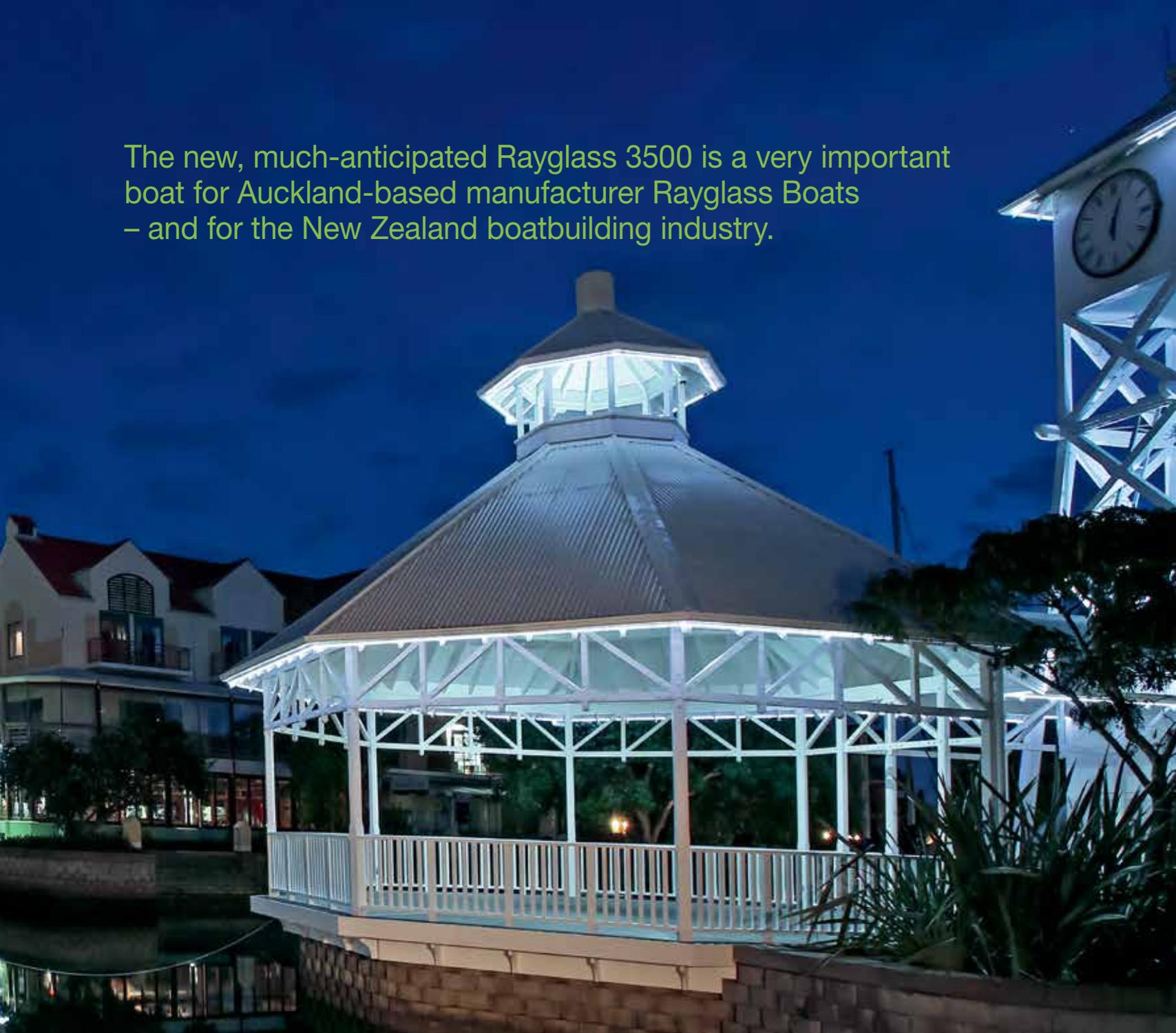


SHARE *the* DREAM

Words by **John Eichelsheim** Photos by **Bryce Taylor**





The new, much-anticipated Rayglass 3500 is a very important boat for Auckland-based manufacturer Rayglass Boats – and for the New Zealand boatbuilding industry.

