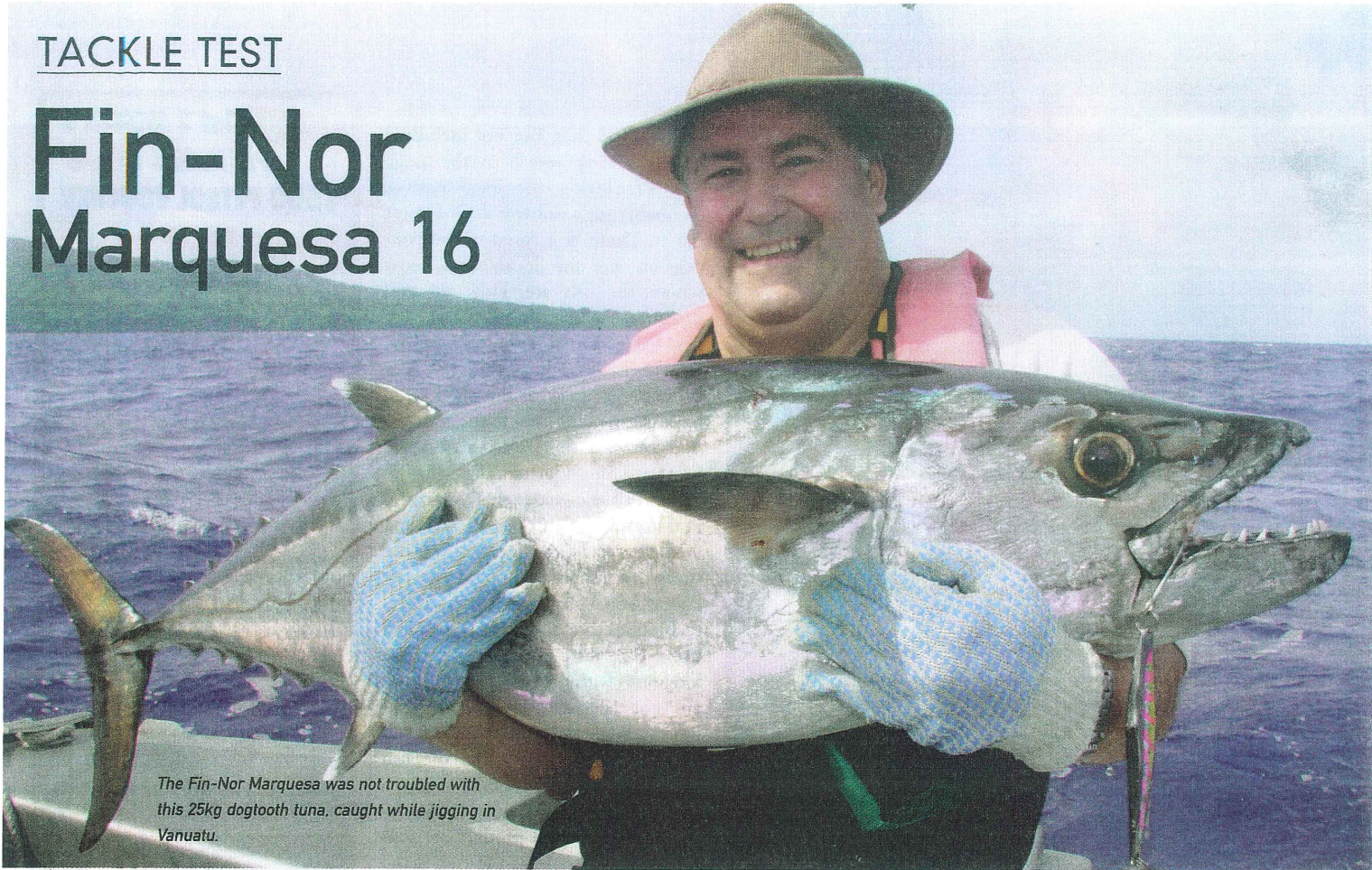


Fin-Nor Marquesa 16



The Fin-Nor Marquesa was not troubled with this 25kg dogtooth tuna, caught while jigging in Vanuatu.

