

The Boat Mag

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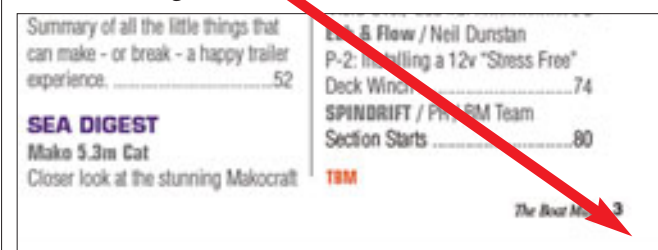
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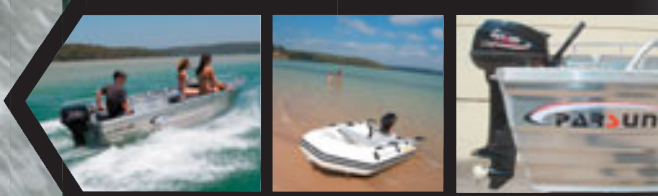
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The Boat Mag

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and couldn't finish this in time, but we're on it, again, now!H/O

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re-working the bones of a major 2 part report he wrote 8 years ago.

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Big section this month, including a great idea for marina forklift operators, and the latest in life jackets for youngsters.

TBM



Cover: One of Mako Craft's popular 5.8 Cruiser Cabs gracing the cover, in PW's favourite colour, whilst our cute little friend here models the latest in kid's life jackets - see report Page 78.



MESSAGE STICKS

As we are such a small team, we are often tied up on the 'phone, or on the water - but please don't waste the opportunity to communicate - send us an email - and we'll get back to you ASAP - usually with 24hrs. Our New Year's resolution has been that we have to stop ringing people back in Broome, or Queenstown (etc) as the 'phone costs are killing us - so email (or snail mail) (we still have stamps!) are the go for 2013.

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Comment

with Peter Webster

December has been a very busy, not to say weird sort of month for us. A whole heap of things happened that were unexpected and in some cases, quite upsetting.

We enjoyed a quiet, family-based Christmas break and the New Year festivities, so things were not always bleak or gloomy, but we did have a few events that took us by surprise. These were headed by the spectacular fire at Horizon Shore's Marina last month, one of Australia's biggest marinas.

Fire Ramifications.

I know it's considered 'poor form' to bring the fire at Horizon Shores Marina up after the event ("*because it's bad publicity for the boating world*") but against that myopic view, there are a number of ramifications – especially for future tenants of this once densely populated marina - that need to be looked at fairly carefully as a result of the fire.

From the outset, credit should be given where it's due, and that includes the initial skilful and courageous work by the marina staff, later boosted by the arrival of the professional fire crews. Together, they all got into action very rapidly, and did a fine job to contain the fire to the northwest corner of the big triple level, dry storage shed.

In all, some 24-26 craft (the numbers



were still being tallied at press time) were written off or badly damaged, with a dozen or more being left as nothing more than charred lumps of black goop, such was the heat of the fire at the height of the blaze.

To that extent, the fire brigade team did a darn good job. As soon as they arrived, they decided that instead of trying to fight the fire itself, they created what was in effect, a wall of water to separate the fire from the rest of the boats in the building.

This decision, combined with the fact that the marina shed was only about two thirds full, and the marina forklift was rushing in and out transferring boats well

away from the flames, no doubt averted what could have been a complete catastrophe.

As it was, more than two dozen families lost their boats, and many others suffered no little grief through the extensive media coverage (TV especially) wondering whether their boat was one of those that had been written off or destroyed. Several days passed before the outcome was clear, as no-one was allowed in the badly damaged building.

It was not a good look on prime time TV for the boating industry at Christmas time, in southern Queensland.

Ruth's Loss

One of the "hit home" tragedies of the fire was the discovery that The Boat Mag's Ruth Cunningham's partner, Gordon's beautifully set up Whitley 580 Voyager was unfortunately right on the edge of the northeast corner that suffered maximum damage.

Apart from the damage caused by the fire, one of the steel cross arms holding up the platform above their Whitley (it was on the middle tier) buckled and collapsed down over their boat, so apart from fire damage, the boat suffered major structural damage as well. It was subsequently 'written off' by the insurer, RACQ insurance, and the payout was being processed as this issue is published.

Whilst this is obviously a relief for Gordon and Ruth, like so many of these situations, it's not just the cash value of the boat that matters, as the two of them were so looking forward to the Christmas/New Year break for a badly needed 10 day R&R program.

They planned to come and go from Horizon Shores (which they enjoy very much, it must be added) in the Whitley with Gordon's sons, their rellos and of course Dug, the dawg.

Dug can't understand why they don't seem to go boating anymore, and Gordon and Ruth have missed out on their summer of boating thus far.

However, all is not lost – they've spent three solid three weeks researching every boat in their price range in the Southern Hemisphere and after an exhaustive analysis, zeroed in on a 1995 SeaRay 230 through a local broker. They submitted an offer to buy the SeaRay which has been

Even in the closing stages, the scale of the fire - and the risk potential - is easily seen. Note the forklift (and driver!) just beside the flames.



