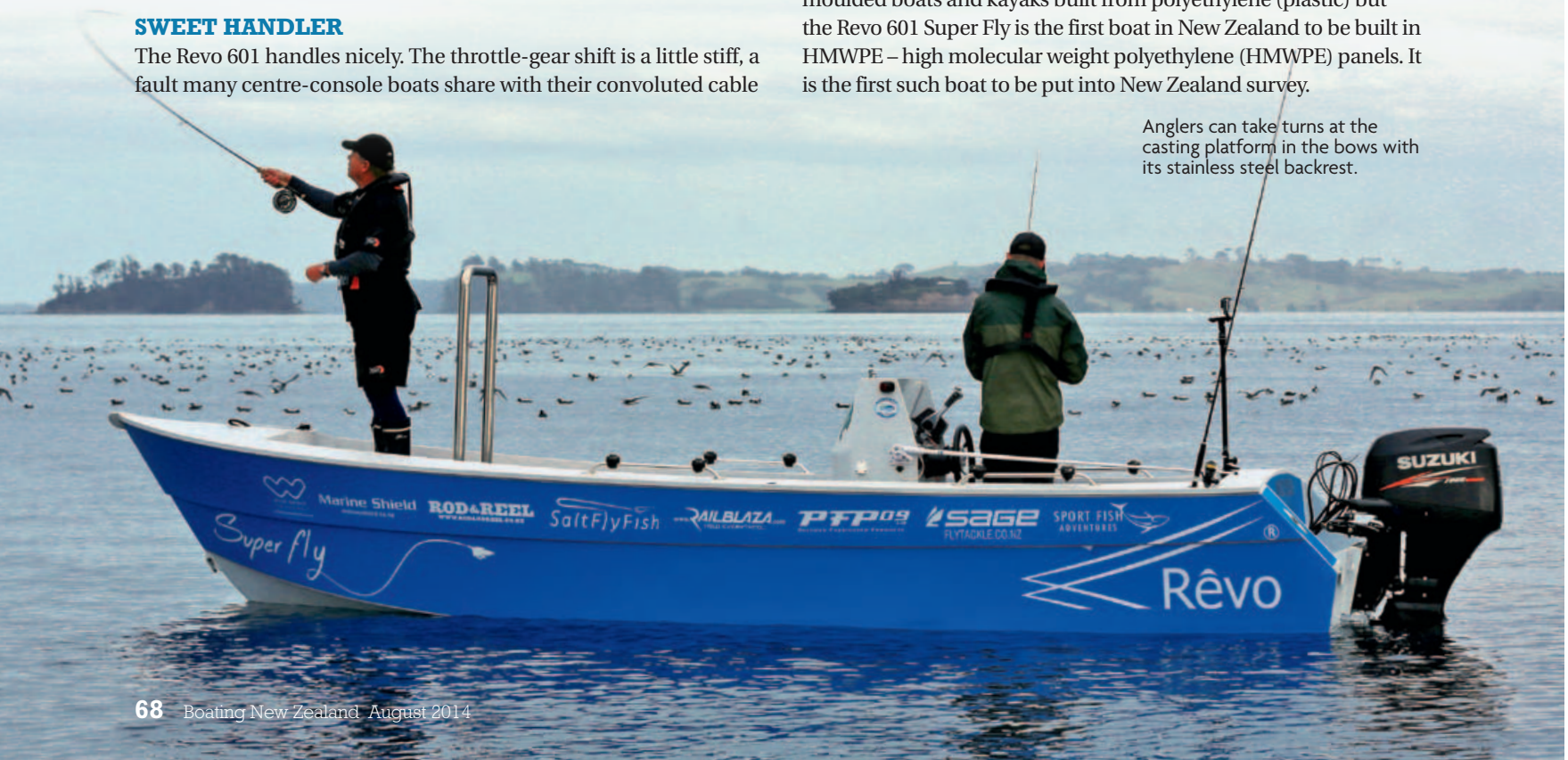
routing, but the steering is light and responsive. The turning circle is excellent and control in reverse is outstanding. I enjoyed carving turns in the 601, which feels serenely unruffled, and pushing it through wakes produced little bow lift. It was a calm day but the hull gave the impression it is a soft rider.

A noticeable characteristic of the high-thrust motor is how well it pulls in reverse. A long, narrow boat can be a bit of a pig to steer when going backwards, but the Suzuki offers so much thrust, it literally drags the stern of the boat around, making it easier to manage when coming alongside or berthing.

PLAYS HARD

New Zealand has other boats such as the more familiar, rotationally moulded boats and kayaks built from polyethylene (plastic) but the Revo 601 Super Fly is the first boat in New Zealand to be built in HMWPE – high molecular weight polyethylene (HMWPE) panels. It is the first such boat to be put into New Zealand survey.

Anglers can take turns at the casting platform in the bows with its stainless steel backrest.





Building with HPWME

HPWME sheets are ordered from the manufacturer in the colour, thickness and sheet length required. Once the sheets are delivered they are CNC-cut according to the designer's CAD files and welded together in an aluminium jig. The review boat's jig became its trailer, which requires only a single axle and features skids, not rollers. Towing weight is 750kg.

Just like an aluminium boat, the hull features two full length bearers and several transverse frames. Because this boat has to meet survey, it also has a full keel. Unlike rotationally moulded plastics, one of the beauties of this material, says boatbuilder Jim Pauling, is that you can control the thickness, adding and subtracting structure where required. He describes the boat as "very strong and robust".

