

Smartwave 4200



Kiwi-made Smartwave delivers a smarter way of fishing with its no-fuss, no worries, super strong, poly-plastic hull. Test report James Hill, photos by Baitbox.

If you think tinnies are pretty fuss-free then you haven't checked out the Smartwave! These polyethylene boats really are the 'smart way' to travel if you have no time for maintenance and just want fuss-free, fun boat fishing. We've seen poly-plastic boats before but this Kiwi model takes the concept to new heights with an attractive, practical, semi gull-wing design that rides beautifully and delivers brilliant stability. Best of all, the Smartwave gives you lots of room to fish or just have fun with the family.

These boats feature a tough, durable construction that's UV stable and will therefore stand up to decades of Aussie sun. The colour is right through the

skin so there's no such thing as fading colour, or need to repaint. You simply buy, use and forget about it.

So why aren't more boat builders using this wonder material? Good question because we've had this technology around for at least four decades. However, the problem is the set-up cost for just one boat mould is super expensive, and dedicated to just one design. They need massive production run-ons to be business viable so they tend to be restricted to small dinghies, canoes or paddle boards.

Early models of polyethylene boats were also pretty heavy and prone to degraded, or deform in sunlight. However, all these issues have been addressed in the modern Smartwave, which has the latest polyethylene technology plus a foam-cored between the inner and outer skins.

The Smartwave 4200 tested here weighs 220kg which is comparable to a conventional fibreglass hull and not much more than equivalent of alloy boat of about 190kg. On the positive side the Smartwave is softer, quieter



riding in the water and feels much more stable than most tinnies. And Smartwave are naturally buoyant to the point they really are 'unsinkable' and therefore very safe.

Kiwi fishos love the Smartwave because the foam-cored poly plastic hull is warmer on the butt in their chilly climate. My guess is they'll be equally popular in the cold climes of Tasmania or our Snowy Mountain lakes!

And Smartwave are super tough. Knocks and scratches just don't bother these polyethylene boats and they can literally be driven onto a concrete ramp without a bother. You will get scratches on the surface but these can be sanded papered out – if you are bothered about the cosmetics.

The Smartwave range covers a number of models from the small car-topper style SW 2400 to the SW 3500, the SW4200 which we are testing here. All are produced in the Smartwave factory in New Zealand and exported worldwide to destinations as far away as the UK and Europe. They were recently introduced to Australia and have been enjoying a growing following here especially amongst bay fishermen and water commuters.

Recently I had the pleasure of sampling my first Smartwave through NSW dealer Hunts Marine of Sydney. This is currently the top-selling model and it's not hard to see when you see the roomy interior and capacity to carry five adults!

Powered by a single Evinrude 40hp ETEC with electric start/tilt/trim this is a really nice rig for running around the bay and doing a bit of bottom bashing, or lure casting.

The interior is also flexible enough to suit family and general fun boating on estuaries and lakes.

The hull features a developed Vee that is semi-gull-wing and therefore soft

riding without being too deep drafted. This means it can slip into shallow waters but still handle choppy waters out on the bay.

Built to handle the harsh environments of New Zealand, the Smartwave boats can take a real hammering beyond what you'd expect of an alloy or fibreglass boat. With a thick outer and inner skin with solid foam cavity the Smartwave are noticeably quieter on the water under way. With high stability they feel very safe.

The SW4200 is the latest model and we recently tested her on Botany Bay with NSW agent, Hunts Marine of Sydney.

Fitted with an electric tiller Evinrude 40hp ETEC and trailer, this boat sells for \$15,390, however, Hunts Marine also sells it with a 30hp Suzuki 2-stroke and trailer for just \$9890 if you want a cheaper package.

Design: The SW4200 was only introduced to the Australian market last summer. It's a nice size boat for the recreational fisho as it measures 4.3m

in overall on a 1.93m beam width and 58cm hull depth.

Hull form is a mix of traditional variable Vee bottom and a gull-wing. It's a nice combination and gives you an effective 16.5 degree transom deadrise, which is a bit higher than most tinnies.

Combined with moderate freeboard and plenty of bow flare this makes the Smartwave ride well in choppy waters and track nicely running down-sea.

The hull comes easy to the plane due to the roll-over 'gull-wing' chines and at same time be able to slip over sand shoals at high tide because of the moderate draft.