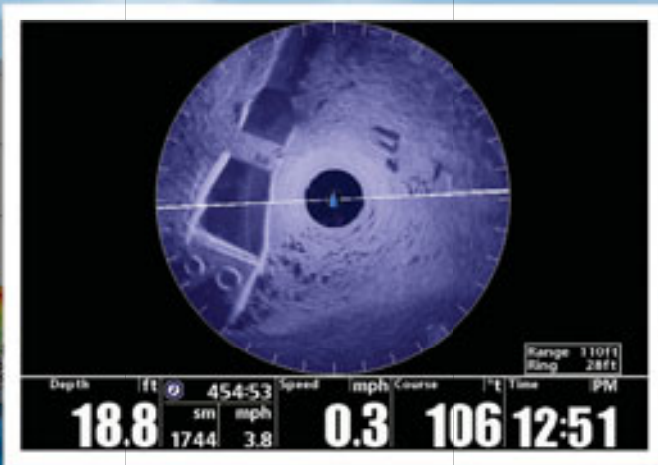
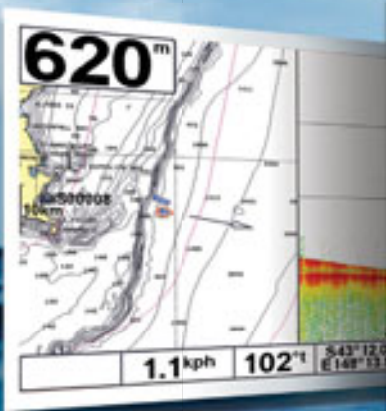


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the boat buying trail, to help Gordon (“GR”) find another boat, and being Ruth, she can’t just buy any ol’ boat, can she?

The only reason I’m raising the issue is that it affected our editorial program quite a bit this month, because we’d originally planned that Ruth would complete the research on the “*Gently Down The Stream Displacement*” story, *Part Two* that was scheduled for this month whilst I finished off ‘godzilla’, the huge plate aluminium boatbuilding book project that we’ve been working on as well.

Prior to Xmas, we just ran out of days and available ‘arms and legs’ to complete the research into the displacement boats.

So, apologies to readers looking for *Displacement, Part Two* this month.

We’ll be back on line with that report asap, as I have now finished the Plate book project, and will have the time to complete the research on the displacement craft myself.

It’s not finalised yet, but I suspect Ruth and Gordon are going to try and wrinkle a couple of weeks off in the new boat, as GR has to take holidays in January or miss out for months . . . and they are both hanging out for a break.

Sigh. Aren’t we all ?

The Mother Of Plate Books

A little bit further along in this issue you’ll see the promotion start for our latest challenge - producing the ‘best-of’ all six Plate Alloy Boats of Australia.

This is a massive undertaking we’ve been working on for some time, as a result of running out all but the last of the printed Plate Alloy Boat Books in this popular six book series.

Whilst we still have a handful of copies of Book 5 and 6 left, all the copies of Book One through Book Four have now gone.

Because the books were written about two years apart over a 12 year period, they are not worth reprinting, because roughly half of each books’ contents are now out of date - thanks to the advances of technology as far as outboards, communications, electronic instruments,



accepted, subject to the requisite survey and mechanical inspection, but no surprises are expected.

The good news continues – it looks like the cheque from the RACQ will be roughly the same as the cost of the Searay.

So hopefully, they’ll be back on the water some time later in January, with a marginally bigger boat more suited to the now fully grown Dug (he’s a beautiful golden retriever about 4 hands high!) and his passion for leaping about the shallows chasing whiting . . .

Ruth Under Pressure

This whole fiery issue couldn’t have come at a worse time for Ruth. She’s been struggling a bit with a sick mother, a very ill older brother, her terrific work with one of the Gold Coast’s main community bands - and a business which has asked all its readers to switch over from print to online readership.

Needless to say, given all of the stress and pressure she’s been under of late, the fire business has not helped one bit.

Instead of taking off for some badly needed R&R, she’s been pushed back on



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Comment . . .

welding techniques and gear, (etc) are concerned. We've been living with this problem for some years, uncertain about the best way to resolve it.

It was more complicated than even we first thought, too.

Because each of the six books was a unique publication, and had fresh new material in it each time it was published, whilst one half might now be dated, the other 'half' of the core material in each book is just as valid today as it was when it was first published. Much of it is truly

timeless, 'benchmark' editorial.

As demand for the older issues has grown each year, late last year, we decided to produce a "Best Of" version of all six editions, culling the out of date stuff, and focussing just on the timeless, high quality editorial that needs to see the light of day all over again.

The project started with *just over 1400 pages* from the six editions, which we pruned down to a core that came in (initially) at 639 pages, at which point we got really brutal, and pulled it back to about 460 pages, and finally attacked it again, getting it down to 370 pages!

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Hi,

We trust you are enjoying the revised F&B format in The Boat Mag, as much as we are producing it.

