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held GPS unit.

The Origin 4000 offered one of the sweetest rides I've experienced in an alloy boat of this size. While the test runs were carried out on quite smooth waters there was always ample opportunity to cross washes and pressure waves, and the 4000 4x4 came through with flying colours.

The Origin's hull featured an entry area that was well raked plus fine enough to cut through chop quite sweetly. It was also mated to a prominent outer chine that pushed water away from the hull and finished in a reversed chine aft on the 14° dead rise hull. The result



Left: Those big side pockets offer plenty of storage and are out of the way. Right: Forward storage takes care of PFDs and similar.



of the excellent designed features was a ride that was very hard to fault with lack of impact and overall dryness.

Cross winds linked to chop might present a case for the wet weather gear to be kept handy, same as we would expect from other open boats. However, I feel that with such high sides plus the water management system I've described users would not be bothered too much with unwanted water.

There's no doubt that the high degree of sea keeping ability is a strong point of this craft, which makes it quite suited to bay and estuary work, and even perhaps a run-off shore in smooth conditions.

**OVERALL**

I'd rate the new Origin 4x4 4000 tiller steer as one of the best finished, best handling and best riding 4m

open boats I've reviewed. Stability was also exceptional and given the strong plate construction it should give many years of service.

With the 40hp Yamaha four-stroke and Bellco skid and roller trailer the rig was priced at around \$23,000.

Fitting a standard two-stroke outboard would offer cost savings and Origin Boats offer a bare hull for around the \$9,000 mark. Contacts are telephone (07) 3284 0778, fax (07) 3284 0181 or on the net at [www.originboats.com.au](http://www.originboats.com.au).



The 4000 provides a very clean wash.



The very smooth 40hp Yamaha four-stroke proved to be an excellent power plant for the Origin 4x4.

**FIELD TESTED**

**PANASONIC LUMIX FT2-A COMPACT CAMERA**



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One of the great advances of the digital age of photography is the quality of the photos we routinely experience.

I was a fairly rapid graduate of the school of digital photography having purchased a Nikon digital SLR pretty soon after they were released. A couple

of smaller digitals followed and I must say I was pretty happy with the results given the lesser cash outlay. But there were limitations. One camera gave great results but it was near impossible to see the rear screen in daylight conditions. That aside, I like camera technology and testing new gear.

Having recently field-tested the new Panasonic Lumix FT2-A on a trip to Ebor's trout waters, where the camera had a trip around the paddocks in the pocket, I

was more than just pleased with the results. Extremely impressed might be more like it.

Take a look at the images nearby. On the left is the shot I took with the Nikon SLR, on the right is the one taken with the little Lumix. There's some difference in overall composition, but the Lumix holds its own so far as picture quality is concerned.

With 14.1 mega pixel resolution and great shooting versatility courtesy of a Leica DC Vario-Elmar lens

offering 28 mm wide angle plus 4.6 optical zoom, which equates to 28 - 128 mm, this camera can do a lot.

What I really liked about the little Lumix, along with the sheer compactness of the unit and the quality of results, was the absolute ease of use. One touch buttons activated all systems including video (which features a zoom capability), plus there's a 2.7" high resolution colour LCD screen at the rear of the camera which will adjust to really bright light situations

to make things easy for the user.

Other main features of the Lumix FT2-A include Intelligent Auto mode (point and shoot), HDMI output and Viera Link (which offers slide shows on the TV via a link cable). There's an Optical Zoom in movie mode, Panorama Assist to make perfect landscapes, a decent Macro Zoom plus Photo Frame Mode that allows the user to compose shots while displaying one of the frames within the camera.

If you're in the market for a very compact but powerful camera for those all important fish photography shots, the new Lumix FT2-A certainly has a lot to offer. It's water proof to 10m, 2m drop proof, dust and frost proof, and pretty well fool proof to use as well.

For around \$550 from Photo Continental of Mt Gravatt, that Lumix FT2-A is going to be hard to beat from what I've seen of it.



Photo courtesy of Nikon SLR, 18 - 70 Nikkor AF-S lens.



Photo courtesy of Panasonic Lumix FT2 with inbuilt Leica DC Vario-Elmar 28 - 128 lens.