

Savage 485 Scorpion SC

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A mid-sized bay and harbour fisher for a competitive price

Savage's open boat range has been reinvigorated with the launch of the Scorpion series. Well priced, but with a decent set of features and equipment, these smooth sided vee hull craft will find favour with both newcomers and experienced anglers. On test this week is the 4.85m Side Console with great performance from a 75hp DFI Evinrude E-Tec outboard.

OVERVIEW

- *Savage trims prices but maintains equipment levels with Scorpion range*

Late last year Savage introduced the Scorpion series following calls from dealers for a more price competitive boat range than the existing Piranha models. The latter range was dropped in favour of the new Scorpions – and the new boats are keener on price, yet retain plenty of standard features.

There are nine models in the Scorpion range, spread across three different hull sizes – 435, 455, and 485. The entry 435 model is available with tiller-steer and side console layouts. The 485 series boat comes with tiller, centre console and side console versions, while the flagship 485 hull can be ordered with side and centre console configurations.

A higher specification 'Pro' version is also available with the 4.85m hull. It has more features (including a rod locker) and a fast-back style Maxi-Bracket transom with dual boarding platforms.

The subject of this test report is the 485 Scorpion Side Console. This mid-priced model will suit anglers looking for a well packaged, value-for-money fishing rig.

PRICE AND EQUIPMENT

- *Keen price, well-equipped and ready to fish*

The Scorpion 485 SC does not have quite the feature-set of the 485 SC Pro, but it has enough standard gear to satisfy most boaters and fishermen. The regular boat is also cheaper and there are plenty of options to accessorise the boat as required.

As with most craft in this category the 485 SC has bow and stern casting platforms, plenty of under-deck storage, carpeted floors throughout, wide side coamings, and a compact side console helm station with two standard, removable pedestal chairs.

The standard inventory also includes a roto-moulded plastic anchor well, short bow and stern rails, cockpit side pockets, bow cleat and roller (but no stern cleats) four rod holders, two transducer brackets, bilge pump, navigation lights, switch panel, three in-floor seat sockets, battery master switch, battery tray and transom step.

You will also find a 77-litre underfloor fuel tank and a port-side transom corner live-bait tank with plumbing. The inclusion of both the tank and the underfloor fuel supply is a bonus for anglers as these items are rarely included with craft in this price category.

On the subject of price, Coffs Harbour Marine has Scorpion 485 packages starting at \$26,357 – and this includes a single-axle braked Savage aluminium trailer, 75hp Evinrude E-Tec DFI two-stroke outboard, registrations and safety gear.

Drop back to a 60hp outboard and your package price would go below \$25k. You can expect a lower top speed with the smaller engine, but the overall performance would still be sufficient for most applications.

The test boat came with the maximum power 75hp Evinrude E-Tec outboard along with options of two-tone paint and a formed outboard motor splash well. This lifts the price to \$28,893.

Other key options anglers might want to add to the standard boat include a bow-mount trolling-motor plate, casting platform live-bait/fish well, rod locker, bimini, and a vinyl hull wrap.

INTERIOR LAYOUT

- *A comfortable helm position with plenty of deck and storage space*

The 485 SC Scorpion has a similar layout to the 455 Tiller model we tested previously, but with a larger and deeper middle cockpit area and a side console helm configuration.

The console is compact and takes up surprisingly little room within the cockpit. There's also space underneath it – on the bow side – which seems tailor made for a large tackle box.

The fascia is small and caters for standard engine instruments and a switch panel.

There's a hand-rail and glove box above the steering wheel and space alongside it for a bracket-mounted fish finder/GPS – but no room for a flush-fitted unit.

The lift-out helm chair is well positioned so that the plastic steering wheel and side-mounted throttle are within an easy

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reach. This ergonomic design meant the boat was comfortable and easy to drive – although we felt the steering in the test rig could be improved as it felt a bit stiff and jerky at certain trim levels.

The bow and stern casting decks are key features for anglers. The bow deck, which has loads of storage underneath, is roughly 1.0m x 1.74m wide and 260mm above the centre cockpit floor.

The rear deck is a lot shorter, albeit the same height above the floor. The battery and bilge area is accessed via a centre platform hatch, while there is storage space under a starboard hatch and a small, roto-moulded plastic live-bait tank on the port side.

The standard live-bait tank will be too small for competition anglers, but you can option the boat with a much larger live-bait/fish well – which is fitted under the forward casting deck.

