



## WEATHER CONDITIONS

Wind: Calm

Sea: Calm river conditions



Whittley's CR2080 and CR2180 cruisers have been relaunched to celebrate the life of founding father Jim Whittley.

# FITTING TRIBUTE

Jim Whittley, the founder of Australia's Whittley boatbuilding dynasty, sadly passed away last year. However, the family tradition lives on, and to celebrate the life of the family patriarch, who together with brother Ossie first began building boats in 1953, Whittley has released limited edition "tribute" versions of its CR2080 and CR2180 cruisers. To this end, the manufacturer and dealers have dropped their margins and repackaged the boats to offer a pair of value-packed pocket rockets that hit all the right notes.

*TrailerBoat's* Bernard Clancy took the Whittley CR2080 for a run when it was released back in July of 2009, and he was impressed with what he found. "I'm still astonished by how Whittley can squeeze so much into a 5.5m hull and still retain so much open space, especially in the cockpit," he wrote at the time. "There doesn't appear to be a cubic centimetre that doesn't have a use, and a practical one at that," he added.

I can only agree. This compact cruiser has all the traditional bells and whistles of a classy overnighter, but it also has plenty of cockpit and cabin space for loads of fun on the water. It's a modern design with a classy finish and an exceptional layout that should appeal to everyone.

## IT'S ALL COMING BACK

I recently got to sample both the CR2080 and the CR2180 on the Goulburn River at Nagambie, in Victoria's picturesque Goulburn Valley.

I should mention that I used to sell Whittley boats back in the early '90s, and my perception of Whittley products has changed in the years since. Whittley always delivered beautiful-looking packages but they were often let down by their roughwater performance. Since then, the Whittley design team has taken some big steps to eliminate these issues by using the latest in CAD design techniques, and incorporating some cutting-edge technology to deliver refined packages now entirely suitable for multi-purpose boating.

The CR2080 is 6.13m long (LOA), and you could be forgiven for thinking it's been made to replace the older but extremely popular Monterey. In actual fact, it was

Photos: John Willis and Whittley Family archive

**TRAILERBOAT RATES THE WHITTLEY 2180 / 2080**

1 Suitability for purpose	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 Innovation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3 Design and layout	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4 Quality of finish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 Handling and ride	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Stability at rest	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7 Ergonomics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 Standard equipment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9 Value for money	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10 X-Factor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>OVERALL</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**SIX COOL THINGS WE LIKE ABOUT THESE BOATS**

1. They're Australian-made and designed specifically for use by Australian families.
2. Each boat comes with a limited edition plaque signed by both Neville and Steve Whittle, with a photo of Jim and one of his old original Whittle Boats.
3. The limited edition decal and hull gelcoat design.
4. The Fusion entertainment system.
5. The boats are factory fitted on top of an Australian-built Mackay trailer.
6. The multitude of standard niceties we expect from a Whittle.

The tribute CR2080 in full swing on a gorgeous autumn day on central Victoria's Goulburn River — time to open her up and blow out the cobwebs!

developed more as the new Voyager or Impala, the Monterey's very successful little brothers. While those older offerings were state-of-the-art some 20 years ago, I always thought their internal layout seemed a little poky. That's not the case with the new models — like Bernard, I simply can't see how you could hope to fit more into a boat while retaining such a

**DOING IT IN STYLE**

While I'm calling my recent trip to Nagambie a boat test, it was actually more of a great day out with top company, doing exactly what these boats were designed for — cruising in style.

The larger CR2180 accompanied us on our river sojourn to the nearby Tahbills Winery. This model is only slightly



**“Jim’s commitment to building quality family cruisers lives on in every Whittle boat.”**

roomy, user-friendly layout.

The CR2080 is available in both outboard and sterndrive formats. Our test boat was fitted with the MerCruiser 3.0lt, four-cylinder sterndrive with an Alpha 1 leg, and with 130hp, it delivered satisfying, even surprising performance. With a 19° deadrise and a 2.2m beam, the hull provided a good amount of lift. It actually looks and feels wider than 2.2m, and with three passengers onboard it reached a comfortable top-end speed of around 34kts (63kmh) at 4800rpm. It's a little noisy at WOT (wide open throttle) but that shouldn't be a problem unless plenty of family skiing is on the agenda.

larger than the CR2080 — it has an LO of 6.16m and a 2.3m beam — but the difference is quite noticeable. The CR2180 was fitted with the Volvo Penta 3.0lt (3.0GL) donk with an SX sterndrive unit. Its power and performance is impressive and the package handled beautifully both through turns and running over wakes on the river. However, it too was surprisingly noisy at high revs.

