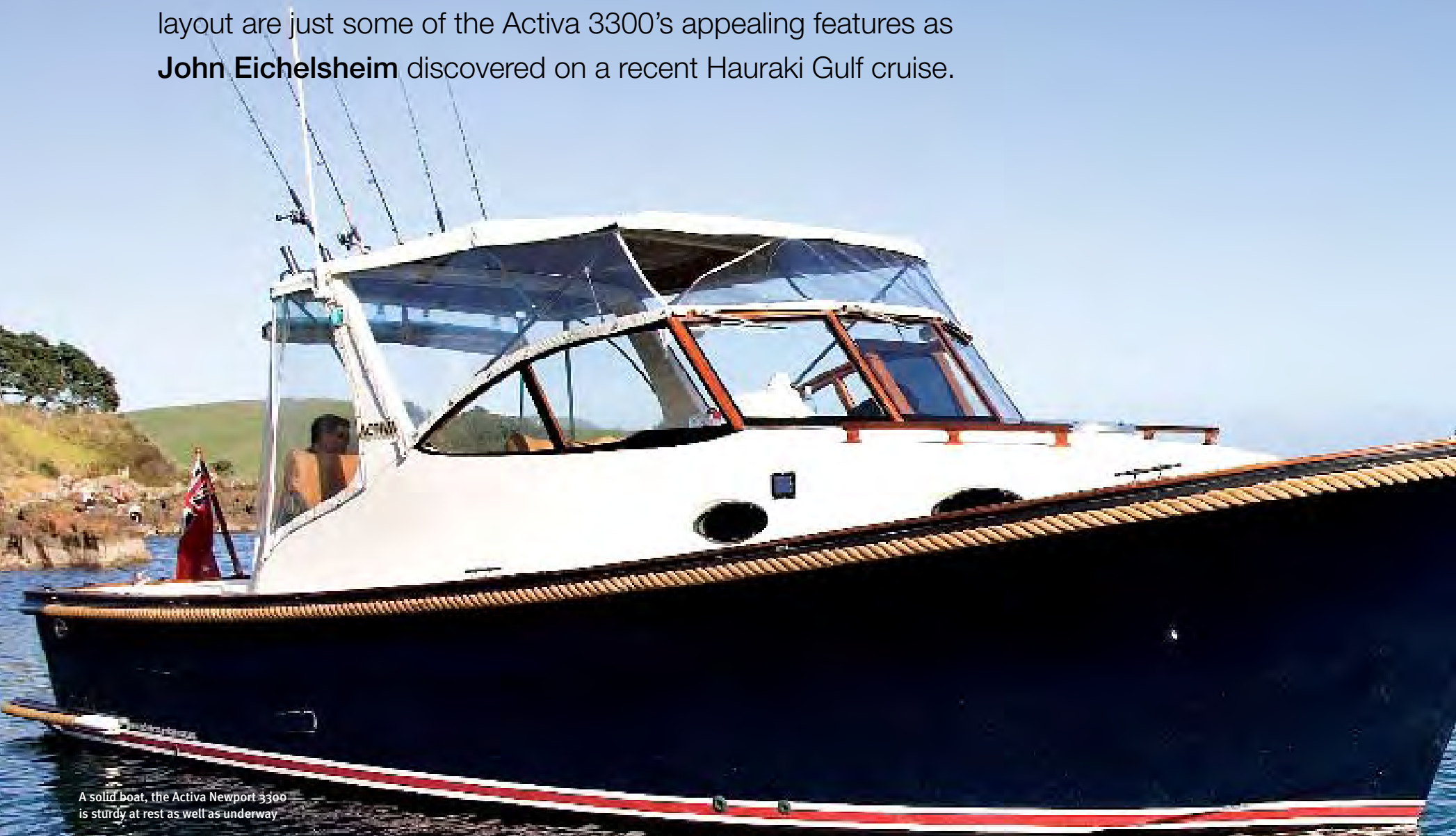


Gentleman's hours

Classic nor' east styling, masses of teak and a family-friendly layout are just some of the Activa 3300's appealing features as **John Eichelsheim** discovered on a recent Hauraki Gulf cruise.



A solid boat, the Activa Newport 3300 is sturdy at rest as well as underway

A solid, beamy cruiser with walkaround side decks, a raised helm and dinette under a canvas bimini top, the Activa Newport 3300 is a handy fishing boat, as well as a great family weekender.