This is the base version with tiller steer motor, front and rear thwart seats and removable esky seat/fish box in the middle. However, there's also a centre console model as well with motor cable loom tubes already fitted.

With its flat internal floor and moulded conduits this is a very clean looking craft. The moulded interior is enhanced by a carpeted floor insert and stylish two-tone swab cushions that snap down and have pull-straps. The whole boat is designed for easy

cleaning after a day's fishing – and that's what we want to hear these days when we're all so busy!

The SW4200 comes with grab rails, rod holders and even a pair of drink holders. It's a simple but clean layout that also gives you a large enough for'ard seat to double as a casting platform, whilst the flat floor also suits modern, fast paced lure-fishing.

Whilst poly construction is something we don't see every day, it's quite sophisticated and allows boats to be built in large numbers without a lot of labour involved.

Basically, liquid material goes into a dedicated metal mould using a rotational process. The result is a strong, single-piece hull with no joins that can leak! The hull material is naturally buoyant but the craft becomes even stronger and more unsinkable with a foam core added. So, the Smartwave would float even if cut in half!

All new Smartwave models are put through stringent testing procedures including a drop, float and destruction



test so they meet the internationally accepted CE certification standards.

With a hull a weight of 220kg you are looking at a loaded trail weight of about 550kg-620kg with a single axle unbraked trailer. This keeps the Smartwave within the tow limits of small cars like the Mazda 3 (900kg).

Admittedly it's getting a bit heavy and big for roof-topping however it will be

ideal for light trailer work especially in off ramp and beach launches.

I might mention that polyethylene boats have a great reputation for not fouling up as easily as other craft and this is good news if you want to leave the boat in the water for any length of time.

Performance: Back in autumn we took the Smartwave for a spin on the quiet waters of Botany Bay. First up I was impressed by the interesting shape of the SW4200 and its extended landing steps either side of the motor that provides extra buoyancy as well as faster acceleration onto the plane.

Noticeably, the boat came very quickly and easily onto the plane and ran along quietly and smoothly. Immediately you notice the superb quietness of the hull through the water and it sure enhances your enjoyment. Whether this also makes the Smartwave a better stealth fishing machine I don't know. However, I always believe if a boat is quieter through the water you must be improving your chances!

Underway it was hard to fault the handling of this Kiwi interloper. She ran smoothly through turns and cut back over boat wash real easy. The extra weight seems to dampen the bumps and make for a pretty comfortable ride. So that's all good.

I've heard that back-wash was a problem on the smaller SW3500 model but I didn't experience that with this bigger SW4200 model. It's a great all round craft and running a long-shaft motor means you get less splash back at the transom.

Some might think the Smartwave isn't knocking out the speeds you would expect from 40hp but the trade off of smoothness and stability really makes any speed loss worth it.

A console model would be great but I personally like the tiller-steering model because it follows the KISS principle and really maximises interior room for fishing. It's also the cheaper option, especially when it comes time to repower.



It goes without saying the Smartwave is a very stable craft for stand-up fishing. We tested this by having me and John Hunt standing right at the sides. Our combined weight only produced a moderate heel confirming this is a pretty sure-footed craft.

So, I reckon the SW4200 is going to be a great craft for those times you want to go for a fish on your own. It's small enough for easy one-person handling and has the safety and stability to keep you out of trouble. However, note that under current laws in most states you will be required to wear a life-jacket when out there on your own as this model is under 4.8m length.

I really love the idea of a hull that doesn't require painting and, for that matter worry about chips and scratches. This means you can go fishing without worrying about getting her too close to the mangroves, or the rocks. You don't have to worry about fenders either so it's all pretty fuss-free.

Colour options on the Smartwave vary from off-white (pictured), light blue, dark blue, red, grey and green. You might go for the grey or green for stealth fishing but personally, I love the off-white because it looks good.

Overall, we found the Smartwave quite comfortable in small bay chop and certainly it seems quite a safe boat for operation in typical estuary fishing situations we have on the east coast. The carpeted floor is a great feature and a nice touch in what is otherwise a plastic boat.





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Power: The Smartwave SW4200 is rated for single, long-shaft motors of 30-50hp and certainly gave us quite nice speed results with an Evinrude 40hp ETEC.