Pauling chose HMWPE construction because it's a robust material able to withstand the general wear and tear that goes with charter fishing. The boat could equally well be constructed using aluminium, timber or composite panels.

HMWPE sheets absorb shock, are UV resistant and deaden noise, so the boat is a remarkably smooth, quiet runner – even quieter than a GRP boat – and the hull won't suffer deterioration from exposure to the sun. It's a tough material, so the 601 boat can take the ground, be pulled up onto beaches and used in shallow water where there is always the chance of bumping submerged

rocks. A low speed impact is unlikely to damage the Revo 601's hull and minor damage is easily repaired.

The centre console, forward platform, seats and lockers are also made from HMWPE, CNC-cut and then welded together. Because it's a relatively narrow boat, the console is wide enough only for the helmsman, who stands up to drive. Motorcycle-style seating behind the helmsman will accommodate two people sitting astride and there's a padded seat on top of the locker in front of the console for another passenger, or two at a squeeze. The boat's twin tote tanks slide neatly into transom recesses either side of the rear seat.

Rêvo[®] lutionary 601

STRONG
Engineered in super tough high molecular weight polyethylene, virtually indestructible.

UNSINKABLE
Built in sealed buoyancy compartments plus the natural positive buoyancy of HMWPE makes it impossible to sink.

LOW MAINTENANCE
Naturally resistant to electrolysis, corrosion, marine growth, etc. Just hose it down!

ANTI UV
UV resistant materials will not degrade in the elements.

Specifications
LOA: 5.99m
Beam: 1.76m
Disp: 750kg
Built to MSA survey

Designed by
Rêvo Boats

Built by
PFP09
POLYMER FABRICATED PRODUCTS

Photo: Jason Milne

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The dashboard has room for a reasonably comprehensive range of flush-mounted Garmin instruments, including a GPS-chartplotter-fishfinder and a separate GPS-engine data display, along with the VHF radio, a pair of switch panels and the throttle control. There are no analogue gauges. A large compass is hung off the back of the console beside the wheel, part of the survey requirements, while one of the boat's two batteries is housed in the console locker; the second battery lives inside the aft seat locker along the boat's centreline.

Dry storage can be at a premium in an open boat, and because it's long and narrow the 601's internal volume isn't much greater than that of, say, a 4.6m boat with a wide beam. However, the 601 is reasonably well endowed for its size: there's ample space for tackle bags, fly rod tubes and other gear under the forward casting platform and quite a bit of dry stowage under the front and rear seat squabs. An open storage locker in the console accommodates a fire extinguisher and gives access to the bilge while a shallow underfloor wet locker stows the sea anchor.

There is fly rod storage in racks along the sides and a plethora of rail and flush-mounted Railblaza Starport receptacles all over the boat. These accept a wide range of accessories, including rod holders, drink holders, cellphone and tablet holders, so they're a versatile storage solution for an open boat.

ANGLERS PLUS GUIDE

Under normal operating conditions Super Fly will fish one or two anglers, plus a guide. While underway, the anglers will occupy the padded seat forward of the console, or perhaps straddle the rear seat if conditions are unpleasant. Anglers can take turns at the casting platform in the bows with its stainless steel backrest. It's quite secure up there with the U-shaped stainless steel backrest offering a decent handhold and the non-slip deck providing good footing. The boat's simple interior is uncluttered, and importantly, up on the casting platform there is little to snag a fly line – even the bow cleat is retractable. **B**

Revo 601

- ▶ **loa** 5.99m
- ▶ **beam** 1.758m
- ▶ **draft** approx 0.2m
- ▶ **weight** approx 750kg incl trailer
- ▶ **construction** HMWPE sheets welded over bearers and transverse frames
- ▶ **engine** Suzuki DF60AV 60hp four-stroke
- ▶ **fuel capacity** 2 x 25-litre tote tanks
- ▶ **cruising speed** 12-25 knots
- ▶ **max speed** 29.6 knots
- ▶ **packages from** \$26,780, base open boat, tiller steer

“...there is little to snag a fly line...”

High-thrust Suzuki

The new Suzuki DF60AV is the high-thrust version of Suzuki's three-cylinder four-stroke engine with lean burn technology. Instead of the standard lower unit, the DF60AV is fitted with a heavy-duty gear case enclosing the gearbox from Suzuki's 115-140hp models.

The engine fitted to this boat is the first Suzuki DF60AV in New Zealand. Two others are being commissioned in a commercial application. These heavy-duty lower units with their 242:1 gear ratio and low-pitched, large-bladed propellers offer durability and thrust – 1.6 times more thrust in forward and three times more in reverse – than standard lower units, but there is a trade-off in maximum speed.

The outboard was selected for the Revo 601 partly because it is a new model for Suzuki and partly because it offers a weight advantage over the four-cylinder 70hp. With just three cylinders, it is slightly more economical to run. By opting for the larger lower unit, the Revo team could achieve the desired hole shots and load carrying ability from a smaller capacity engine.

Suzuki New Zealand is still experimenting with propellers on the Revo. As reviewed it has the standard DF60AV propeller which is perhaps better suited to pushing heavy loads like houseboats or barges. Suzuki will try a couple of more pleasure boat-oriented propellers, including a 13-inch by 15-inch pitch PowerTech semi-cleaver stainless steel propeller. This should help the Revo achieve 30 knots plus, at the expense of some of its hole shot and acceleration performance.

