

BOAT REVIEW

Rae Line 185 Bow Rider

The Rae Line 185 Bow Rider underway on Auckland harbour.

Sporty Kiwi

By Freddy Foote

Rae Line, built in Kaiapoi north of Christchurch is one of the countries quiet achieving brands. With a number of models in production, we sent Freddy Foote to test their 185 bow rider outboard model.





Plenty of comfort in the bow for the kids.



Clip in carpet is a feature throughout and can easily be removed.

I'll admit, I didn't know too much about the Rae Line brand, but it has, in fact, been around since 1992. It was established by Peter Rae as a gel coat and fibreglass repair shop, however, a number of years later, the company ramped up its manufacturing capabilities and began building boats.

In 1998, through ties in the US and New Zealand's & Australia's Sea Ray dealer Sports Marine, Rae Line was approached by boat building giant Sea Ray to manufacture two models of Sea Ray's sport boat range, then known as the 180BR and 180OB. Sea Ray had identified Rae Line as a quality boat builder with sound procedures and the ability to expand. This was the first time for Sea Ray to allow its boats to be built under license and was a huge contract for Rae Line – quite a big thing for a small kiwi boat building company.

The first Sea Ray was manufactured on New Zealand soil in August 1999. This first boat was sent back to Sea Ray in the US for inspection, as Sea Ray is renowned worldwide as being a leader in quality control it was important for both companies that this quality level be maintained.

In March 2006, the boat building contract with Sea Ray was reviewed and it was decided for the expansion of both companies that Rae Line would re-brand



The helm is ultra sporty and stylish.

and re-market its Sea Ray boats as Rae Line. This new contract allowed Rae Line to expand further into markets such as Canada, Korea, South America and Europe. Expanding into Europe came with a new set of challenges, namely in getting CE (European Conformity) approval for all its models that were to be shipped to Europe. This was a long and extensive process requiring rigorous testing of test boats to ensure they were built to the highest standard.

With gaining CE Certification for the 180,

185 and 186 models, it was not long before dealer agreements had been signed and the first boats were on their way to the UK and Europe.

FUNCTIONAL LAYOUT

With its heritage stemming from the earlier Sea Ray models, the 185 Bow Rider has become one of the company's most popular models. Storage is plentiful throughout the Rae Line 185 and is one of the most prominent features I observed during our test day. You'll find a lockable

glove box in front of the port side passenger seat and on both sides of the cockpit gunwales, there are full-length side shelves that would be big enough to fit water skis.

The bow seating area is very conventional, yet well appointed. Backrests provide extra comfort for passengers, with a cup holder on either side, as well as a handrail for passengers. Under the seat squabs, there is further storage space as well as a small anchor locker forward.

Beneath the cockpit floor aft, there is a large under the floor locker for wet storage, which is big enough to accommodate water skis. There is further storage under the port side king/queen seats and also under the aft bench seat.

The seating configuration is open and optional. You can opt for the single helm seat and king/queen seats opposite, or have two pedestals or two king/queens. I liked this option, as the port side seating adding further storage space. You can never have too much storage!

Aft, there is a full-width bench seat that could easily accommodate three adults or four kids. On the port side of the boarding platform, there is a telescopic boarding ladder, complete with grab rail to aid re-entering the boat and in the middle of the transom is a stainless steel ski arch. If you are planning to tow an aggressive slalom skier, it is advisable to get this mounted right through to the cockpit sole.

There is a clip-on cover for the open bow area when not in use, or coming home in rough seas, plus a removable carpet that covers the entire cockpit section. The carpet is very easy to install



The layout is all about passenger comfort.



Standard power comes in the form of a Mercury 150hp four-stroke outboards.

BOAT REVIEW *Rae Line 185 Bow Rider*

Stylish, practical and very user friendly.

Above Right: There are plenty of appointments throughout; here we see passenger grab rail, cup holder and stereo speaker.

Below Right: A sizeable glove box is located immediately in front of the passenger seat.



and remove, meaning you can take it out of the boat to dry and the end of the day's activities on the water.

