

INTEGRITY 520SX PLUS

By Kevin Green

VERSATILE VOYAGER

Voyaging along Australia's coasts requires a good degree of both seaworthiness and self-reliance, which are features of this trawler-style vessel, reports Kevin Green.

The 520SX Plus is part of the Integrity Plus range, which is the semi-displacement hull. It offers double digit cruising speeds with fuel efficiency, while maintaining the reliability and comfort of previous models. China based Integrity make three ranges: Coastal Plus, Classic and the SX. The latter is aimed at wide range of sailors, but appeals to the discerning boater especially. Sized from the 34-51 foot (340 SX to the 510 SX Flybridge model), the range focusses on functional designs, specifically made for Australian conditions by the Whitehaven Group that commissioned these builds. So, key features are fairly deep hulls with ample shade protection. According to the dealer Spectrum Marine, the Integrity Brand has around 100 boats locally, which are impressive numbers, but after a day spent aboard this versatile 520SX, I can see why.

ALL-WEATHER BOATING

Strong aesthetics are a feature of the 520SX, with its large saloon having vertical bulkheads and a vast cabin top that overhangs the side decks and the entire cockpit. Yet more trawler-style attributes include the flared bows and prominent rubbing strakes along the hull with stylish wooden taffrail around the stern. However, water accessibility is good, via a wide transom door that leads onto the hydraulic swim platform. Here, the teak clad base sinks to allow a three metre tender to launch from the dinghy garage. Surrounded by sturdy stainless guard rails, the protected area could be a mini beach club. Especially, when combined with the comfortable cockpit that has bench seating on three sides, making for a convivial social area; which can be further protected by drop-down clear plastics or bug netting



Moving forward via two steps brings me to what I'd call the bridgedeck because this is a workmanlike area for navigation. Twin bolster helm seats, with mini couch and sturdy doors on both sides give the skipper easy deck access, while clear views all round should give plenty confidence when manoeuvring. The console houses twin Garmin screens with throttle for the single shaft-driven Volvo and bow thruster joysticks (for bow and stern thrusters, which are Lewmar 24V 8HP models). Other smaller screens include

one for house systems, anchor and a retro set of analogue readouts. For docking, a Yacht Controller hand-held device is available, so combined with twin thrusters this is a very controllable vessel, especially for the inexperienced boater.



BELOW DECKS

Below, are two double cabins with ensuites, accessed via a wide atrium corridor with good natural light from saloon above. The central cabin uses the full 5.26m beam of the 520SX to create a space that is low in the hull, so my pick for sleeping when offshore. Centred around the large double bed, with chaise lounge to starboard and a bank of drawers on port and naturally lit by double portlights; this is a most comfortable berth for the owner. Tall

headroom is another plus, which includes that ensuite with roomy shower cubicle, alongside the electric head. Walking through the atrium takes me to the forward berth where its volume benefits from those tall flared bows. The semi-island bed has opening portlights on each side and skylights, so well illuminated and naturally ventilated. Its ensuite is similar in size to the stern cabin, so well proportioned and ventilated.



SHELTERED DECKS

The low centre of gravity and deep keel makes the 520SX a steady boat to move around on and this is enhanced by tall bulwarks and guardrails, as I walk to the foredeck. Here, a short bowsprit for the anchor gives good separation from the stem head, with a horizontal Quick windlass for the rode and a

quality Rocna 40kg anchor; which has a deep chain locker. My only gripe is slightly undersized cleats for 52 footer but they are numerous – all round and midships. Another vote winner for me is traditional (elevated) skylights that are more seaworthy than the fashionable low-profile versions. Lazing here is also a possibility, simply sling some cushions on the cabin top when the mood takes you.





HULL AND SYSTEMS

Our review boat was hull number one. The company use solid, hand-laid fibreglass hulls. The layup has vinylester layers for strength, durability and osmosis protection. In addition, FGI Gelcoat is used on the exterior of the hulls, especially applied to suit Australian conditions. The Plus range uses a fairly long keel that protects the single propeller and rudder, while a deep forefoot copes with swells. The engine room is accessed from the stern cockpit via a smallish hatch. It contains a single Penta D13 900HP, which means there's ample space to access the service points. Also fitted on the review boat is an 11 kW generator with the bank of house batteries here as well; which could be complemented by using the vast cabin top space for a large bank of solar

panels. Quality Racor fuel filters are used with isolation taps fitted to bypass blocked filters on the two fuel tanks and reduce the chance of contaminated fuel. Separate ball valves are installed to assist the return or transfer of fuel between tanks. Cabling is configured to Australian standards, and Certified 240V DC electrical systems are fitted to all Integrity models. A separate hatch leads me to the transom, where I see that the quadrant is accessible, alongside the Lewmar thruster unit. The smooth hull layup is also evident here, with stringers at near intervals to give rigidity to this hull.





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GOLD COAST VOYAGE

Casting-off in the tight confines of the Gold Coast backwaters was the first test for the Integrity 520 SX, which it easily passed, thanks to the effective Lewmar fore and aft thrusters, and to aid the single spade rudder when in reverse – an ideal arrangement for this shaft-driven hull. Once onto the Coomera River, one of the busiest on the east coast, I appreciated the clear views from the steering console, and having doors on each side of the navigation area allowed me to

duck out quickly to gather fenders. Out at sea in a light Gold Coast swell, and sat comfortably in the bolster helm seat I then accelerated, noting the low hum as the turbocharged Volvo put us on the plane at about 12 knots before smoothly pushing us to 18 knots. Cruising speed proved comfortable, with a stiff feel to the monolithic hull, which prompted me to put the helm down to seek more swell, using our wake. This caused no groans or deviation from our course, the deep single rudder giving good feedback and control. Equally drama-free was throwing the Integrity into a series of 'S' turns, then a doughnut, showing a really tight circle (especially compared to many IPS-driven boats) even with the Zipwake tabs on automatic. These tabs did a good job both in trim, with only a 20% bow rise and also controlled the roll. As the swells rose as we neared the sandbars of the Gold Coast Seaway entrance, any spray that hit the windshield was easily dealt with by the large wipers. Experienced owner Barry told me he's had several Integrity boats and after a day spent on the 520SX I can clearly see why because these are proper seaboats, bristling with practicalities and most enjoyable to helm.

SPECIFICATIONS

Overall Length 16.2m

Beam 5.26m

Draft 1.4m

Displacement 22,000kg

Fuel 2,500 Litres

Water 1,000 Litres

Sleeps 4-6 (2 cabins plus in saloon)

Cruise Speed approx. 16-18 knots

PERFORMANCE DATA

RPM	KNOTS	LNM	RANGE
600	6	5.8	2586
1300	10	40	625
1500	11	88	313
2100	18	138	326
2200	20.1	171	294

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