Whilst retaining all the core F&B values of creditable, 'hands on' editorial, it's been good to branch out into other areas - working with second hand boats for example, or recognising that imports are here to stay, and local boat manufacturing will be strained to the max as a result

These are issues that effect each of us in different ways, and we believe it's more important than ever that you can count on The Boat Mag team for fast, independent advice, whether you are planning to buy a 'pre-loved' rig, an import, or renovate that lovely old timber bay boat you've been admiring . . . as a subscriber, you can count on the experienced support of The Boat Mag team.

**Peter (editor@boatmags.com.au) &
Ruth (admin@boatmags.com.au)**

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The end result of these surprisingly complicated machinations has resulted in the new "Best Of" book, or to give it its proper title "*Plate Alloy Boats of Australia, Book 7 - Collector's Edition*".

It is an absolutely amazing publication with answers to just about any question anybody could possibly have about the world of plate aluminium boat building. Or fitting out any new boat in any material. Or renovating any sort of boat; this book is an "ideas" factory!

Printing such a publication is out of the question, as the cost would be enormous. Worse, it would cost about \$9-\$12 to package and post anywhere in Australia, let alone overseas.

So the book is being published as an online title for \$29.95, as a down-loadable PDF edition which is fast becoming the reader's preferred option.

In this case, being a classic reference volume, it makes even more sense to do it as an 'offline' PDF production as everybody will want to keep on their desktop, in a folder, so they can refer to 24/7/365 without even needing the internet - well, apart from the initial download, that is!

Interestingly, using the PDF protocols we developed so successfully for the Sea Library, the entire 370 page publication is only 28.7mb, and by today's standard of video games and movies, that is bigger all - an exceptionally pleasing (and manageable) result.

If you're interested in the *Plate Alloy Boats of Australia Collector's Edition*, take a quick trip to the website and check it out, using this link:

www.boatmags.com.au

This will take you straight across to the website and the four pages of contents involved in this massive publication.

Alternatively, we've started the initial promotion on Page 28-29 this issue, where we have a condensed version of the publication's contents, and the technical specifications.

You'll be impressed, I promise!

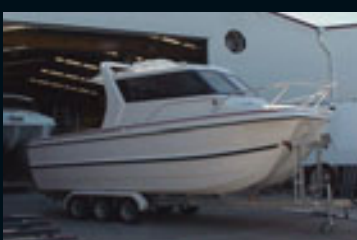
Secondhand Opportunities

As a by-product of Gordon and Ruth's research into secondhand cruisers available in the \$30-\$40K range, we've upgraded our secondhand boat series with more information, more costing details and more specific hints on how to go about purchasing a secondhand boat.

I have to confess to being quite shocked at the way boat prices have fallen



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Comment . . .

in Australia, not just back in 2010 or 2011, but right now, at the end of 2012. Going into the New Year 2013, prices are *still coming down!*

Part of the inspiration for this new feature article was the fact that one of our neighbours turned up with a very sharp 7.3 Sea Legend by Whittley.

This beautiful sportscruiser has a just-rebuilt gear box, an EFI MerCruiser 5.7 sterndrive in excellent nick. With a couple of days of professional detailing, I reckon the complete rig could be brought right up to as-new, Boat Show condition.

It's been well looked after, there are logbooks from Northside Marine (in Brisbane) going back for all of its life, and it is a genuine two owner craft with a near new set of covers and clears.

To study this boat, sitting in its excellent RMS gal-steel tandem trailer (with the big LandCruiser wheels and a Carlisle power breaking system) and appreciating it was on the market for around \$40K, absolutely knocked me over – and yes, we all know the owner's asking price has usually got a couple of \$K's built in for final negotiations.

But hold the 'phone - it wasn't *that* good value, because in the end, Gordon and Ruth had a choice of *several* excellent (Gold Coast / Brisbane) Bayliner and SeaRay cruisers of the bridgedeck kind, for as much as \$10-\$15K less, and there were plenty more interstate to choose from in a similar price and quality range!

Acknowledging these latter craft were priced without a trailer (as they are all marina, dry storage or wet berth boats) these prices are still hard to believe.

It doesn't matter if the boat is a 1988 model or a 2005 model, either, as it doesn't make much difference in fibreglass. All you have to worry about really, are the mechanicals, and there is nothing quite so reliable or strong as the 5.0 - 5.7L V-8 MerCruiser sterndrives so commonly used.

Never have we seen such cheap boats, and never has there been such a fantastic time to go forth and get a genuine, 100% ridgy-didge, boat bargain.

You've All Done Very Well!

In the lead up to Christmas and the New Year, we received many cards and emails from our subscribers and readers, many of whom we've known personally on and off for years. It was great to hear from so many people and acknowledge



Fellas . . . putting this as delicately as we can . . . um, with the new downloadable PDF version of The Boat Mag, in your iPad (as pictured above) or tablet, you CAN now enjoy The Boat Mag anywhere your little heart desires - including out back on the 'loo, on the boat, the front porch, the 'van, in your swag - anywhere, anytime. And it's so easy to use, you don't even need your glasses to read it or enjoy the videos.