She's the first full-blown production launch from a New Zealand boatbuilder since the demise of Genesis Boats, although Rayglass produced a number of its semi-production 4000 model.

The Rayglass 3500 is a response to pent-up demand, says Rayglass Sales Director Scott Little, who, with other key staff at Rayglass, had considerable input into the model.

"I'm like a lot of our customers: I was looking for a boat around this size but was feeling frustrated by what's out there – older secondhand vessels or imported boats. At Rayglass we felt the time was right to develop and build a Kiwi boat for New Zealanders and the 3500 is our take on that."

GREAT UPTAKE

There has been a clear strategy getting the 3500 to market. "We wanted it to be absolutely right and there were some challenges to overcome for us and our suppliers in gearing up for full-scale production. All good things take time, and we are confident we've hit the mark," says Scott.

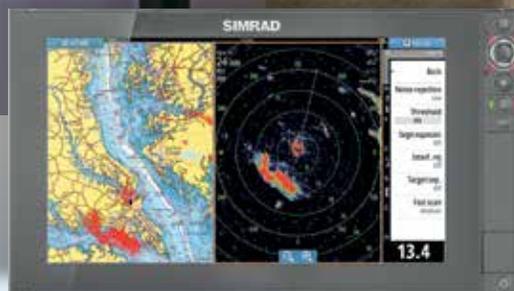
"After years of work, research and development, Rayglass can offer the local market a totally modern, practical design with, we believe, plenty of appeal for Kiwi boaters," he adds. "We learned from the 4000, especially around better use of space, taking what was good and incorporating it, and making sure we used proven, well-tested technology for the new boat."

The new Rayglass has certainly caused a stir with the New Zealand boating public. With four 3500s already delivered and 30-odd boats in its order book, the company and its suppliers are gearing up to reduce lead times and cater for strong demand.

The boat we reviewed is hull number four. Subsequent 3500s will share this boat's specs. It's one of four on order for Ownaship, the boat share company with a long relationship with Rayglass, and is already sold to owners who each have a sixth share in the vessel.

EASY LIVING

This new boat is a handsome beast. There's enough Rayglass DNA so that it's instantly recognisable, but they have been clever with the styling, which is modern and edgy without being over the top.



Electronics are from Simrad. Radar and 3D sonar are options.

The layout is clever too, the Rayglass design team spending a lot of time and effort getting it right, including full-size mock-ups.

Development started with the living spaces – the saloon and galley – with everything else worked around them. This has resulted in a generous-sized, practical living area, enhanced by plenty of head height, large windows and light, bright décor.

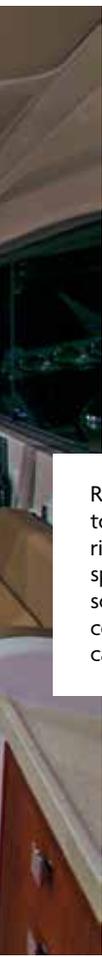
The saloon works well socially; sightlines through the large windows are excellent, sitting or standing, and the gelcoat surfaces, marine vinyl ceiling panels and high-quality upholstery fabrics should be easy to live with.

Sliding roof hatches let in light and air and LED lighting illuminates the space at night. Optional diesel heating has been

added, extending the boating season, while an inverter, two large house batteries and roof-mounted 1,500W solar panels sustain the use of domestic appliances. The vessel is also well-supplied with 12-volt and USB outlets, including the cabins.

Rayglass enlisted a female perspective when choosing the colour palette and also for the saloon layout. With neutral colours





Rayglass was determined to get the living spaces right: the saloon is spacious with a very social layout, the helm is comfortable and the boat can sleep up to seven.



and warm teak trim, the theme is 'coastal' or 'beach house,' says Scott. Owners have a choice of two upholstery shades: the light tan of the review vessel or a darker grey.