Pleasingly though, the noise factor at fast engine speeds was about my only criticism of both boats, other than a slight bow rise as the hull lifts out of the water and onto the plane at around 3000rpm. I imagine trim tabs would be worthwhile



# SHAPING THE WHITTLEY WHEEL

The founding father of Whittley boats, Jim Whittley, was a pioneer, an innovator and a true gentleman...

Over the years Australia has been blessed by many characters who have had the guts to get up and have a go. The Aussie boating industry has more than its fair share, and brothers Jim and Ossie Whittley, who began making timber cruisers in 1953, are up there with the best.

You have to take your hat off to the early pioneers of production trailerboats — the courageous and inventive people who first introduced fibreglass and aluminium, and the new techniques associated with them, over 50 years ago. In a short time the age-old traditions of boatbuilding were turned upside down, as moulds, jigs and chopper guns replaced block planes, dollies, and chisels.

After WWII the emerging space age ushered in a pace of life that demanded speed and excitement. Displacement hulls and sedate speeds gave way to planing hulls and horsepower. Outboard and inboard engines evolved from marinised lawn mower and truck engines to highly specialised performance powerplants.

This was the world of enterprising brothers, Jim and Ossie Whittley. They took their love of boating into the workshop in 1953, when Jim was just 21 years of age. They produced their first timber boats from a small shop in the Melbourne suburb of Bulleen, and then set about building models of all shapes and sizes.

However, Ossie's love for yachting saw him depart to follow that particular passion, leaving Jim to push on with the cruisers. Jim soon met his lifelong sweetheart, Aileen, and the two formed a bond that would spark a family powerboat dynasty — a dynasty that, three generations on, is showing no signs of losing momentum. To all who knew him, Jim Whittley was a true gentleman — for proof you need look no further than the outpouring of public tributes paid to Jim after his death, on March 12, 2010. His contribution to the Australian boating industry will not be forgotten.

Jim Whittley was also a pioneer when it came to new boating design and technology. He walked hand in hand with other great names such as Haines, Savage, Nichols (Cruisecraft), and the Caribbean's Spooner family. However, the Whittleys have always had a style all their own, with the guiding light of an unswerving commitment to quality.

When previously asked about his company's



origins, Jim was typically modest. "I think we were about the first in Australia to put a production wooden boat on a trailer," he said. "Then it became popular with the public, and the demand automatically came after that. There was never any great plan or any great intention; I suppose it just grew, rather like a tree."

## NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

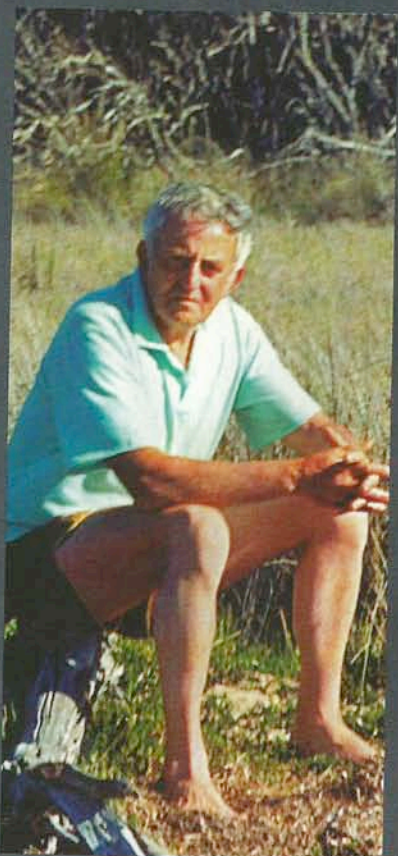
Some 30 years after building his first boat, Jim handed over the company's reins to sons Steven and Neville, and the success continued. Who could forget some of the early Whittley clinker skiboats, the sleek lines of the Cherokee, and the versatility of the cruising Fleetmaster, Cruisemaster, Monterey, Voyager and Impala?

As a fitting tribute, the Whittley family has honoured "Pa" with the release of these two very special packages. The CR2080 and CR2180 cruisers have been remodelled and repackaged to offer many premium Whittley benefits at a highly competitive price.