If you haven't tried one of these things, 'git yer bum' down to Harvey Norman and try one for size - you're gonna luv it - PW

PS: When you get your iPad, get the iPad 2 wi-fi + G3 model, and think about buying the Navionics marine Navigation App with it - add in a simple iPad stand - and you then have one of the best - and by far the cheapest - marine navigation GPS plotter units available. Capiche?

their support of our struggles through 2011/12. Especially in view of the controversy surrounding the decision to ask our readers to switch over from their favoured printed magazine to the online format we are now using.

I can't begin to tell you how proud we all feel that so many of you took the bull by the horns, and either upgraded the home computer, upgraded your laptop or went out and actually purchased an iPad to work with the new Boat Mag online structure.

We've spoken to hundreds of readers these past few months, explaining how it all works, helping readers when they got stuck, suggesting better ways of working it – it has been a fantastic process, and we congratulate you all for a magnificent effort.

We have taken much encouragement from the obvious delight – *not to say relief* – so many of our older readers have expressed when they've got The Boat Mag up and running, used the page

turning technique for the first time, and checked out the videos.

And we have to say a special 'thank you' to all the wives, daughters and sons who stepped into the breach to help Dad get that darn computer thingy going . . . it has been a heart warming process with some great Aussie humour and many a good laugh along the way.

Thank you, everybody!

Safety At Sea

We've thought about all this quite a lot recently, and have decided to produce a 2013 version of one of the most successful supplements we ever produced in the 1980s, the "*Castrol - Australian Boating - Safety At Sea Supplement*".

This was an incredibly powerful and very well received document, with many in authority believing it contributed significantly to a reduction in small craft and yachting accidents in the years following its release on such a huge scale to the wider boating public.

Thanks to Castrol's financial assistance (and the AMSA team in Canberra who co-wrote the Supplement with us) *more than 250,000 copies were distributed to boatowners throughout Australia.*

Whilst the 1980's club or organisational structures are but a shadow of what they used to be, thanks to the spread of the internet, we think we can achieve a similar distribution of this important supplement through our online website and magazines and all the SAR groups who will be involved around Australia.

The supplement is loosely scheduled for the April issue 2013 (#197), and although we recognise that reading about safety issues is not very high on too many people's editorial agenda, we will make it as light and readable as possible. At the very least, a cursory glance through the pages will give you a very affective update on the latest thinking in respect of "pee" tubes, laser flares, inflatable life jackets, rescue techniques, seamanship and boat handling, life without a GPS, and so on.

We will also be featuring a lot of safety aids, so if you're a manufacturer or supplier who produces or imports safety equipment, please get in touch with The Boat Mag's office as soon as possible if you'd like to be involved.

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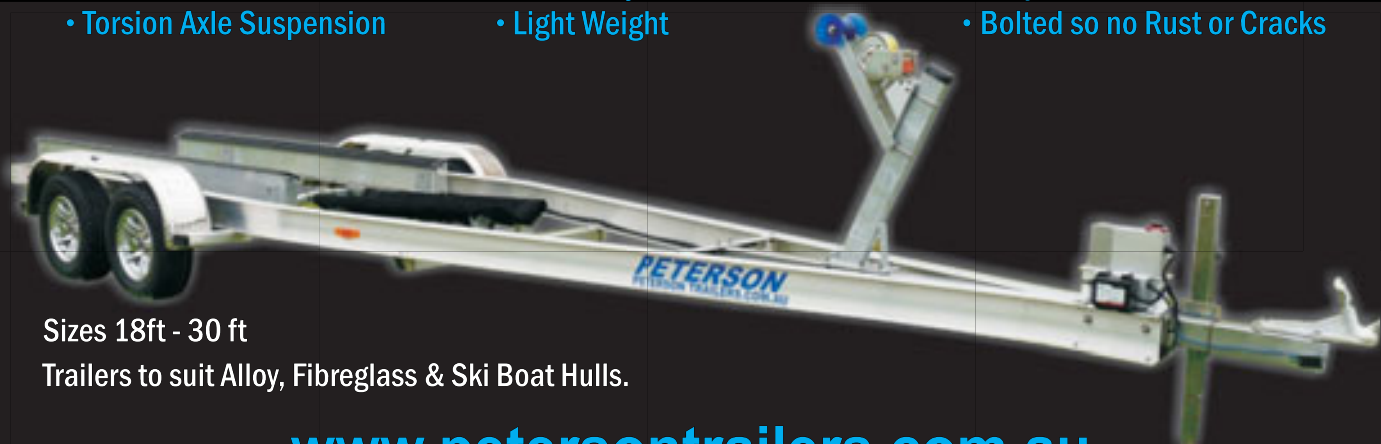
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Twenty Years Apart

Peter and crew

Just a thank you from an avid trailerboat fisho, I have a Fitting Out For Sportfishing 1987 issue, and

although technology has changed, the basic principles remain the same.

I also have F&B Trailers, Towing & Rooftopping Book Two - decades apart, these two books have been a wealth of information for ideas and basics in fitting out my boat and then safely getting it to the ramp and home again. So again cheers and hopefully the knowledge gained from your experience can help other avid fishos.

