

# Savage 445 Raptor Pro Review - BoatAdvice



by Steve Lague

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Savage has released a new entry-level model range for 2016 introducing the Raptor, replacing its long serving Jabiru Series. Built using an all-new hull design Savage calls the V-Nose, it is designed to provide a drier ride and more interior space than its predecessor. One thing that Savage has not changed is that the Raptor, like the Jabiru, will be offered in two model ranges, the standard Raptor, a simple dinghy design with two bench seats and the Raptor Pro which has a flat, carpeted floor, painted hull and forward fishing platform as standard.

Initially the Raptor will be available in six model sizes, three less than was offered under the Jabiru nameplate. There will be three Raptor models, the 335, 395 and 425 and three Raptor Pro models the 405, 425 and 445. The latter two will be available with the option of a tiller steer setup or a side console and steering wheel.

BoatAdvice was invited to test the top of the range 445 Raptor Pro with tiller steer prior to its official public launch at the 2016 Marine International Expo.

## **WHAT YOU GET**

As an entry-level boat the [Raptor Series](#) is built to a price, which means that virtually every feature available on the boat is listed as an option. While this practice keeps the boat more affordable it also means you need to consider the option list carefully when making a purchase, especially if you are keen inland fisherman who is looking at the Raptor Pro range. The boat we tested had many options that I would strongly suggest you tick if it falls within your budget. The first of these was the bow mount for an electric motor.

The fully carpeted forward fishing platform, which is standard, is not only a great area for standing and tossing lures but can be a great storage area if you elect to have the optional lockers included. On the test boat there were five lockers. One carried the anchor, there were lifejackets in another and the battery casing to hold a second battery if you fit an electric motor in a third. And there was still plenty of room for tackle boxes, and all the bits and pieces you want for a day on the water. You can also opt for a live bait tank to be fitted in this area and while it was not on the test boat, again, it would be a very handy addition. Without these additional storage areas you are going to find deck space is quickly eaten up with eskies and boxes for your safety gear and all the other bits and pieces you need in a boat.

The only other storage area on the [Savage](#) 445 Raptor Pro is under the bench across the transom. On the test boat the 25-litre fuel tank was on one-side with enough space for all your valuables on the other, though I would also be putting them in a waterproof bag.

The 445 Raptor Pro comes standard with two pedestal seats and five inserts, including one on the forward casting platform. Two of the inserts are situated at the rear of the boat so you can drive the tiller steer from the left or right hand side. While both seats can be placed at the back at the same time with this configuration I found steering a little more difficult. I found it much better with the passenger seat situated in a more central position.

The top of the gunwales on the Raptor Pro are nice and wide and there are two rod holders fitted as standard, I would have at least two more fitted so you had a couple at the front and back of the boat. There are also side rails at the front and back of the boat that are handy for hanging onto while the boat is underway.

If you wanted to fit a small sounder or multi function display unit it would have to be mounted on the top of the gunwale or you would need to have a bracket made to fit on the side.

Cockpit space is very good for a boat of this size, two people could comfortably fish, and the carpeted floor is comfortable under foot.

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### **POWER**

The 445 Raptor Pro is built to handle a maximum of 50hp but 40hp is the recommended engine size for the 4.48m long tinnie. A [40hp Evinrude Etec](#) outboard with electric key start was fitted to the test boat. The key position, at the beginning of the tiller next to the engine was not difficult to reach or find. For convenience, Evinrude fit stop and start buttons close to the throttle on the tiller while the engine tilt button is also at the end of the tiller and is easy to operate with your thumb.

There were no electronics fitted to the boat the GPS on my phone revealed a cruising speed of around 13 knots (25km/h) on nice flat water and a top speed of 25 knots (47km/h), which felt pretty fast in this style of boat.

### **ON THE WATER**

The Raptor series utilises a brand new hull design Savage has called the V-Nose which gives the boat a sharper entry than the Jabiru it replaces. The hull is also slightly wider at the bottom. What this means is that you should get a drier and more stable ride. We tested the boat on the protected waters of the Gold Coast Broadwater, exactly the type of conditions the boat is designed for, and it was hard to fault. The ride was comfortable, and dry, though I would venture to say that because of the wide flat bottom the ride would become quite hard in rougher conditions. Turning was good for this style of boat with the back end sliding in a controlled and predictable manner. The up side of the new design was the stability of the hull at rest. Even with three people standing on one side of the boat the lean was only slight.

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### **ON THE TRAILER**

The 445 Raptor Pro will come standard on a new aluminium TALL 749 trailer built in-house by Telwater.

Because the trailerable weight of this package is under 750kg it means the trailer does not need brakes and can be towed by all but the smallest cars on the market.

TALL 749 is fitted with Teflon coated skids so it is an easy operation to drive the boat on and off. It can also be used just as easily manually and could easily be handled by one person.

### **OVERVIEW**

The Savage 445 Raptor Pro is an ideal boat for somebody looking for an inshore fishing boat that is not going to break the bank. It rides nice and flat with no spray, is extremely stable and easy to handle. Getting it on and off the trailer can be done single handedly and most family vehicles will tow

it easily.

**POSITIVES**

Very stable

Plenty of deck space

**NEGATIVES**

Long option list

No storage in standard guise

**NUMBERS THAT MATTER**

Price: (as tested) \$20,176

Length Overall: 4.48m

Beam: 2.04m

Bottomsides and Transom: 3.00mm

Topsides: 2.00mm

Max HP: 50

Engine Fitted: 40hp EvinrudeEtec

Capacity: 4 people

Trailerable Weight: 749kg