The 3300's hull started life in a completely different guise. Activa developed it as an all-weather hull for recreational charter fishing in Japan. Japanese anglers take their sport seriously and expect to go out on the appointed day regardless of sea conditions. Consequently, the semi-displacement hull is solidly built and sea kindly.

Her E-glass composite hull is resin-infused FRP below the waterline, while topsides are resin-infused foam core and the boat's superstructure - a mixture of foam core, plywood or balsa core laminate construction - depending on location.

The boat's interior and deck layout is the work of John Winter and his team at Adventure Bay Motor Yachts, here in New Zealand and in China where the boat is built. Activa specialises in larger boats and it shows in many of the fittings found on the Newport 3300. Heavy-duty Mainship hatches and



ports are shared with Activa's 50-foot-plus models, while stainless steel hawsers and deck fittings, teak decks, solid teak doors, a teak transom, teak caprails, 20mm marble counter tops — even teak window mullions — are unusual on a boat of this size. It looks great, though all that timber will doubtless require a reasonable amount of upkeep.

With all this luxury, the 3300 is no lightweight. She weighs in at 6.5 tonnes lightship — more with a full load of fuel (750 litres), water (120 litres) and all the bits and pieces boats inevitably accumulate over time. But this weight does give the boat a reassuring feeling of solidity when underway.

A 370hp Yanmar drives the boat a maximum of 22 knots via a shaft and conventional propeller, with 16-18 knots (3000-3200rpm) a good compromise between speed and economy. The same engine is available in different horsepower configurations right up to 480hp if more speed is a priority. A 4hp Sidepower bowthruster takes the anxiety out of berthing the boat and AGM batteries (two house, one starting) supply the ship's power via a 1500W Victron inverter.

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Underway

We enjoyed a relaxed cruise around Rangitoto Island to Rakino Passage, stopping to fish close to Motutapu Island. The journey out was comfortable on a brilliant Auckland winter's day with no wind and a mostly glass-calm ocean. Pushing a little tide, we managed a top speed of 21 knots, but settled for a more sedate 16 knots for the rest of the journey. The Activa 3300 cruises equally happily at 18 knots, but in such pleasant conditions it was

hard to be too urgent.

With a full keel and a protective skeg over the propeller, the 3300 is never going to break any speed records, but neither is she likely to broach in a following sea. She certainly tracks well in the turns and she doesn't heel over excessively.

The boat's layout is modelled on the 'gentleman's cruiser' style popular on the northeast coast of the United States. Its clean, simple lines are attractive, aided by the lack

of railings – a distinctive feature. There's no need for them, because full height bulwarks wrap right around the boat's near-flush decks, making the 3300 especially child-friendly. Vetus rope belting complements the boat's 'classic' flavour, as well as serving the practical purpose of protecting the hull from wharf damage.

The slightly raised helm and dinette area can be completely opened to the elements – all the electronics are water-resistant – by dropping the Strata clears and folding away the canvas bimini, manufactured here to Winter's specifications. On the other hand, it's snug and reasonably weatherproof with the top up and clears buttoned down. A hardtop version is available if preferred.

Unlike most sportsboats, the 3300's helm is relatively low key. There are no wrap-around dashboards or fancy consoles; nor does the helm seat adjust up and down and in and out. Instead, there's a simple burr-cadrona fascia set into the modest moulded dashboard, which is large enough for engine gauges and a Simrad LCD colour sounder-GPS-plotter. A large stainless steel wheel effortlessly steers the boat and the single throttle control is within easy reach, whether seated or standing. The bowthrustrer control is also well positioned. Trim controls, BEP switch panels, throttle control, VHF radio and other necessary switches, gauges and controls are positioned here and there around the helm. It's a simple

layout in keeping with the boat's generally relaxed progress and classic styling.

Clever use of space lends the dinette uncommon versatility. The paua shell inlaid madrona burr table has folding leaves for easy seating access and also drops down to convert the linen-upholstered dinette into a generous double berth. Helm seat backrests are reversible, as are aft seat's backrests, which allow the seats to be used in more than one role. Push the aft seat's backrests forward and you're ideally positioned to watch lures trolled in the wake or to interact with people down in the cockpit. Push them back and you're facing forward around the dinette table. Likewise with the helm seats: backrests pushed back when underway or pushed forward to sit around the table. All four seat backrests are independent of one another, so they can be configured any which way, depending on what's going on at the time.

