

LOCAL REVIEW
Sealegs 9.0m

EASY LIKE SUNDAY MORNING

Lionel Ritchie had it right. When you go from complex to carefree, it's "Easy like Sunday morning." Say goodbye to boat ramp congestion, tidal considerations, launching locations and limited landing opportunities. The possibilities are vast with the Sealegs 9.0, and best of all, it's a beast of an adventure platform to go places.

WORDS AND PICS **James Dumergue**





ABOVE The transition from fast boat to beach-crawler takes just seconds.

RIGHT Highly versatile, Sealegs see service in Tourism, Search and Rescue, as Special Forces landing craft and as civilian leisure craft too.

FAR RIGHT An idea on an Auckland napkin in 2001 has translated into over 1500 boats sold in more than 55 countries.

Whether you fish, dive or love exploring, the options for amphibious explorations in Australia are epic. We've just done a run-up to Jumpinpin at the top of South Stradbroke Island in no time at all. By strapping a whopping 425hp, 5.7 litre Yamaha V8 engine on the back of this well-crafted RIB, you get rocketship performance to go places in a day that few boats could achieve with the blistering speed and supreme comfort that the Sealegs 9.0m Hydrasol RIB delivers.

The 23 degrees deadrise of the aluminium hull length handles the building southerly with ease. There's minimal effect on the ride, including running into a 20 knot wind on the way back. We were doing a modest 40 knots with ease, and unless you're turning, you don't even notice it; the top speed is around 50 knots, so if you want to set off for distant locales, offshore fishing, diving or exploring, that puts a lot of choices on the table.





ABOVE Sealegs can be a single-handed proposition.

BELOW This RIB wants for nothing on the tech front.

You could share this boat with anyone and know they'll be safe and comfortable. We're used to standing and using our bent knees as suspension to absorb the bumps from ripping along at high speed, but once you've tried the Joltrider suspension seats out, you'll be so impressed and feel as refreshed at the end of a journey as if you've been in a lay-flat bed on a long-haul flight. Set the seats to your height, no matter your leg length, and get ready to be

converted. It's a beautiful sensation, like cruising on an undulating country road in a car from the 50s, built for comfort. The slow rise and fall are phenomenal, and they will extend your range of tolerance for sea states and time spent travelling.

When you find the place you want to go ashore, it's a quick transformation to amphibious mode. There are some pre-flight steps to take but watching Michael from Sealegs Australia do it, the process

was smooth and coordinated.

Driven by an inboard 35hp Briggs & Stratton motor, the boat rose up out of the water, drove along the beach at up to 7km/h and lowered itself down like a kneeling bus.

Covered by an impressive T-Top built by Black Marlin Towers on the Gold Coast, it is a classy addition that makes the boat much more usable both on land and out on the water.

ABOVE With that big V8 pushing not a lot of boat, the pace can be addictive.

RIGHT Joltrider seats are a simple, clever and highly-adjustable solution to a long-standing issue.



Facts & Figures

9.0M HYDRASOL RIB

GENERAL

LENGTH OVERALL (WHEELS UP)

9.15m (30ft)

HULL LENGTH OVERALL (EXCL. WHEELS) 7.9m (25ft 11in)

HEIGHT 2.52m (8ft 3in) [Wheels down] / 2.12m (6ft 11in) [Wheels up]

BEAM OVERALL 3.13m (10ft 3in)

DRAFT (OUTBOARD TRIMMED UP) 0.40m (15 3/4in)

HULL DEADRISE AT THE TRANSOM 23 degrees

HULL PLATE 5mm, (3/16") Marine Grade Aluminium, (5083)

DISPLACEMENT - NO FUEL 2240kg (4938lbs) single outboard / 2400kg (5280lbs) twin outboards

CAPACITIES

MAX PAYLOAD (INCLUDING PASSENGERS) 500kg (1102lbs)

MAX PASSENGERS ON WATER 12, including driver

TOP SPEED (LAND) 7.5km/h (5mph)

ENGINE

ON-LAND POWER Inboard petrol engine, Briggs & Stratton 35hp (26kW) 4-stroke, air cooled

DRIVE (LAND) All wheel drive, permanent with standard momentary diff lock

Sealegs have been around a long time and have a proven record of their technology, being favoured for adventure RIBs on superyachts and with Search and Rescue operations. They're popular with recreational users who live by the water, looking for the convenience of climbing aboard and driving off for a fishing session or accessing their island home without building boat launching infrastructure. The utility of Sealegs boats is evident, and the ability to get in and out of the water with ease is unmatched. Some time-honoured aspects of boating have changed too. There's no lugging gear forward and back from the boat to land or vice versa. This one's going in a purpose-built boat garage, part of the home right by the water on Moreton Bay. It's as convenient as jumping in the car and going for a drive, but if you want to load some gear, the boat can lower and rest on its hull for easy loading, unloading and washing down. Easy like Sunday morning!



LEFT The single front wheel is both steerable and powered.

BELOW Sealegs means being able to explore places inaccessible by land, and far from the sea

“It’s as convenient as jumping in the car and going for a drive, but if you want to load some gear, the boat can lower and rest on its hull.”





LEFT Currently powered by a small petrol engine, future Sealegs will add an electric land option.

BELOW Besides the discreet wheels, there's little to distinguish it on the water, from a regular RIB.

Compared with the usual boat ramp shuffles and hassles with trailers, we drove straight out of the water and up the boat ramp at Gold Coast City Marina at the end of our run. We took a left, a right and another left to get to the shed for a wash-down and scrubbing before being showcased at the recent 2022 Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show. [📺](#)