(Email - name supplied)

Industry Blues

Hi PW,

Read your latest Boat Mag and enjoyed it. You guys are back in form.

Why does this industry believe they are any different to the rest of manufacturing in this country?

To be straight up, the car industry only survives based on taxpayer subsidy as did some other protected industries via tariffs, etc. Those days have already gone thanks to the worldwide free trade agreements, industry subsidy reductions and the movement of production to substantially cheaper countries such as China, South Africa and India.

Frankly, western manufacturers can't compete manufacturing at home with the

wages, conditions, tax regimes or working hours that exist in these nations.

Many even in this industry, have voted with their feet and make and import overseas to sell under their Australian brand. The concept that products made in non-western countries (are made of a lesser standard than we expect) is now demonstrably a furphy, and most clients don't buy that anymore.

Add the fact that more than half of customers according to recent surveys don't care where something is made - and the truth comes home to roost. No good bleating Australian made for Australian conditions - more than half your potential customers (and this is increasing) don't care anymore; purchasing loyalties are only about value for the hard earned. Most of world acts like it's on eBay now!

Some other factors such as the Australian dollar exchange rate, reluctance or inability to produce world class products (really there is insufficient funds to do this), and the volumes here are less than just California alone - crucial factors like these contribute significantly to the reality. And here is that reality - *there is no longer a place for the current crop of volume GRP builders*

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Little did Alf Stessl realise when he was about to embark on his first dealer delivery run in 1975 that it would be the beginning of what has become an integral part of Australian boat manufacturing history. In the early nineties Alf designed the Edge Tracker System that is the signature of The Stessl Family Company and the design in which many other boat manufacturer have attempted to copy but never succeeded.



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to make boats here - the money is better invested in another industry as the risk and return on investment is no longer worth it.

In fact, that's been the case for a long time. Hard to swallow but it's the truth.

Car making is exactly the same - it's a so called "zombie" industry that survives exclusively on taxpayer support to preserve what's left of the politically constituent workforce. Even then it is collapsing.

Some makers will try diversifying into making other stuff like caravans (etc) but really they should sell while (and if) they can and invest the proceeds in another industry that will provide not just survival but an actual acceptable return. Battling on could be a slope to disaster.

No blame, just fact.

We absolutely must acknowledge the role the Internet has played in changing the game too, by informing consumers about what they can buy and for how much, from anywhere, anytime.

This has fundamentally changed our world in all manufacturing, wholesale and retail endeavors, regardless of industry.

To the chagrin of many industries, the punters are no longer mugs, as they are armed with information and won't pay for

middlemen, outrageous markups once enjoyed, or indeed, just indifferent service.

We are no longer tied to anyone and heaps of people buy new cars interstate and have them delivered via the web which makes a mockery of old style territory based dealer networks.

The boating market being what it is also contributes with relatively high second hand sales (locally made new is now too dear, and people are reluctant to spend anyway), the aforementioned relatively low volumes and the viewing of boating as discretionary.

But this market also leaves the door open for niche and specialist builders which the car industry does also, but to a far, far lesser extent.

Who are these guys? Well, the great plately builders, the pressed tinny guys which Aussies just love (although Chinese manufacturing and the odd import is attacking them) and of course the specialist application makers.

Need a role model? Look to Cairns Custom Craft, AMM or CrossXCountry Boats who, through innovation, excellent standards of build and customer service, listening to clients and observing market trends, have survived and indeed

expanded, creating ongoing sales through the loyal customer base and advocates they create.

Of course we must not exclude the Telwater business (*Quintrex, Stacer, Savage, Yellowfin - Ed*) which is very smart, and will continue to takeover competitors, market cleverly and manufacture where needed to remain the force they are in the pressed tinny world. They have shrewdly created the size and market power to remain.

Observing the makes of cars parked in boat makers staff car parks always reveals that some of the espoused reasons to buy Australian or to be disparaging about the relentless march of imported boats don't seem to ring true.

You'll find lots of older cars, some newer models and a couple of luxury cars. The telling point is the vast majority are produced overseas. So the reality is in fact demonstrated by the purchasing behaviors of those in the industry. Therein lies the answers.

