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AXOPAR 22 REVIEW

Off the Trailer



FINNISH FINESSE

The Axopar 22 Spyder is not your average tender/
dayboat, it is a boat designed to be driven fast.



AXO N

By Dominic
Wiseman



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boat off the ground**



Axopar boats launched onto the scene approximately six years ago with what some would call the defining dayboat of the modern era, the Axopar 28. Since then, it has gone on to build an Axopar 24, collaborate with Brabus, and design an Axopar 37 well. Those boats were all aimed at a select crowd, but to bring the Axopar name to a broader audience, they have now introduced the Axopar 22.

We are testing the Axopar 22 Spyder. This boat also comes in a T-top configuration. The Axopar 22 hull is not simply a shortened version of the larger boats; the design team started from scratch to get this boat off the ground. There was a significant amount to live up to, as the original Axopar 28 was renowned as a driver's boat. It was fast and sleek, with a drive that was at complete odds with its size and appearance. Can the Axopar 22 live up to the name?

The Axopar 22 replaces the relatively short-lived, in boat terms at least, Axopar 24. That boat has been discontinued, having hit the market in 2017. It seems like a rationalisation of the model range is underway and a quick look at the Axopar Finland website confirmed my suspicions with reference to an Axopar 25 coming soon.



Above: A sports wheel for the sportiest of boat drives.

Below: Branded Axopar, the rear bench seating can be arranged in several positions, including as a sunlounge.



When you look at the Axopar 22 you will find it is very different to the other models currently in production. Design is personal and the Axopar 22 looks tougher and stockier than the others. Based upon the line drawings online, the Axopar 25 also looks like the new Axopar 22, so this design is more than likely going to run across the other models eventually. I will wait to see how it manifests itself in the Axopar 28, but it would be difficult to improve upon the original velvety appearance of this larger sibling.

ENTRY LEVEL

That said, the Axopar 22 is the baby of the range and some space had to be sacrificed for Axopar

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to build to a lower price point and increase its appeal. The boat is still unique looking, maintaining the twin-stepped hull of the previous models, and still carries that same rigid inflatable guise. In fact, the original design was modelled off a RIB due to the safety aspects of the design.

At a little over seven metres (22ft11in), this is still a decent slab of boat. The beam is not massive, though, at 2.23m. That's well-down on the previous Axopar 24's 2.55m, but they have managed to fit plenty into the walk-around design, including a head. One advantage of that new beam width is the opportunity to legally tow the Axopar 22 in Australia, opening new waters for any owner.

While still predominately a dayboat, this boat is also aimed at the sporty fraternity. You can add an optional skipole and a freshwater shower at the stern on the port side, and there is a transom-mounted stainless-steel ladder for easy access back on board.

COCKPIT CHOICES

The business area of the boat is the rear cockpit which comes in three layout choices. You can





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Highlights include: Deep interior freeboard; configurable seating; a bow settee with cupholders; and even a head.

choose from the standard offering of a twin jump seat with a walkway to the side, to a rear lounge offering U-shaped seating, or the Axopar multi-box design that provides storage beneath with a modular backrest and sunlounge combination. The moveable backrest can create front to back seating, all-round seating by moving this backrest to a north-south position, or be used as a headrest for the sunlounge.



There is additional seating at the bow for four, with a rear-facing seat immediately behind the anchor locker and an optional forward-facing seat ahead of the console. And in that console is a toilet, surprisingly spacious, complete with a small sink.

SPIRITED PERFORMANCE

But it wouldn't be an Axopar without handling like a sports car, and the hull on this boat is every bit as good as the previous models. It runs on the traditional Axopar twin-stepped hull, with the super-sharp entry they are known for. Honestly, looking at the hull you wonder how they make it all work, yet work it does.

