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CLUB MARINE

WINNING WAYS

How to conquer your next fishing comp

AUSSIE INFERNO WAKEBOAT WILD NT FISHING **NEW BOATS FOR FAMILIES**
CHOOSING A TENDER **ONBOARD POWER SYSTEMS** SUZUKI'S STEALTHY V6

TIMELESS CRAFT, CONTEMPORARY COMFORT

Italian tradition meets modern expectations in the Cantiere Mimi Libeccio 8.5 Cabin, a private retreat for refined weekend escapes.

By Dominic Wiseman

Here's one for Australian boaters in the market for a modern classic. The Mimi Libeccio 8.5 Cabin is an elegant reimagining of a traditional Mediterranean fishing boat known as a gozzo (pronounced gotzo).

Founded in Naples in 1975, the Cantieri Mimi boatyard crafts a selection of models in true Italian style up to 13.5m (44.3ft). Its Libeccio 8.5 Cabin is, as the name suggests, 8.5m (27.9ft) in length with a 2.5m beam. Defined by a rounded hull, high bow and impressive seaworthiness, it's available in walkaround and cabin configurations.

With an approximate hull weight of 3000kg, rated to carry eight people, and with two berths for overnighting, the Libeccio 8.5 strikes a sensible balance between size, capability and liveability.

ITALIAN STYLE

The Libeccio 8.5 Cabin's deck feels like a meeting point between Italian *gozzo* tradition and modern cruising design. True to Cantiere Mimi's heritage, the deck surfaces are finished in solid seasoned teak with mahogany detailing, giving the

Mimi 85

a meeting point between Italian *gozzo* tradition and modern cruising design

Top: Lift the cockpit table to create an alfresco dining space, or drop it and add cushions for a lounging sunbed.

Above: Generous space at the bow allows for a full sunpad.

boat a timeless Mediterranean look and a warm feeling underfoot.

The beamy, generously sized bow deck has room to set up a full sunpad (cushions are included). Alternatively, you could have a tandem lounge with a backrest built into the front of the cabin, making it the ideal place to relax with a sundowner. The only thing missing are cupholders here and elsewhere on the boat.

Heading aft, access to the well-proportioned cockpit is via walkways on either side of the cabin framed by a stainless-steel rail. Facilitating socialising and entertaining, a timber folding table and cushion arrangements transform the area into an alfresco living zone – if lounging about is more your speed, drop the table and add more cushions to create a large sunpad.

Adjoining the helm and facing aft, a wetbar with single stovetop and fridge beneath serves the cockpit in practical yet stylish fashion, while a manual awning extends to the transom to provide shade when the sun is high.

The design also incorporates a sizeable swimplatform with ladder and deck shower, and a portside door for easy boarding.

COMFORTABLE CABIN

Mimi has achieved a close to even split between cabin size and topside space, an impressive balance in any boat of this size with berths.

The main berth is comfortable and functional. It runs north–south and is fully lined, creating a warm, inviting space complemented by tasteful timber accents. Storage is well designed, with drawers and clever little nooks throughout, while twin speakers help set the mood for a quiet night away.

Entering the cabin, a twin seat to starboard lets you duck out of the sun without fully committing to bed mode. Cantiere says you could use that space for another bed, but you would have to be a small person for it to be comfortable.

An equally practical bathroom with marine toilet, holding tank and an internal shower, paves the way for extended trips and weekend escapes.

And if additional sleeping space is required for kids or guests, the cockpit can be fully enclosed with camper-style covers, allowing the rear sunpad to be converted into a second berth, and adding another layer of versatility to an already well-resolved layout.

AT THE HELM

A lofty helm seat inspires confidence when you take the wheel, delivering a commanding view forward and reinforcing that sense of control you want when driving this style of boat.

The canvas canopy does impede visibility slightly in certain areas, particularly when looking out at a 45-degree angle, but it's a trade-off that comes with the added shade and weather protection – and you quickly adapt to it.

While a little different to your usual dash layout, it's spartan simplicity is rather refreshing.

A compact pod contains the MDF, gauges and tachometer for the 230hp Yanmar diesel engine, while a narrow bench in front puts the bow thruster and stereo controls within easy reach. It suits the boat's character perfectly – functional, uncluttered and focused on the experience rather than screens just for the sake of them.

Underway, the boat's sharp entry does an impressive job of slicing through wake and chop, while the large planing surface at the rear enhances performance and provides excellent stability, both underway and at rest.

Top speed sits around 26 knots (48km/h) at just over 3600rpm, but the boat feels more settled and steering is effortless at a relaxed cruising speed of 18 knots (33.3km/h).

Turns are surprisingly sharp once you have had a little time to bed in, with the hull maintaining composure and keeping everyone comfortable. Truthfully, this is not a boat you would be inclined to hoon around in anyway. It is far happier cruising with purpose, allowing you to soak up the journey, rather than race to a destination.

BALANCED BEAUTY

With its nostalgic appearance, there's a lot to love about the Mimi Libeccio 8.5 Cabin. You have all you need for entertaining and simply cruising any waterway. The stability at rest is excellent for those new to boating, and the design lends itself to multiple uses.

It's priced from $429,000 and $539,000 as tested, which includes an upgraded bow thruster, trim tabs, battery charger, stereo, Garmin GPS+ 7" sounder, table and cushions, complete enclosure, and custom-painted hull and rollbar.

What I loved about this boat was its balance of space, high-end quality build, and its distinctly classic appearance.

It really grew on me, and it may surprise you, too. Why not step aboard and see. CM

MIMI LIBECCIO 8.5 CABIN	
LOA:	8.5m
Beam:	2.5m
Construction:	Fibreglass/timber
Fuel capacity:	200lt
Water capacity:	100lt
Displacement weight:	3000kg
Power:	230hp Yanmar shaft drive
Capacity:	8 people/sleeps 3
More information: Boatology, tel: 13BOAT (13 26 28). Web: boatology.com.au.	

Above: The dash layout is simple and user-friendly.

Below: With a rounded hull and high bow, the Mimi Libeccio is a fresh take on a classic design.

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