



story **CRAIG SCHIONNING**

Anyone familiar to boating realises how a good tender can make life on the water so much easier. Getting to and from your boat may seem like an arbitrary task that most people take for granted however over time the wrong tender starts to wear you down.



TOP: A 3.6m Ripple design built from a Gaboon plywood kit.

ABOVE LEFT: A Duflex foam 4.2m Ripple tender with a side steering console. This is the largest model in the range.

ABOVE RIGHT: The Ripple range have excellent carrying capacity due to generous internal space and inherent stability.



Depending on how and where you store your tender, this becomes the first hurdle to conquer. Regardless, if you have your dinghy in a rack or whether you cart your dinghy down to the water by car, weight is an important factor. A lightweight tender is also an advantage in many other ways, such as storing it on your boat, either on deck or on davits, or dragging up and down the beach when required. Weight also affects the performance whether rowing or under power determining the size of the engine

required. A lighter boat will plane quicker and more easily with less horsepower.

Let's face it, a tender is never big enough! The size of the mothership will usually determine the size of the tender. If stored on deck it must fit the space available and the same applies for the davits. This is where the weight becomes paramount because the tender needs to be able to be man handled onto deck, or not overload the davit assembly. A heavy tender can also affect the weight distribution of the mother ship so thought must be given to this.

Stability is another factor highly sought after in a tender. Monohull tenders can be unstable and a trap for any unsuspecting guests new to boating. Most people remember the iconic TV advert with a character saying "I know boats" before plunging clumsily into the water. However funny that may have seemed its not the sort of scenario a boat owner would like to experience with one of their visitors. Being able to step into a tender with confidence is the aim.

STABILITY IS ANOTHER FACTOR HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER IN A TENDER

Safety and stability go hand in hand so when in choppy conditions or worse its always comforting to know that you have the best possible chance of reaching your destination. Built-in floatation is also something every tender should have in case of capsize or being swamped.

At Spirited Designs we believe that our Ripple range of tender designs tick most of the required boxes to achieve one of the best tender designs available. Being a catamaran tender stability is guaranteed as is maximum internal space. It's been proven that these designs are so stable that a person can stand directly on the gunnel without a risk of flooding or capsize.

The fine-entry hulls are efficient at low or high speeds however are a planing hull design. The twin bows and hulls provide a very comfortable ride into even heavy chop. The tunnel between the hulls feed the



TOP: The Ripple building system when using the kit is quick and easy. An interlocking temporary building frame is included in the package to form the hull over.

ABOVE: A composite in-built fuel tank below the seat. Note the clear composite sight gauge in the front of the tank.

water through with a cushioning effect and internally this becomes a full-length seat. These designs are powered with a single outboard mounted centrally which by design has the advantage of when the engine is tilted up, the tender can be powered in shallow water not much deeper than its keels with the prop running in the tunnel between the hulls.

Built in positive buoyancy chambers maintain safety if ever swamped or capsized. Another feature included in this range is a good-sized foredeck with a dry locker below for storage of life jackets, fishing gear, tools etc. This locker is designed to be lockable for any valuables when leaving the tender, a very handy feature for the cruising yachtie. For those familiar with approaching the beach on a mono tender, this can be quite precarious if there is any swell or chop because the boat tends to broach to one side pivoting on its single keel. The Ripple with its twin bows and advantage of keeping the prop so high means that the boat can be powered straight up the beach with secure stability. Occupants



TOP: The Gaboon plywood kit process shown.

ABOVE: It's recommended to sheath the exterior of the hull with a light cloth for extra waterproofing and abrasion resistance.

ANOTHER FEATURE INCLUDED IN THIS RANGE IS A **GOOD-SIZED FOREDECK** WITH A DRY LOCKER BELOW FOR STORAGE OF LIFE JACKETS, FISHING GEAR, TOOLS ETC

don't even get their feet wet by stepping off the flat foredeck directly onto dry land. This is ideal for dropping off or picking up, the driver simply reverses off the beach without leaving the boat!

We're often asked how a cat tender tows behind the mother ship. This is another box ticked with the answer being very well. The position of the tow fitting is such that it lifts the bows and the design is proven to track well.

Since the release of the Ripple range of tenders in 2011 and strong sales, there has been many refinements made wherever possible with some custom projects specific to customer requirements. For example, to build on an already excellent concept, we have included features such as an in-built composite fuel tank, davit lifting fittings, composite built-in rod holders, beaching wheels, all-round fender strip etc. All of these extras add the 'polish' to an already good tender and ensure the best experience possible when using your tender.

The lightweight feature comes from light strong material and construction techniques. The lightest option being foam core however this comes at the highest cost so there are other material options such as plywood keeping the build cost lower.

There are three ways to order, the first is to purchase the plans only. This option allows the builder to choose and source his desired material. The plans provide the builder with all the details required to develop out his parts and carry out construction. The second way to order is to purchase the plan and kit package from us which includes the entire package as a kit system. Part of this a computer-cut build frame to form the hull over. If building yourself is not your thing, we can organise to have the boat fully built for you.

Our office provides unlimited building support to our DIY customers for peace of mind for the duration of their project. Some of our Ripple customers have chosen this DIY project as introduction to boatbuilding in preparation for a larger project.

In conclusion, some may feel that we are overstating the importance of a good tender but the ones who feel that way maybe haven't yet experienced what it's like to have a good tender!



The 4.2m Ripple tender underway, this vessel fitted with a 20hp outboard.

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**SPIRITED
DESIGNS**

For more information on the Ripple range of designs please visit:
www.spiriteddesigns.com.au

www.boatcraft.com.au/shop

Buy on line and your purchase can be delivered to anywhere in Australia.

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