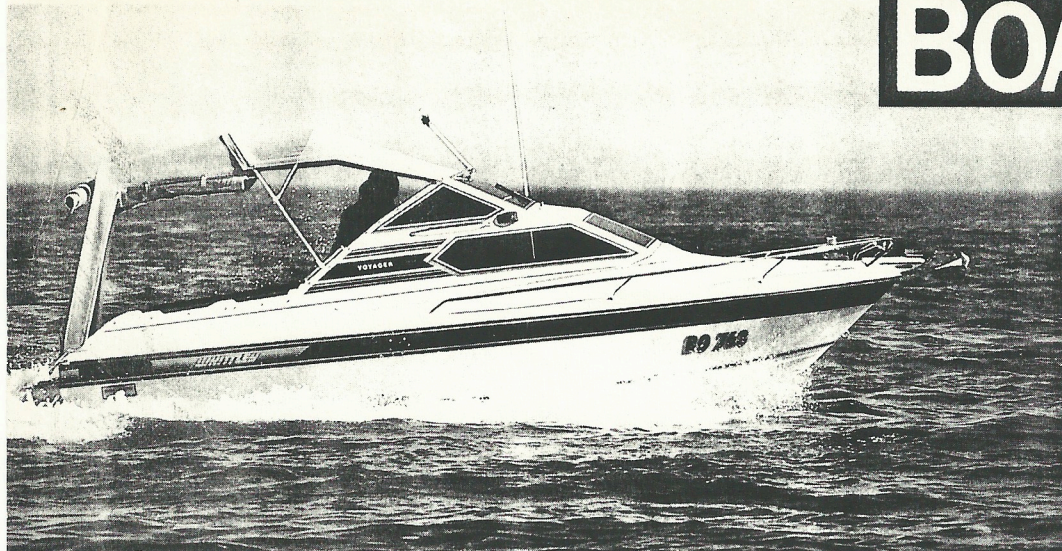


BOAT TEST



FAST FACTS

- The Voyager is powered by a 130hp 3 litre OMC stern drive engine.
- Storage space abounds while the cabin sleeps at least two people.
- A 45 litre freshwater storage tank makes the Voyager ideal for weekend cruising.

Luxury and power a-plenty

With stylish interior appointments usually found only in much larger boats, the Voyager is a value-for-money 5.3m contender

Someone described the Whitley Voyager as a mini gin palace but the expression has somewhat derogatory connotations; if the expression is taken that way, it is unfair.

The Voyager is a cruising boat, beautifully appointed and equipped.

It is one of the smallest live-aboard boats around but for two people it is the perfect way to explore the byways of the remote Australian coastline.

In standard trim it comes complete and ready for use but with most boats, it is possible to option it further to suit individual tastes.

The 5.3 metre craft as tested is fitted with a 130hp 3 litre OMC stern drive engine, but the boat is rated to as much as 205hp. While a larger engine will obviously improve several performance factors, it is not really essential unless a number of weighty options are added.

The 130hp donk brings the boat onto the plane easily and holds it there with the engine revs as low as 2000rpm.

The combination of a four-stroke engine and low revs produces excellent economy.

Short choppy waves on Port Phillip were hardly a hurdle for the craft as it gave a comfortable low noise ride, consistent with the needs of buyers of such a craft.

In fact the Voyager is comfortable beyond expectations, and quiet.

It is stable in tight turns. With its 18 degree deadrise, it rides fairly flat at rest.

There is a slight tendency to cavitation out of tight turns if the power is applied hard, especially if the prop is not fully in the water.

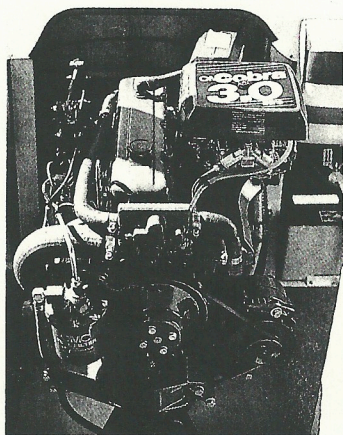
The Voyager carried 72 litres of fuel under the floor giving it excellent cruising range.

A small criticism is that the

driver's seat is too close to the rather low-set vertical tiller, cramping movements slightly.

While performance is hard to fault, it is in the level of appointments that the Voyager excels.

From a practical point of view, two batteries are fitted with an isolation switch, removing



The Voyager's 3.0 litre OMC heart.

anxieties about flat batteries on over-nighters.

There is heaps of storage space in the upholstered side pockets and the half cabin will sleep two in comfort either in twin beds or with bolster cushions to create a double.

Full instrumentation is standard as is a marlin board and full length camper canopy.

There is a toilet in the cabin, a sink and basin beneath the driver's seat and a neat single burner stove with its own gas bottle under the passenger's seat.

The Voyager also has the capacity to carry 45 litres of fresh water, complementing the possibilities for long weekend cruising.

Weather changes present no worries. The full canopy goes a long way towards coping with that problem, while the toughened glass windscreen carries a wiper for all-weather visibility.

In ex-factory trim, the Whitley Voyager costs around \$30,000 and is good value for what it offers.

WHITLEY VOYAGER

LOA	5.3m
BEAM	2.2m
ENGINE	130hp OMC
DEADRISE	18 degrees
WEIGHT	620kg
PRICE	\$30,000

Test boat from Barry Lawrence Marine, Preston East, (03) 478 1420.

story Peter Wherrett