The 3500's interior has a proper saloon table with wrap-around seating. There's another bench seat on the starboard side and a good-sized L-shaped galley aft. Rayglass has extended the aft counter into the cockpit, which is great for serving food and drinks and allows room for a large Nova Kool fridge-freezer under the bench. There's an optional bar fridge under the helm seat.

Bi-fold doors and a large swing-up window that secures under the rear cockpit overhang really open the saloon to the cockpit. It's designed for outdoor living, with the roof



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Vision and Innovation

Stress-free boating

The new Rayglass 3500 is latest addition to Ownaship's fleet – a company that offers you an on-the-water lifestyle without the hassle of owning a boat.

Based at Auckland's Westhaven, Ownaship is a boat-sharing company geared to simplifying boating for time-hungry people and making luxury boating affordable.

It operates 12 vessels – powerboats and yachts – ranging from 7m to 17m in size. Clients buy shares in the boats and receive an allocated number of days for using them. The days are spread across the year, and include periods in peak season and holidays.

Most of the vessels live in the Orams drystack – larger boats are in nearby berths. This accessibility feature that makes using the boats particularly easy. Customers arrive to find the boat in the water, fully-fuelled and ready to go.

As a walk-on-walk-off service, Ownaship boats are pre-checked for every departure and equipped with fresh linen, beach towels, crockery and cutlery. At the end of the day, the vessel is delivered back to the Orams jetty or berth. Staff clean, valet and service the vessel in preparation for the next booking.

The operation eliminates maintenance, insurance, towing and storage issues – effectively allowing shareholders to enjoy a boating lifestyle without the associated demands of owning a boat.

An online booking system simplifies the reservation process.

HOW MANY DAYS?

A sixth option gives a shareholder an allocation of 57 days per annum, while a 10 percent share option equates to 33 days. As many boat owners will attest, that's a lot more boating time than most people use. Subject to availability, shareholders also have unlimited 'standby days'. If the boat hasn't been booked, it's available on a first-come-first-served basis.

For those keen to entertain aboard or take a rest from passage-making responsibilities, skippers are available. And for those mildly intimidated by marina manoeuvres, valet parking is on hand.

If your boating interests change or you want to swap to a bigger/smaller boat, your share can also be sold. Ownaship will endeavour to find a replacement shareholder through its marketing programme, or the seller can find a buyer. The company takes care of all the legal work and technicalities to complete the transaction.

And for those days where bad weather/unforeseen circumstances stymies a booking, there is no penalty if users cancel the booking no later than 6.00pm the day before. The day is credited back to the shareholder's allocation.

**For more information contact Simon Barker:
0800 696 744 or email simon@ownaship.co.nz**

extending well aft to provide shade and shelter. There's useful underfloor stowage and a transom BBQ under a GRP moulded cover, accessed from the wide swim platform.

The rear lounge has a reversing backrest, so you can relax facing into the cockpit or out over the swim platform. Cockpit lockers on either side also serve as steps up onto the side decks and as seats with the addition of upholstered squabs.

A typically practical Rayglass moulded bait table mounts on the stainless-steel rail on the swim platform, which also supports a tender. The dive ladder is on the port side opposite the stainless-steel transom door, there's a large live well set into the swim platform floor and a cockpit shower complementing the saltwater washdown.

GOOD BALANCE

Cockpit and saloon work well together, offering a nice balance between inside and outside space. At 11.5m overall, the Rayglass 3500 is not a big boat, but that's not the impression you get when step aboard. It's designed to fit a 12m berth, or a dry stack, but it feels like a 40-footer from the inside looking out.





WATCH IT! ON YOUR PHONE

To watch the video on your phone, install a QR-Code scanner app (Apple or Android). Many are free. Launch the app, hover it over the QR-code, and a link to the video will open automatically.