Having the focus of the boat on the bridge makes for a very sociable layout. The cockpit is slightly lower, as are the side decks, which offers a degree of separation, but there's excellent communication between the two.

Although not especially deep, the boat's wide beam still affords a decent amount of cockpit space. A large livebait tank, curved and plumbed, testifies that this boat has serious angling aspirations. There's also a sink unit, with one of the boat's four hot and cold freshwater outlets, as well as a

In the pristine sea conditions she managed 21 knots



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saltwater washdown on the starboard side. There are plenty of rodholders fitted, too, along with a six-position rocket launcher on the bimini top. The cockpit's also equipped with shore power, television and telephone connections, and shore water – all de rigeur in the USA and Europe.

Under the floor a pair of generous wet lockers drain overboard via macerator pumps, which deal with any fishy waste. They can be used as fish bins or to store dive gear. Deep gutters around the hatch covers are reassuring, though the boat is not really equipped for backing up at speed: the broad swimstep (removable at a pinch), inward opening transom door and engine room access hatch at cockpit level would dictate skipper discretion when a big one is hooked.

Engine room access is reasonable. Day to day tasks can be undertaken from the aft hatch, but the engine is also accessible from above once the table is removed and the aft seat bases folded back. Access to pumps, steering and tankage is also reasonably straight forward, though obviously less so than with a larger craft. Although not built to survey, this model, like other boats in the Activa range, easily meet New Zealand survey requirements with the minimum of modification.

For general sportfishing, the boat's layout is ideal. There are no annoying cockpit overhangs to interfere with casting and the



A gentlemen yacht finish with good detailing down below in the teak-lined forward cabin, accessed from the flybridge deck



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The slightly raised helm and dinette area.



The forward cabin oozes teak

Activa Newport 3300

designer	Activa/Adventure Bay
builder	Activa Marine Ltd
construction	E-glass FRP laminate; foam, balsa & plywood core sandwich
loa	10.5m
boa	3.3m
draft	850mm
displacement	approx 7t
deadrise	Variable
max speed	22kts as tested
cruising speed	16-18kts
fuel capacity	750L
water capacity	120L
black water	50L
engine	Yanmar 370hp turbo-diesel/straight shaft drive
gearbox	ZF 2.45:1
price as tested	\$350,000
packages from	\$320,000 (subject to exchange rate)

side decks are wide enough to allow fishing right around the boat — something we appreciated while drifting and casting soft plastics for an hour or two.

The foredeck is great too — roomy, but still reassuringly safe with full height bulwarks. There's a handy little seat up forward too, and notably tidy treatment of the forepeak area with a teak-covered bow platform and anchor locker access underneath. The Maxwell rope-chain capstan is remotely operated, while the deep stainless steel channel section fairlead not only looks smart, it prevents a muddy chain dirtying the foredeck.

Although the logical entertainment centre on the 3300 is up on the bridge deck, Activa hasn't neglected facilities down below. While it won't find favour with everyone, access below decks is via a ladder which makes sense on a boat of this size. V-berths in the forepeak are luxuriously upholstered and the pua-inlaid cadrona-burr saloon table mimics the larger table up on deck. It can be removed completely if desired, or dropped down to convert the v-berths into a good-sized double

berth. An LCD screen on the forward bulkhead, fed by a Panasonic 8-disc CD/DVD player, provides the entertainment, along with audio speakers inside and outside. There's also a Panasonic MP3 player. AV gear is all 12V.

The galley, too, is well equipped and remarkably spacious for a boat of the size, especially one with walk-around side decks. The heavy marble counter top is a luxurious detail reinforced by solid teak cabinetry, pale vinyl headlining and teak and holly trim elsewhere in the cabin. There's a two-burner gas hob, stainless sink and a microwave oven, opposite. LED lighting is used throughout the boat for low power consumption.

The second double berth extends athwartships under the bridgedeck aft of the galley and head. It's a good size with plenty of inbuilt stowage and easier than most such arrangements to squeeze into. The 3300 also boasts a stand-up head/shower. It's fairly compact but functional.

Incidentally, The Activa Newport 3300 is supplied with monogrammed towels and line, as well as galley equipment, a dinner set,

charts, flares, first aid kit, boat hook, lines and fenders and much more.

In fact, the equipment level really surprises. Extra features included in the price are too numerous to list, but together represent amazing value. The stylish and surprisingly versatile Activa Newport 3300 is ready to drive away: on a harbour jaunt, a fishing expedition, or on an extended stay-away cruise — just add stores.