OUTBOARD POWER

Our Rae Line 185 came fitted with the standard 150hp Mercury Four-Stroke outboard. As you would expect, the 150hp Mercury four-stroke provided more than enough power. The punch out of the hole is excellent and it is certainly a good little ski boat for the family.

Our test day was the boat's maiden voyage and the boat still needed a little bit of fine-tuning to achieve its optimal performance. We managed 41.7 knots @ 5000rpm, not quite being able to reach 5500rpm on the digital display. We predict that with hitting the maximum rpm, the boat should achieve 46 knots.

The boat was easy to trim and is up on the plane at around 2000rpm.

Wide-open throttle and the boat is stable and not too flighty but is quite sensitive to trim.

Blasting up and down the harbour during

our photo shoot, we found a comfortable cruise speed of around 26 knots @ 3500rpm. Surprisingly, the Rae Line 185 can be fitted with a 200hp Mercury two-stroke EFI outboard, which would make it an absolute rocket.

However, I thought the 150hp four-stroke was a good match, and you could power it with as little as an 115hp, and it would still perform well. However, keep in mind that the 185 has seating for as many as nine passengers, so horsepower is needed to accommodate that extra weight.

A 100L under floor fuel tank comes as standard, meaning that with the four strokes excellent economy, you're going to have plenty of range. The same hull is also available in a stern drive configuration, fitted with a 190hp Mercruiser.

At the helm, the seating position is excellent. The bucket seat is very comfortable, adjustable and allows you sit down snugly below the windshield, protected from the wind.

The throttle is within easy reach, and a Raymarine A9 MFD provided all of the

engine instruments. Below is a Fusion stereo system, which links to two speakers in the cockpit sides behind the helm seat and opposite.

Performance on our test day was good. Auckland's upper harbour was mainly flat and perfect for boating. This is a family boat, so in all reality, you're going to head out on the water when the weather is perfect, however, should the weather turn on your return trip, the 185 will handle the conditions.

Overall, I loved the 185 Bow Rider. The finish is superb, and the functionality is great. It would be the ideal first boat for a family who wants to enjoy a day on the water with comfort and style. What's more, the boat looks great.

As tested, this rig is \$NZ68,215 which is quite good value for money, considering the high level of finish and amount of gear and features that it had installed. However, if that's slightly outside of your budget, then boat, motor and trailer packages start from \$NZ54,900. ☼

RAE LINE 185 BOW RIDER

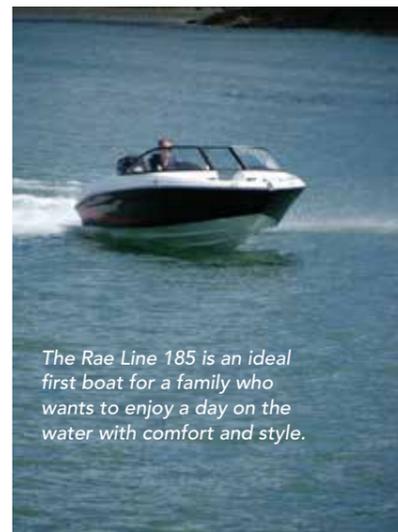
Model & Model Rae Line 185 Bowrider Outboard
Priced from \$NZ54,900.
Price as tested \$NZ68,215
Type Bowrider
Construction GRP
LOA 5.49m
Beam 2.29m
Deadrise 19 degree
Trailerable weight 1070 kg
Test Power Mercury 150hp 4S
Propeller 14 x19' S/S

Power options Outboard/Stern drive
HP Range 150-200hp
Fuel capacity 100L
Trailer Multi roller
Boat Supplied by Sports Marine,
www.sportsmarine.co.nz

Contact Rae Line,
www.raeline.com

Performance Figures //
 150hp Mercury four-stroke

| RPM | Knots |
|------|-------|
| 1000 | 3.9 |
| 1500 | 4.5 |
| 2000 | 7.5 |
| 2500 | 15.5 |
| 3000 | 21.0 |
| 3500 | 26.0 |
| 4000 | 30.5 |
| 4500 | 35.6 |
| 5000 | 41.7 |



The Rae Line 185 is an ideal first boat for a family who wants to enjoy a day on the water with comfort and style.