

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Skirted lures that consistently deceive fish

JB Lures 'BIG TAIPAN' BlueWater Boats and Sportfishing www.bluewatermag.com.au

With its unusual insert design producing a unique swimming action, JB Lures 'Big Taipan' is a lure that will catch you by surprise. Its action may be subtle, but its productivity is almost certainly misleading, and on its day this lure can prove deadly for blue marlin, as Sam Baillie describes.

AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHY: **SAM BAILLIE**

When people win a Big Taipan in a tournament they often send JB Lures creator Dave Venn a photo and ask if there's something wrong with it. The point of difference is the oddly offset insert that sits about 7.5 to 8 degrees off-centre inside his unique Big Taipan lure. "It's actually meant to be like that. My moulds are all marked and each lure comes out with the same offset insert," he said. This unusual feature certainly sets the Big Taipan apart from any other lure I've reviewed in the pages of *BlueWater* thus far. With approximately 56 grams of lead in the bottom of the insert, there is enough weight in that offset to create some instability as the lure dives and rises during its swimming cycle.

While the lure will naturally want to swim with the slanted face angled upwards, the offset weight of the insert causes the face to roll over slightly, creating a deviation in the swimming pattern before water pressure over the face corrects its orientation again. This constant battle of roll and correction creates a rhythmic shimmying action that is a little different to other lures in the pattern. Dave did say that the action of his Taipan is more subtle rather than radical, and after testing the lure for this review I have to agree.

At first the Taipan doesn't appear to swim much differently to other slanted lures of this genre. In fact, on first glance it looked rather unimpressive, but when you study it more closely in some clean water you notice the subtle shimmying action as it dives and rises before busting the surface with a gentle splash.

A big, splashy, aggressive lure the Taipan is not. Its subtle, more specific action stands out from the crowd because it swims differently to the other lures you're likely to have in your lure spread.

I generally find lures like this are only moderately consistent fish-catchers and not likely to become your all-time favourite go-to lure that catches fish every

time you put it in the water. Most of the time this lure will pick off the odd fish here and there, but there will also be days where it just gets belted, taking every bite from every fish that swims into your spread. For whatever reason, the fish must tune in to that specific action and it becomes the hero for the day. It's for this reason that it's always a good idea to have at least one different lure out there like the Taipan, as any day could be its big day.

The Big Taipan we tested measured 345mm overall, with head dimensions of 70mm x 40mm diameter at its widest point at the rear of the head. The profile of the lure is almost a cross between a plunger and a straight-runner style, with a gentle, even taper down to the slanted face.

That subtle action described earlier is definitely closer to that of a plunger rather than the aggression of a straight-runner, which means the Taipan really lends itself well to the long-corner or long-rigger positions. We tried it in both positions during testing, and did favour the long-corner as the best place to run it. Dave said he also prefers the Taipan in the long-corner position, especially when chasing blue marlin.

We rigged our test lure on 7m of 180kg Ande leader with a single, stiff-rigged 11/0 Mustad 7691S hook – pretty typical of the rigging used by many who chase blue marlin on heavy-tackle. Rigged in this way the lure performed consistently and didn't appear to be affected by the heavier leader at all. The Taipan impressed with its easy riding action, although it does take some fine-tuning to get it running at its best. I could certainly see it being effective for larger yellowfin tuna, as well as the intended target species: blue marlin.

We received two lures to test for this review, one of which featured movable dolls eyes on silver mirror and the other featured a gorgeous ice-blue shell, both with two-tone colouration that showcases the variety of options available from JB Lures. As with their previous lures I've handled, the finish and craftsmanship was flawless; certainly equivalent to the quality normally only associated with Hawaiian-made lures. The lures were fitted with a mix of Yo-Zuri and Yamashita skirts, hand-tied the traditional way – a fitting touch for a world-class product.

For more information on the Big Taipan and the rest of the JB Lures range, visit www.jbmarlinlures.com

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