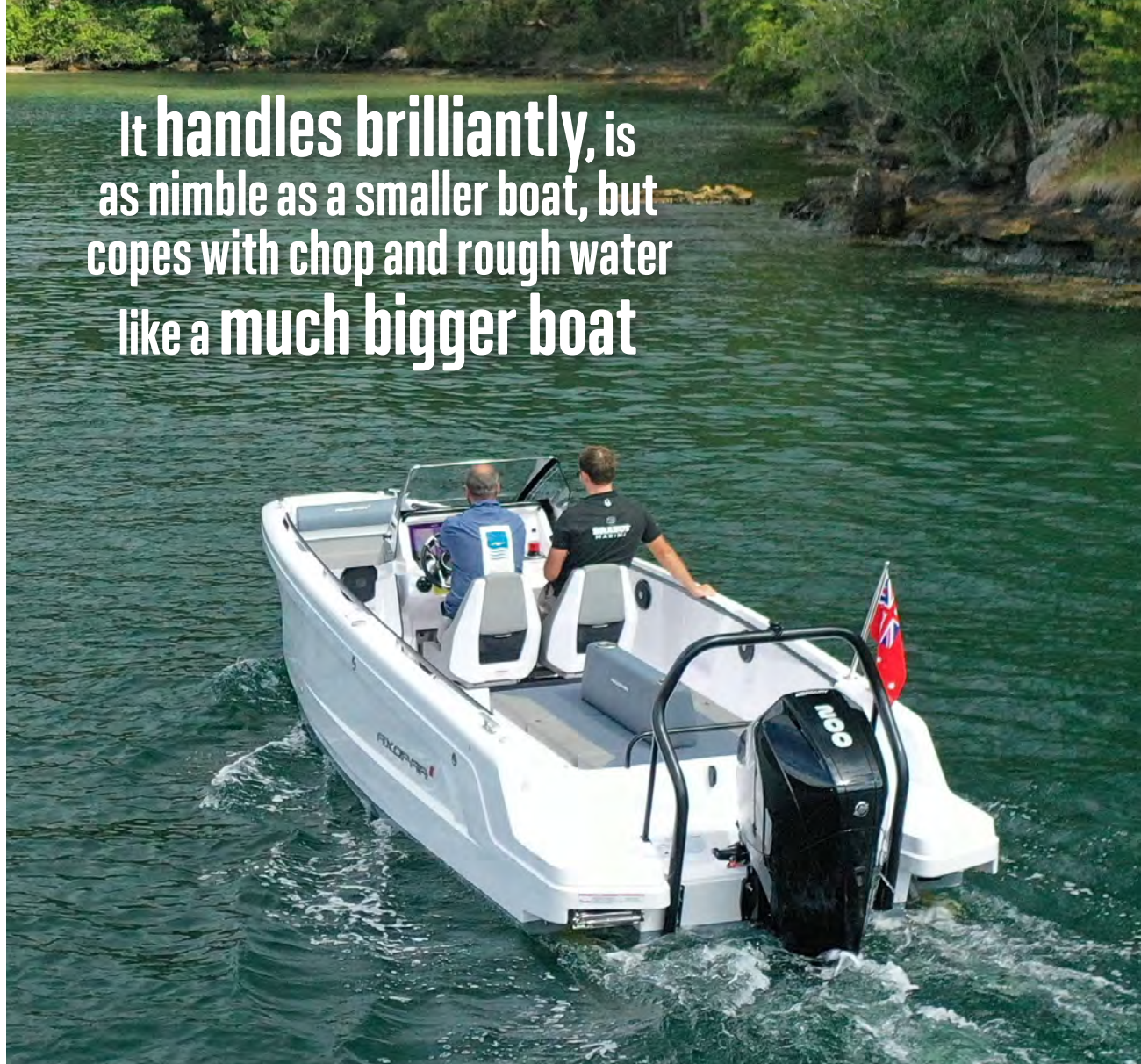
Strapped to the back is a 200hp Mercury, the maximum for this boat, and while it delivers a quick 40-knots-plus (74km/h) flat out, it is the hull's ability to literally slice through waves that impresses the most. The steering is direct and immediate with any input from the driver. Pull the throttle back and it almost feels pedestrian, such is the handling.

This is a boat designed to be driven fast. Cornering is impressively sports car-like with a comfortable bed-in from the boat as you turn, and little to no slip from the hull as you power out. Trim the engine down as you go into a turn and it holds on even better. It simply will not let go. It is agile and spirited, with the smooth and direct steering simply adding to the experience.

It feels like there is a symbiotic relationship between the helm and handling of the Axopar 22 almost unlike any other boat I have driven,



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save for the locally made Force 24XB. The driver has full visibility in the driving position, a must at these speeds. You can go for the sleek look while seated or fold the acrylic windscreen up for extra protection when standing. Both positions are comfortable with all the controls in easy reach. There is even a small piece of acrylic down at shin height either side of the console to stop the wind wrapping around it.

UNIQUE DAYBOAT

The competitive set for the Axopar includes seven-metre luxury RIBs and European dayboats. It is fair to say though, that the Axopar brand has a unique appeal.

The 22 Spyder certainly carries forward the performance Axopar has become known for. It handles brilliantly, is as nimble as a smaller boat, but copes with chop and rough water like a much bigger boat. It is an interesting dichotomy.

The Axopar 22 Spyder sits at the pointy end of the seven-metre luxury boat market and does not quite reach the broad audience objective, but, given how many Axopar 24 and 28s have been sold in Australia, I have no doubt the Axopar 22 will continue that strong selling tradition as well. 

AXOPAR 22 SPYDER

LOA:	7.2m
Beam:	2.23m
Draught:	0.8m
Weight (dry):	1200kg
Fuel capacity:	230lt
Power (as tested):	200hp Mercury outboard
Persons:	7
Price from:	\$134,900
Price as tested:	\$178,489
More information:	Eyachts, tel (02) 9979 2443.
Web:	eyachts.com.au

Above: Nothing like a 200hp Merc, good for 40 knots-plus, to get the heart racing.



Watch the video at
clubmarine.com.au