The following tribute from Alan Whittley, says it all. "My grandfather was a quality master craftsman, and a loving family man who always wanted to make his customers, friends, suppliers and family happy. We will remember Pa as a true gentleman; down to earth, honest and a hard-working man who was the builder of other people's dreams. Pa was the ultimate mentor and role model. We'd regularly talk about life and business; his input and thoughts helped us all grow. He used to often talk very highly about the boating industry and the people in it — even his competitors — and he didn't have a bad word to say about anyone. He was the best, most loving grandfather we could have wished for."

Above: After humble beginnings in a small factory in Bulleen, growing demand for Whittley's "plastic fantasies" saw the company move to new premises in Briar Hill, in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs.

Below: Gentleman Jim lives on through his children and grandchildren, and Whittley boats. Jim was instrumental in shaping the modern face of the Aussie boat industry, and he's commonly regarded as the father of Aussie trailerable cruisers.



# WHITLEY CR2080SD



## HOW MUCH?

Price as tested: .....\$49,999 with dual-axle Mackay trailer and 3.0lt 135hp MerCruiser excl. dealer / statutory costs

## GENERAL

Type: ..... Moderate-vee cruiser  
Material: ..... Fibreglass  
Length: ..... 6.13m  
Beam: ..... 2.2m  
Weight: ..... 827kg (standard boat weight configuration)  
Deadrise: ..... 19°

## CAPACITIES

People: ..... 6  
Rec. HP: ..... 135  
Max. HP: ..... 150  
Fuel: ..... 100lt

## ENGINE

Make/model: ..... MerCruiser 3.0 TKS  
Type: ... Naturally-aspirated, four-cylinder, 135hp four-stroke  
Weight: ..... 288kg (with Alpha 1 drive)  
Displacement: ..... 3.0lt  
Gear ratio: ..... 2.00  
Propeller: ..... Alloy

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Web: [www.jvmarine.com.au](http://www.jvmarine.com.au)

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Tel: (03) 8339 1800  
Web: [www.whitleymarine.com](http://www.whitleymarine.com)

## TO OWN THIS BOAT

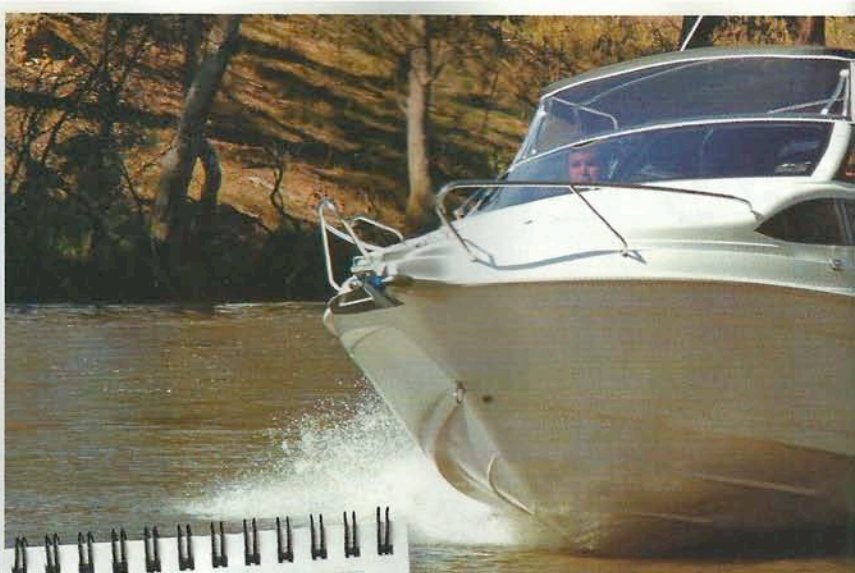
Price as tested .....\$49,999  
Weekly Repayment TAP .....\$142.57  
Deposit .....\$12,499.75  
Final Repayment (%=\$) .....\$12,499.75  
Term (months) ..... 60

\* Customer rate is 8.99% comparison rate is 9.44% for all of the above payments. See rear of magazine for conditions.



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### Dragging the chain...

- x Noisy at high speed
- x Backrest mounts a little fiddly
- x Slight bow rise on takeoff

additions to stabilise the load and offset wind and weight. They would also give a slightly lower planing speed for cruising, but we certainly had no need for them on the Goulburn River or Lake Nagambie.

Both these Jim Whitley tributes are easy on the eye. They have beautiful modern lines and functional mouldings that integrate seamlessly with the overall package. The standard high quality Whitley finish, combined with simple but stylish graphics, completes the picture.