Roger Emmerson
Paradise Point, Qld 4216

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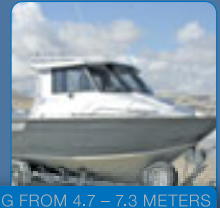
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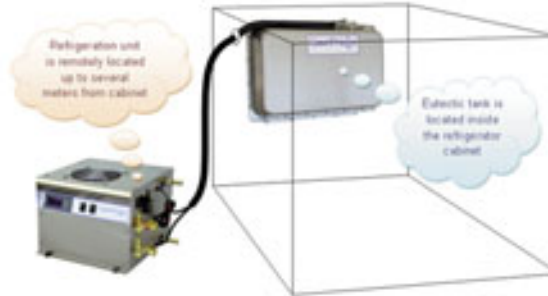
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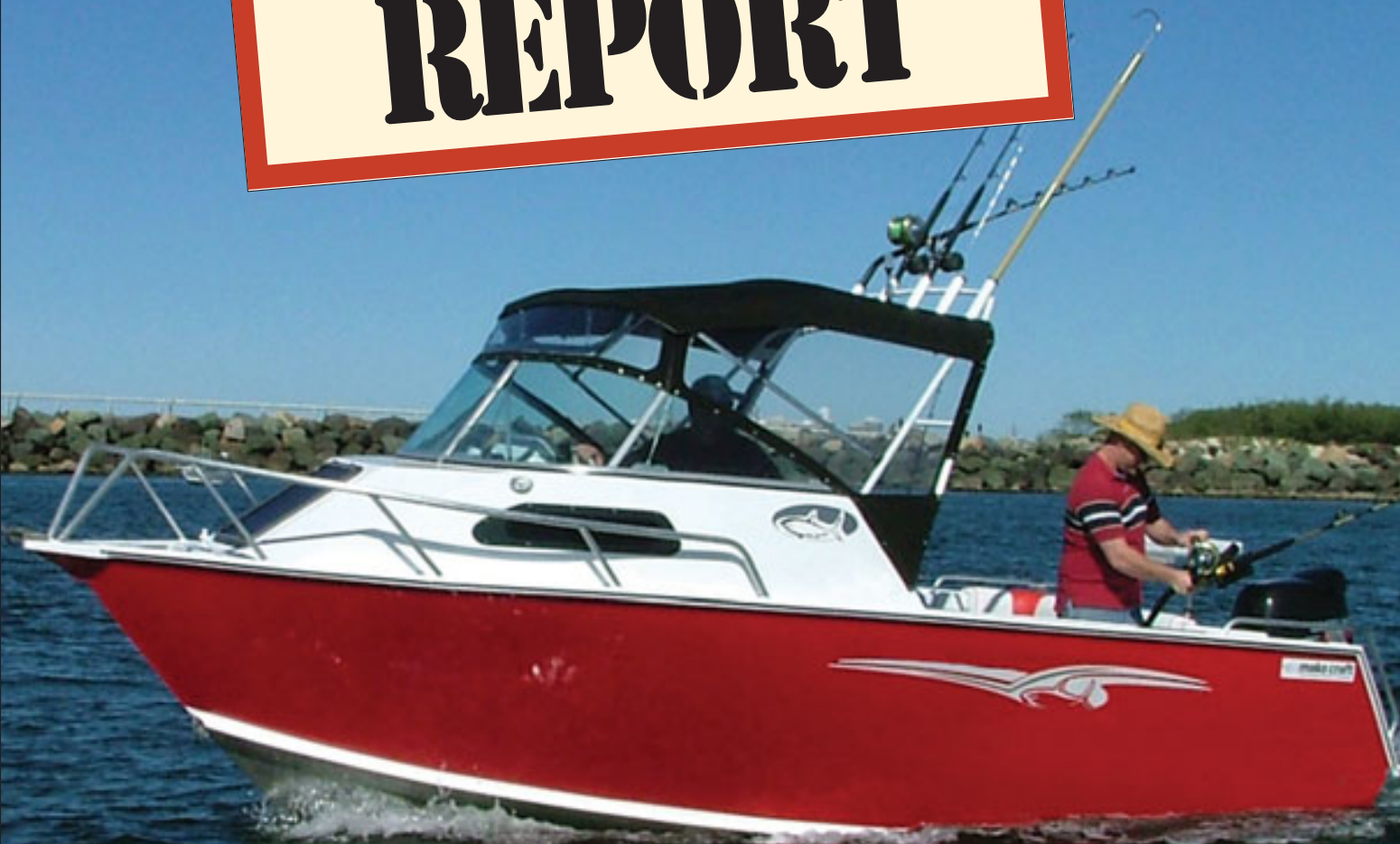
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The Boat Mag's **CONSUMER REPORT**



Almost certainly one of the most interesting - and surprisingly, one of the most complex groupings for boating consumers to work through in their quest to find the best new half cab or 'cuddy' for their family. PW Reports

**520-580 CUDDIES &
HALF CABS**

5.2-5.8m Cuddies & HALF CABS



One of the most enduring classes of family fishing boats in Australia remains cuddy and half cabs in the 5.2-5.8 range.

Obviously, the same principles apply down to craft at 4.8 and up to craft to 6.5m overall, but by far the biggest concentration of activity (from virtually every manufacturer, too) is in the 5.2m - 5.8m classes, or in the old language, 17-19 footers.

If anything, this class of boat is becoming even more popular as time goes on, because of a whole range of physical characteristics which are extremely important to consumers.

Some of these characteristics we need to examine from the outset, because they can of themselves, determine whether or not a consumer should invest in one of these craft.

For example, if you have a garage or car park that can

Family boating is all about Mums and kids, Dads and fishing. All boats do things differently, and have different priorities. As Ruth has confirmed in her partner's Whittley Voyager (seen here with young and old rellos) the Whittley is a terrific family fun craft - safe, dry, comfortable, practical toilet wise, with good access and shelter. It is really a totally different package and orientation to the Trailcraft on the facing page.

only go to 5.2m overall, there's not a lot of point looking at boats in the 5.9 m range, is there?