We found this bigger motor not only gave us the better overall performance but has the convenience of an electric start plus tilt and trim. The latter is a huge benefit in getting the best out of the boat and to my way of thinking well worth paying the extra dollars.

Performance figures with the 40hp ETEC were as follows:

3500rpm	16 knots
4500rpm	24 knots
5500rpm	26 knots

These are pretty good all round speeds for a boat this size being used on close coastal and estuary waters. We were carrying a moderate load of two people and a heavy safety pack so they are pretty realistic speeds.

Would you want to go faster? Perhaps you might in situations of remote fishing with long stretches of water to reach your destination. In that case I'd definitely go for the 50hp size motor but otherwise stick to the 40hp or 30hp motor package.

The boat doesn't have an in-built fuel tank and so comes standard with a portable 25-litre tank that fits into a dedicated space moulded into the rear seat thwart. In most cases this provides sufficient range for daily outings, however, if you were exploring further afield you'd take a spare 22-litre tank.

Deck layout: In all respects the Smartwave is set up nicely for inshore boating and fishing. It comes standard with a bow roller, bow cleat and

self-draining moulded anchor well. You also get nice polished grab rails bow and stern plus moulded boarding steps at the transom.

The cushion seats at the bow and stern thwarts are recessed into the deck line and cover moulded storage bins. There's not a lot of stowage but

with the additional esky/seat in the middle of the boat you have enough for most purposes.

What the boat is missing over the tinnie equivalent is side stowage pockets plus an over-hang side deck. But frankly you don't miss these features with so much flat floor space.

If you the esky/kill box out there's a clear open floor space of 2.4m length and 1.5m wide which is more than enough for two anglers lure fishing, or three or four hand-lining.

There seems to be no provision for navigation lights but I'm sure these could be added at the dealer level depending on whether you needed them at all. In fact, the latest battery-operated navigation lights might be sufficient if you were only very occasionally doing night and early morning sessions.

Verdict: The Smartwave SW 4200 is a great entry level craft for anyone looking to get on the water fairly inexpensively this summer. I guess the craft with sophisticated Evinrude ETEC is starting to fall a little beyond the price point for some battler-fishos but it's really still pretty good value.

If you are trying to keep the cost down I'd be looking at matching the SW4200 with a cheaper 30hp or 40hp two-stroke and getting on the water under the \$10,000 mark including a sounder and some portable nav lights.

Whilst pricier than the tinnie equivalent the Smartwave SW4200 is a boat that will deliver the value long term. It's the sort of craft you buy for life and keep in the family. Buy it now, keep it with the on-site caravan and you'll have decades of fun with the family.

Hopefully we'll be looking at the smaller SW3500 at some stage and the bigger SW4800 that has been a real hit as a fishing runabout in her home country.

tbf



BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

Boat supplied with Evinrude 40hp ETEC with trim/tilt, single axle trailer, tie-downs, deluxe seat cushions, two rod holders, gunwale grab handles, cable conduit tube, under seat stowage compartments, drink holders and inshore safety gear. Price \$15,390 from Hunts Marine Sydney ph 02 9546 1324.

SPECIFICATION CHART

	Smartwave	Brooker	Quintrex	Polycraft	Savage
Brand	Smartwave	Brooker	Quintrex	Polycraft	Savage
Model	SW4200	410Adventurer	420Topender	410Challenger	435Piranha
Material	polyplastic	fibreglass	fibreglass	polyplastic	alloy
Style	open	console	open	open	open
Length	4.3m	4.2m	4.2m	4.1m	4.3m
Beam	1.9m	1.8m	1.8m	1.8m	1.8m
Rated power	50hp	40hp	40hp	50hp	40hp
Power as tested	Evinrude40	Yamaha30	Yamaha30	Yamaha40	Vortex40
Hull weight	220kg	210kg	197kg	295kg	295kg
Fuel capacity	portable	portable	portable	portable	50L

STAR RATING

Finish	★★★★★	Helm Set-up	★★
Fitout	★★	Fishability	★★★★★
Ride	★★★★★	Safety Features	★★★
Dryness	★★★★	Value for Money	★★★★★

*Data ESTIMATED by the TBF team when accurate information is unavailable. Maximum star rating 5 stars.

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