The moulded bowsprit retains the plough anchor and electric anchor winches are available as an option. Access to the bow is quite reasonable and there's a separate rope locker to keep wet and muddy robes away from the plush cabin interiors.

Like all Whitley cruisers, the exterior may look the goods but it's the interior that makes the boat. They present an inviting blend of polar white gelcoat on the internal mouldings, accented with soft, plush cabin upholstery and a quality

head lining, plus thick marine carpets and premium, thickly-padded seating and trim. The emphasis on black and white is complemented by fawn and grey accents. Overall, these cabins are both comfortable and inviting.

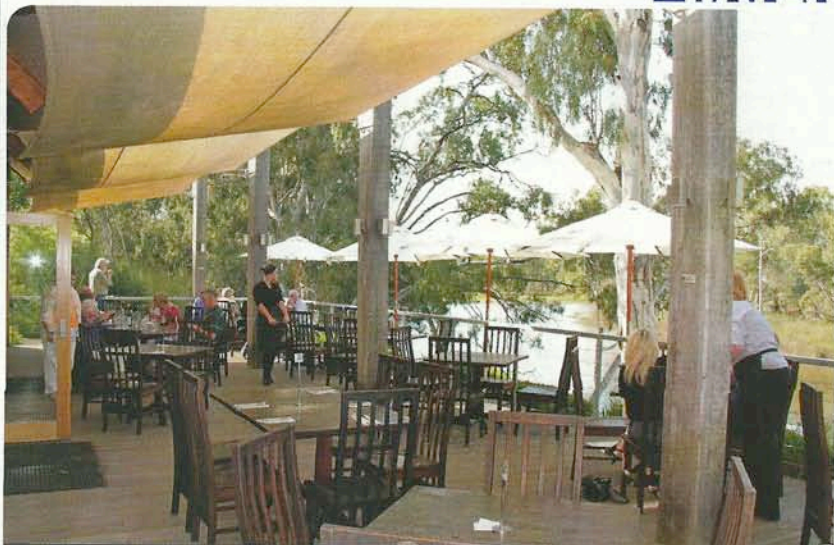
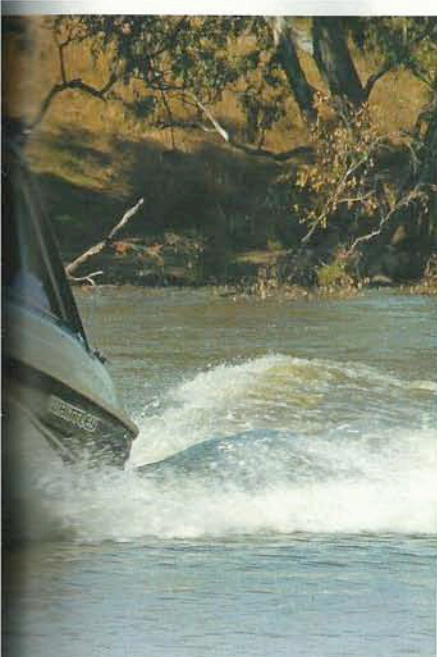
Each has all the usual niceties such as a sink, stove, hot water system and a very practical V-berth with fold-up infill. An LCD TV with DVD player combines with thumping Fusion boom boxes to round out the electronic entertainment options.

The helm position is reasonably comfortable, with the upright seating position affording excellent visibility for this style of cruiser. The full set of analogue engine gauges are easy to read and you don't have to be a computer geek to harness all the various instrument functions.

Everything is in the right place and the cosmetic presentation is first class. I also liked the safety glass windscreens which are formed into the moulding, rather than simply being bolt-on extras. Personally, however, I'd opt for a flush-mounted depthsounder / GPS / chartplotter combo, no matter what sort of activity is on the agenda — I felt naked without it (thanks, now I can't get the thought of a stark naked John Willis out of my mind — Ed).

## TAKE A SEAT

The combination seat boxes are nothing short of state-of-the-art. They house the sink under the driver's seat and the optional stove unit under the passenger's seat. They also provide footrests and storage. Neither boat has a full passenger bulkhead; in its place the CR2180 has a recess for a portable cooler at the end of the V-berth, while the CR2080 has a larger return on the dashboard with



By road or by water, don't forget the Wetlands Café and Restaurant at Tahbilk Winery (and don't miss the rabbit pie). It's one of many great attractions in the Nagambie region.