Similarly, aluminium cuddies (I don't think there are many half cabs down in the 5.2m ally class) are much smaller and lighter than many of the larger fibreglass boats. They can operate very successfully with engines as small as 50-70hp, and that can suit a lot of people, whereas other configurations in this class may require much greater horsepower to cope with offshore conditions.

What we're really talking about here is the amount of capital you are prepared to spend to get one of these craft.

At the low end of the scale, it's possible to get into a 'Plain Jane' 5.2m pressed ally

cuddy on a single axle trailer (without brakes) for around \$30-\$35K, but at the other end of the scale, a 5.8m GRP sportfishing rig with a 150hp 4-stroke, good canopies, a quality tandem trailer with over-ride brakes could push that budget easily past \$60K.

So the question of budget is (as always) crucial, and before any consumer begins the search, it's vital that you establish what that budget really is.

Similarly, one of the other fundamental decisions you have to make from the outset, is whether to buy new, or whether it might be better to buy secondhand.

There's always a big 'pre-loved' turnover in this class of vessel because many people buy them without a lot of boating experience, or really

knowing what they want out of their boating life – and for many people, these boats prove to be disappointing, relative to their expectations.

Sadly, many people coming into boating are very poorly advised, and either purchase the wrong sort of craft for the boating they have in mind (or think) they would like to do, or more commonly, build up an expectation of what they *think* they can do in the boat and then suffer a rude awakening . . . like that day coming back down the Hawkesbury into a 25knot nor-easter, with the kids scared silly and Mum determined never to go boating again because it's all very, very scary, very banga, very uncomfortable and the kids are all huddled in the shelter cabin 'coz Capt



Working out whether a craft has an aptitude to serious bluewater work is not hard. Look at this Trailcraft 560; admire the cheeky raised sheer sweeping forward lifting the topsides height; check the perfect running 'stance' and observe how the cuddy is raised to minimise the windscreen height - and further, how the canopy and clears are braced inside and out. It also has the unique Trailcraft self-draining cockpit . . . so it is ready to give a good account of itself if the skipper does miscue the weather, and has to work hard to get home.

Bligh's told 'em to get in there and hang on . . . whilst he pounds his way around West Head in the best traditions of Master & Commander!

Under these circumstances, it's not at all uncommon to find boats coming back on the market very quickly with low hours on the engine, and a rather embarrassed explanation about why it's being sold. The excuses are endless, but very rarely (if ever) will you here the genuine truth: *"I scared myself silly in the boat because I wasn't ready for the conditions we encountered, and the wife and the kids hated it"*.

The writer has witnessed this sort of 'early days angst' at many different levels over the years, ranging from discussions at launch ramps, meetings with upset boatowners, countless phone calls advising people as to their expectations from particular craft, and whether

or not the choice they've made is suitable.

It is quite a complicated process and the point is primarily this: Many of these boats come back onto the market very quickly in absolutely perfect condition, and providing your expectations are not unreasonable, new boat buyers can often buy a truly great boat that's in perfect nick, for thousands of dollars less than its original price.

So from the outset, you need to think very carefully about whether it's worth investigating the secondhand market in your part of the world to see if you can pick up on somebody else's skinny research and subsequently, poor decision.

False Expectations

Let's deal with this issue now that it's been raised and especially as the writer does not want to discourage or raise doubts in the minds of any reader who might now be wondering whether he or she is doing the right thing at looking at this class of vessel.

What can we expect from cuddies and half cabs in this 5.2m - 5.8m class? You'll note here that I'm repeatedly stating 5.2m - 5.8m as distinct from (say) 5.0-6.0m. The reason for this primarily is because there is such a difference between the 5.0m class and the 6.0m class and without getting terribly high falutin' suffice to say here that the classic 18 footer (5.5m) is actually quite different to the traditional 17

footer (5.2m) and the much larger 19 footer (5.8m) is different again - much more so than you would think at first blush.

This is what's so terribly hard for people coming into boating for the first time or stepping up from the smaller classes of tinnies that are so popular in Australia.

It is crucial that the intending consumer establishes in his mind's eye the parameters of the purchase.

- Obviously, if
- (a) You can fit a 19 footer in your driveway, and
 - (b) You can afford to stump up the cash for it
 - (c) Power it with an engine that will be at least 150hp
 - (d) Afford a tandem trailer, then obviously, that is going



Most buyers put too much emphasis on the size of the cockpit, and for a period, everybody looked for a great big space with nothing in it. That suited the lazy boat builders, but it quickly became apparent that it is not the space in the cockpit that matters - but how it is arranged. The Trailcraft had a fabulous set-up in only a 560 hull. Everything had its place.

5.2-5.8m Cuddies & HALF CABS

to be a much better and more interesting boat with greater capability in the \$60K - \$70K class than the el basico 5.0m pressed tinny cuddy that is available from a dozen or more boat builders.

These models usually weigh about 450kg, are very banga in choppy water, and invariably sit on a single axle, unbraked trailer with little wheels.

You cannot get a 17 footer (5.2m) to do anything like the work of the 19 footer (5.8m) as they are different classes of boat and they have completely different capabilities.