My first opportunity to put the Fin-Nor Marquesa 16 through its paces came during a recent trip to the Banks Islands in Vanuatu aboard *Island Passage*.

These trips are a good mix of fishing opportunities, from casting poppers through to deep water jigging, as well as trolling for pelagics.

On the first day, jigging was recommended over a small underwater mount that came out of 130 metres up to 20 metres. The top and sides of this structure were wickedly laced with coral heads lurking with intent, ready to nick any line that came within their reach.

The first victim of the Marquesa, fished on a prototype Fin-Nor jig stick, was a reasonable coral trout of around 8-10 kilos. Not a heavy-weight, but a fish that gave a good account of itself after latching onto the Raider 200g jig.

Next up was much sterner opposition: a dogtooth tuna. These guys are like our kingfish on performance-enhancing substances. You know when you are into one of these brutes: the bite is solid and you generally get a few lifts and winds before the fish hits the afterburners and a ripping run ensues. Rarely do they run to the deep however, choosing

instead to head for the safety of the coral.

Fortunately, our skipper was wise to this trick and put added pressure on the fish by driving away from the drop-off until I had some semblance of control. With steady pumps I was able to make line, the fish eventually making one more dogged run before succumbing to the gaff. At 25kg it was a good test of the Marquesa's mettle and provided dinner for the village.

I also landed one other fish of 'substance', but not merit – a 40kg reef shark that took a liking to a Williamson Benthos jig in 80 metres of water – to complete the 'test'.

Both bigger fish gave the drag a reasonable workout. I had set the strike preset at a tested 10kg, with plenty more in reserve over the button if needed. At this setting the reel still freespooled well while dropping down a range of jigs, including the Williamson Vortex and Raider jigs, both of which like to 'flutter' down, along with the Kilwell Broken Arrow, Katch1 and Black Magic models, which take a more direct route to the hit zone.

The Marquesa had a number of features I liked, but the one that impressed me most was the drag's

dial system, which enabled the pre-set pressure to be adjusted in fine increments. And, as I like to speed-jig, especially with Raider jigs and similar, the 6.1:1 retrieve ratio (94.6cm of line retrieved per crank) was perfect and certainly got the lures moving. I am no great shakes as a 'mechanical jigger', but found I had to slow the crank down when fishing lures this way to enable better co-ordination.

The drag system incorporates carbon-fibre washers and provided a smooth performance that, in the short time I have fished the Marquesa, I can't fault. Fin-Nor claims the Marquesa features one of the strongest drag systems ever put into a reel, and to match this the frame has to be machined from top-quality aircraft-grade aluminium to handle the torque produced under load.

The reel was spooled with approximately 300 metres (a 'guesstimate' only) of 37kg Rovex braid, attached to a 200lb (90kg) Rovex wind-on leader.

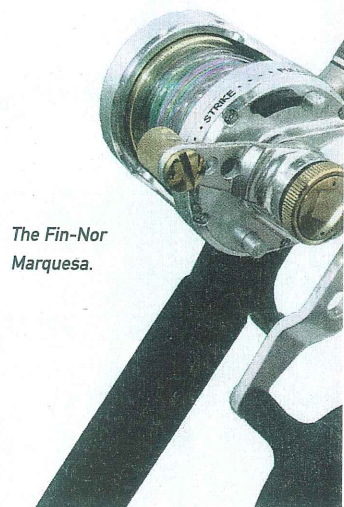
This model was 'topless', giving easy access to the spool and enabling excellent control during lure descent. There is also an adjustable clicker that allows you to control the free-spool tension – great for

live-baiting.

The Fin-Nor Marquesa is nicely finished with a silver and light green livery. It is available in six models from the MA12 up to the MA30 and is distributed in New Zealand by Thompson Walker Ltd.

While I have given the reel limited use over the winter, I have been generally impressed by its performance. The reel feels well balanced to use and for anglers looking to get into this type of specialised tackle, it also represents good value for money.

–Grant Dixon



The Fin-Nor Marquesa.