Stretching between the two elevated casting decks is a deeper main cockpit area measuring 2.23m long by 1.72m wide. The gunwales are high enough above this centre floor section (580mm) so that you can stand and lean against them to fish over the side. This extra depth gives the boat the ability to fish choppy bay and harbour waters in relative safety, and to fish offshore a few miles in good weather.

Rounding out the interior features are the 850mm long above-floor side storage pockets, short aft coaming rails, transom boarding step and hand rail, and carry handles on each side of the outboard well.

ON THE WATER

- *A good all-rounder with safe, easy handling, strong performance*

Savage's Ultra-Lift hull has a traditional vee design with strakes pressed into the alloy hull and wide, flat chines aft. The bow is full with a gradual slope or angle to the stem which works particularly well in a following sea; the boat rides cleanly out of most wave troughs – without burying.

We didn't have much of a chop for our test of the Scorpion 485, but we did climb over a few steep cruiser wakes to confirm the hull is very well mannered and safe, ideal characteristics for inexperienced boaters.

The hull rides well for a light weight alloy boat and we remained dry throughout our test – in admittedly calm conditions.

There is enough stability at rest to fish two blokes over on one side of the boat, and it felt quite solid underway.

As mentioned, the test rig was fitted with the maximum recommended power – in the form of an Evinrude E-Tec 75hp in-line three-cylinder, DFI two-stroke outboard. With this powerhouse of an engine on the transom we achieved a top speed of 33 knots and it had loads of power right up through the rpm range.

Wide open throttle peaked at only 4900 rpm however, so we figure a smaller propeller might have yielded better all-round performance – though the lower rpm for a given speed across the ground would help fuel economy.

Throughout the test, the Evinrude E-Tec ran faultlessly, offering smooth, strong, punchy performance. As the lightest weight engine in its class it is ideal for powering smaller, weight sensitive hulls.

VERDICT

- *A safe, practical, versatile open fishing boat*

The Savage Scorpion is an excellent family fishing boat, it's affordable, well featured, safe, seaworthy and versatile. In the 485 SC size, the Scorpion is big enough to fish coastal offshore waters on good days, yet small enough to navigate narrow creeks and backwaters.

You can tow it easily behind a four-cylinder car, squeeze it into a garage, and launch it single-handed.

We enjoyed testing the Scorpion 485SC, it's not as fancy as some boats from competitor brands, but it is solidly built, well equipped and well mannered on the water. For the money, the Scorpion is an excellent buy.

LIKES

- >> Solid performance
- >> Safe, easy handling
- >> Rolled gunnels – wide side decks
- >> Compact console with storage underneath
- >> Console grab rail
- >> Smooth, plate-look topsides

NOT SO MUCH

- >> Test rig slightly over-propped
- >> Shallow anchor well – anchor may bounce out
- >> No stern cleats
- >> No provision for flush-fitting a fish finder

RATINGS

Overall rating: 4.6/5.0
 Mechanical/equipment: 4.7/5.0
 Packaging and practicality: 4.8/5.0
 On the water Performance: 4.6/5.0
 Value for money: 4.5/5.0
 X-factor: 4.4/5.0

PERFORMANCE

5.6kts (10km/h) @ 1500rpm
 7.1kts (13km/h) @ 2000rpm
 14.2kts (26km/h) @ 2500rpm
 18.8kts (35km/h) @ 3000rpm
 22.9kts (42km/h) @ 3500rpm
 26.8kts (50km/h) @ 4000rpm
 30.1kts (56km/h) @ 4500rpm
 33.4kts (62km/h) @ 4900rpm (WOT)

Specifications:

Price as tested: \$28,893 including Evinrude E-Tec 75hp DFI two-stroke outboard, Savage single-axle braked aluminium trailer, two-tone paint, formed outboard motor splash well, boat and trailer registrations, and inshore safety gear pack.

Priced from: \$26,357 with an Evinrude E-Tec 75hp DFI two-stroke outboard, Savage single-axle braked trailer, inshore safety gear, boat and trailer registrations.

Length overall: 5.04m
 Hull length: 4.91m
 Beam: 2.07m
 Depth: 1.07m
 Hull weight: 435kg
 Towing weight: Approx 800kg
 Length on trailer: 6.3m
 Height on trailer: 2.1m
 Bottom and transom alloy: 3mm
 Topsides alloy: 3mm
 Maximum power: 75hp
 Maximum engine weight: 170kg

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Century 21 AT THE WHARF

Engine as tested: Evinrude E-Tec 75hp DFI two-stroke
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Maximum persons: Five

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