VIRTUAL TOUR



VIDEO REVIEW



Sleeping accommodation is generous too. With the engines aft under the cockpit, the master cabin berth extends across the beam and under the saloon sole. The berth has a comfortable queen-size mattress. There's standing room for dressing and a useful seat as well.

The second cabin is in the bow, with a double berth and the option of a bunk-style third berth. Along with the saloon, which provides another double berth when the saloon table is lowered and the squab fitted, the 3500 can comfortably sleep up to seven adults. The shared bathroom is fully-moulded with a separate shower cubicle. Like the rest of the Rayglass interior, it's simple, light and bright.

The 3500 has a new moulded liner encompassing the cockpit, saloon, cabins and bathroom, a first for a New Zealand production launch. This will bear dividends in terms of ongoing production costs, but it doubtless took considerable time, effort and money to tool. However, with a moulded interior liner, except for a few minor personalised details, what you see is what you get. Fortunately, what you get is quite a lot – the 3500 is certainly a step up from the Rayglass 4000.

PERFORMANCE CRUISER

With a well-proven, soft-riding hull, it's not surprising the 3500 goes very well. Twin Mercruiser 260TDI diesels provide motive power via solid Bravo 2 legs. These are lightweight 260hp V6 turbo-diesels developed from a Volkswagen/Audi powerplant. They propel the 7.5-tonne vessel to a top speed of 35 knots. Cruise speed is 22-25 knots with the engines burning around 30-35 litres of diesel per side.

The engines are accessed through the hydraulically-lifted cockpit sole. Once the floor is up, there's superb access to the engines and also the automatic and emergency bilge pumps. There's a third bilge pump forward and high water alarms fore and aft.

The Rayglass is a pleasure to drive, both seated and standing. Controls are fly-by-wire, the helm seat with its fold-down armrests and adjustable bolster is comfortable and there's great visibility through the flat windscreen panels. Three robust wipers keep the windscreens clear of spray.

Electronics comprise a 16-inch Simrad MFD with a 1kW transducer as standard and the option of 3D sonar and Radar. Remote solenoid battery isolation switches beside the helm are a nice feature, doing away with having to lift the hatch aft to power up the boat.

Shore power is standard and there's a six-speaker Fusion entertainment system. Anchor duty falls to a 35-pound Manson anchor with 25m of chain and 100m of warp, raised and lowered by a Maxwell capstan controlled from the helm.

The 3500's fine entry cuts through the chop and the boat responds nicely to helm. The transition onto the plane is smooth, trim tabs keeping the

“It’s designed to fit a 12m berth, or a dry stack, but it feels more like a 40-footer from the inside looking out.”

bow down, and the 3500 is fun to throw into the turns, which it carves with aplomb. At cruising speed, bringing the tabs up a bit gives the most comfortable ride and best fuel efficiency, but even when they are right down there’s no tendency for the 3500 to bow steer.

Although it gives the impression of being a large boat from the inside, the 3500’s modest dimensions mean it’s easy to manage come docking time, aided by a Side Power bow thruster and twin engines.

GENUINE LIFESTYLE ALTERNATIVE

The Rayglass 3500 offers New Zealand boaters a locally-produced vessel designed with Kiwi-style boating in mind. Rayglass wanted the 3500 to offer a lifestyle alternative to a seaside bach or motorhome. It’s certainly an attractive option: smart looking, well-built, nicely finished and well-priced. It ticks a whole lot of boxes for Kiwi boaters, whether families, couples or partners sharing a boat. **B**

Rayglass 3500

- ▶ **loa** 11.5m
- ▶ **beam** 3.85m
- ▶ **draft** approx 0.7m
- ▶ **weight** 7,500kg
- ▶ **construction** moulded GRP
- ▶ **engines** 2 x Mercruiser TDI 260hp
- ▶ **fuel** 800 litres
- ▶ **water** 400 litres
- ▶ **cruising speed** 23-25 knots
- ▶ **max speed** 35 knots
- ▶ **packages from** \$POA
- ▶ **boat supplied by** Ownaship