## DESTINATION NAGAMBIE

Nagambie is one of those pretty little towns you generally drive through on the way to somewhere else, but it holds plenty of appeal for boaties.

Nagambie is a small community around 125km north of Melbourne on the Goulburn Valley Highway. It has numerous attractions for the traveller or holidaymaker, but it has particular appeal for boaties — especially those who also enjoy the odd splash of wine. This picturesque town is situated on the shores of the man-made Lake Nagambie, which runs off the mighty Goulburn River as it twists and turns on its way through the “food bowl” irrigation region of Victoria on its way to the Murray.

The town wraps either side of the highway and it has a surprising array of shops, restaurants, resorts and cafés, plus traditional country-style bakeries. It's a great watering hole for a break on a long journey, but it's even better if you take the time to stop over and explore its offerings. The parklands by the side of the highway are always beautifully maintained, with plenty of seating, pleasant views, clean facilities and picnic tables, as well as tons of easy parking — even for B-doubles and semis.

### ON THE WATER

However, it's Lake Nagambie and the Goulburn River that are the greatest attractions for the trailerboat brigade. For those with the energy, Lake Nagambie is also a major rowing centre, with large and well-defined competition courses. Anglers will share the waterways with PWCs, kayaks and skiboats both on the lake and the river, but that's not a problem — there's plenty of room for all.

Fishos can target a multitude of prey, including spiny freshwater crayfish, golden perch, redfin, trout or even mighty Murray cod. There are long deep sections, plenty of structure from fallen trees, bridges and jetties, plus inviting backwaters, sand pits and billabongs.

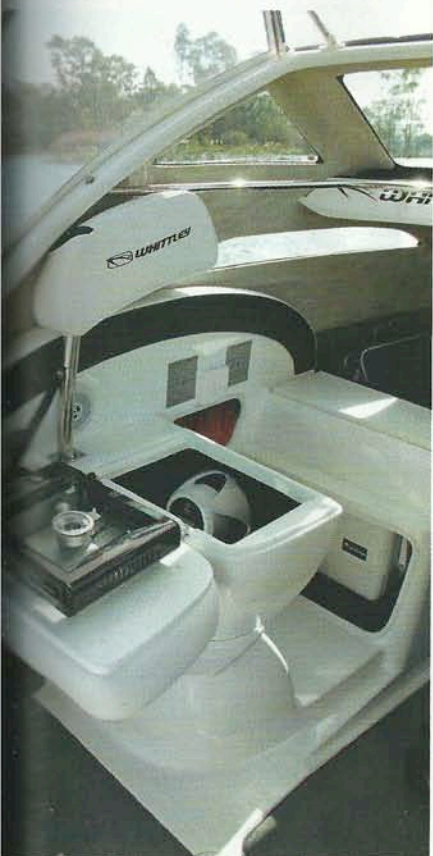
The river is easily accessed from the lake, and the region is serviced by a very good launching facility at the Nagambie Lakes Rowing Centre. The ramp is immediately adjacent to the beautiful Nagambie Lakes Leisure Centre, which offers a great range of accommodation, from lovely riverside spa cabins to camping or BYO caravans.

You just have to take the tour up river to the historic Tahbilk and Mitchelton Wineries, and plan a lunch on the waterfront balcony of the Wetlands Café. Try the rabbit pie, topped off with a chilled bottle of the local sauvignon blanc. I certainly did and I can't say I regretted it.

This is the land of plenty, and as far as food, wine and enjoyment in central Victoria go, Nagambie is the jewel in the crown. The quality of the local produce is sensational and the land-based activities are endless. There are old pubs, antiques, gardens, art galleries, museums, golf courses, mountain bike and dirt bike trails, horse riding and even skydiving — all within a hop, skip and a jump from Melbourne. Nagambie also lays claim to the best vanilla slice in Australia — now that's a big call!

Above: The deeper vee of the late-model Whitley cruisers will obviously see them over a bit more in tight turns, but it also makes for a softer ride and a more functional boat, without losing any stability.

Below: Whitley is a master of practical, attractive mouldings. The fold-away backrest is highly functional, and the hinged seat-base reveals the single-burner cooker. It's not a new idea but it's been done particularly well.



grabrail, enclosed dash area and a handy cargo-net-style storage pouch. The Porta-Potti is nicely hidden behind the driver's bulkhead and enclosed under the seat. There's good headroom (pardon the pun!) and a standard privacy curtain.

At the stern of these sterndrive models, we find a pair of removable rear quarter seats that give way to the full-width boarding platform. Whittley has also developed an optional extended swim platform with a stainless frame for rodholders, a baitboard or a barbeque. The combination of practical seating, plug-in tables, convertible seat modules, and plenty of storage leaves an open and uncluttered entertaining area in the cockpit, covered by a matching set of bimini-style full camper covers, also standard.

One of the key differences between the two models is that the CR2180 has full walkaround sidedecks, which are handy when mooring and also eliminate the need to tramp mud and sand through the cabin when entering via the bow. Up front the CR2180 gives you and your family loads more room to spread out, and perhaps watch a DVD on the Fusion TV.

Both boats are set up as trailerable camping boats that are ready for an extended weekend on the water. Come to think of it, they don't make a bad caravan for overnighting on your way to distant trailerboat locations.

Perhaps I'm saving the best for last in mentioning the pricing of these boats. Back in 1994 I was selling fully-fitted Monterey cruisers for \$42,990 with the four-cylinder engine, or \$47,990 with

With so much in this package it's hard to believe that there's still room to move. The helm is visually and ergonomically appealing with simple, no-fuss controls and gauges. The helm seat tilts back to reveal the kitchen sink. It had to be somewhere...

**PERFORMANCE**

**Tribute CR2180 Cruiser with 3.0lt Volvo Penta and SX sterndrive**  
 14kts (25.9kmh) @ 3100rpm (planing)  
 18kts (33.3kmh) @ 3200rpm (sits much better)  
 20kts (37.0kmh) @ 3500rpm (up and running well)  
 25kts (46.3kmh) @ 4000rpm (satisfying speed, no need to go any faster)  
 30kts (55.6kmh) @ 4600rpm (a bit noisy and floaty at WOT— but who goes this fast in a cruiser?)

**Tribute CR2080 Cruiser with 3.0lt MerCruiser and Alpha 1 sterndrive**  
 19kts (35.2kmh) @ 3100rpm (planing)  
 24kts (44.4kmh) @ 3800rpm (feels great)  
 28kts (51.9kmh) @ 4000rpm (let's go skiing!)  
 34kts (63.0kmh) @ 4800rpm (WOT)

the V6. Today Whittley is offering the CR2080 on a dual-axle Mackay trailer for a recommended retail price of \$49,990 (excluding dealer and statutory costs), while the CR2180 — with the larger 200hp V6 — has a recommended retail price of \$62,599.

These two limited edition models are both eminently fitting tributes to the late Jim Whittley, who was a pioneering father of trailerable cruising boats in this country. Although modern and sleek, the CR2080 and CR2180 follow in the footsteps of Jim's first cruiser, a wooden 18-footer built back in the early '50s. The shapes, styles and materials may have changed, but I'm pleased to see that Jim's commitment to building quality family cruisers still lives on in every Whittley boat. Ⓢ

**WHITTLEY 2180**



**HOW MUCH?**

Price as tested: \$59,999 with dual-axle Mackay trailer and 135hp Volvo Penta 3.0GL sterndrive excl. dealer / statutory costs (\$62,599 with V6 200hp Volvo Penta Volvo 4.3GI-200-R)

**GENERAL**

Type: ..... Moderate-vee cruiser  
 Material: ..... Fibreglass  
 Length: ..... 6.16m  
 Beam: ..... 2.33m  
 Weight: ..... 920kg (standard boat weight configuration)  
 Deadrise: ..... 19°

**CAPACITIES**

People: ..... 6  
 Rec. HP: ..... 200  
 Max. HP: ..... 200  
 Fuel: ..... 112lt

**ENGINE**

Make/model: ..... Volvo Penta 3.0GL  
 Type: ... Naturally-aspirated, four-cylinder, 135hp four-stroke  
 Weight: ..... 288kg (with VP SX drive)  
 Displacement: ..... 3.0lt  
 Gear ratio: ..... 1.97  
 Propeller: ..... Alloy

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 99 Freight Drive  
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**TO OWN THIS BOAT**

Price as tested (w/ 200hp Volvo Penta) \$62,599  
 Weekly Repayment TAP ..... \$178.17  
 Deposit ..... \$15,649.75  
 Final Repayment (%=S) ..... \$15,649.75  
 Term (months) ..... 60

\* Customer rate is 8.99% comparison rate is 9.35% for all of the above payments. See rear of magazine for conditions.



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