The Offshore Question

Looming large in the minds of many readers is the desire to go fishing offshore. The

next question is: At what point can I go safely offshore in one of these cuddies?

The answer is that all of them are capable of going offshore quite safely on a good day. That's not being patronising or tricky – it's a fact.

The writer spent quite a lot of time fishing the South Coast of NSW with our 474 Stacer Cuddy many years ago, and by keeping a weather eye out all the time, fishing early and coming back in late morning, we fished everywhere from the Bermagui 12 Mile Reef to the Sir John Young Banks up off Crookhaven quite happily and safely.

Later, we used 5.2m JBS plateys in similar fishing areas, with a higher degree of comfort and a greater level of safety, because most of Cliff Joshua's boats have a genuine self draining deck and an

aptitude for serious fishing.

As the boats got bigger, we travelled further and further afield with pro rata safety – because we were always conscious of the fact that we were in small boats – and out wide in the deep blue stuff, anything under about 50' LOA is by definition a “small boat” as far as the sea is concerned.

Don't kid yourself about that – nor have any illusions. I've been seriously concerned in a 48' game boat fishing east of Eden in swells and wave conditions that put Mt Everest to shame. At that point I realised that my 18 tonne, 14.7m (48') Tracey J-5 with 2 x 355hp Caterpillar diesels, was a very small boat in those very big seas on that day off Eden, NSW back in the mid 80s.

It's a lesson I've never forgotten, but it's well documented that the writer is also a fanatical small boat

person and I believe that with the right level of experience and nouse, people can quite happily fish offshore in a 5.2m - 5.8mm boat, too – the key words being “experience and nouse”. These are priceless commodities to have in any form of offshore fishing. So how do you get them and where do you start?

In this class of boat, can you start at any size and go offshore safely? And the answer is a definite “yes”. Most Australian boats in the 5.2m - 5.8mm class have the capability of safely going to sea, fishing on a good morning, to near shore reefs and returning with the crew very safely.

What makes one boat better than another is something that experience and research will determine, but believe me, there is a huge difference between the capability and seakindliness of all the different boats on the market.



In the next section we'll look at some of the issues that will help you determine why Brand X at 5.2m LOA is actually more seaworthy than Brand Y at 5.8m LOA.

("LOA" is 'Length Overall')

Determining Seaworthiness

You don't have to be a bearded seaman to recognise the characteristics of a good offshore boat.

Commonsense will suffice. If you're looking at two or three boats carefully, make specific comparisons – starting with the transom. This is the most vulnerable area of most boats. The boat with the highest wall facing the sea is going to be safer than the boat with the lowest – and although this sounds implausible, the fact is that transoms determine much of the seaworthiness of any given boat.

This has always been one of Ruth's favourite craft - the JBS 5.8/6.0m Walkaround, circa 2006 (when they changed the way they measured their boats). It incorporated all the features we'd worked up with Cliff Joshua, and offered first class, economical, dry, safe performance with just 115hp, and was still easy to tow on a good quality single axle trailer.

Most boats have a pointy bit called the bow which is actually designed to rise and fall with the waves either at rest or underway so you shouldn't really have too many problems with the front end of any of these boats – but that's not the case around the back.

When making a comparison of the different transoms, contemplate having two or three blokes standing along the back of the transom on the inside of the cockpit, and think about how far down the boat will subside.

Yes, the bow will come up, and yes, the stern will go down – the question is how far and what will happen if a wave from a passing Riviera

50 comes rolling across the bay and all three guys are standing there as the Riviera wake comes across. (This is a really common situation).

This is when it gets interesting and it's not hard to envisage, as you'll quickly realise some boats have surprisingly low transoms, opening doors, or transom 'cut outs' designed to facilitate getting in and out of the boat on the highway – but they could be a real trap for the unwary out on the water.

The next thing to study is the freeboard ie, the amount of space between the natural sea level of the boat at rest and the top of the gunwales ie, where the water could come over. Obviously, the

boat with the lowest freeboard will be most vulnerable and in theory, the boat with the highest topsides should be one of the safest. Now we have to say "should be" because it really depends on a couple of other factors that you can't see on the Showroom floor.

For example, the boat with the highest topsides could be poorly designed and actually add to the 'leverage factor' of people standing up against the gunwales (or sitting on them) on this high sided boat and leaning over and creating more tenderness or instability than a boat that had much lower gunwales.

John Savage was a master of this design element – in all of the original Savage ally boats, if you stood right back behind the transom, and looked along the coamings, it was very evident that he'd used the width of the coamings to force his crew

5.2-5.8m Cuddies & HALF CABS

well inboard of the 'edges' of the boat. So that even if a couple of big blokes leaned right over the edge to tag or net a fish – they were actually leaning over from well inside the boat. (Ref: *Check the Savage 530/640, 's next time you see one*).

Interestingly, this is something the American's also believe in very strongly. They don't like Australia's preference for deep cockpits and it's one of the reasons why so many American boats from the giant Bayliner stables (Trophy, et al) or Wellcraft, Glastron etc, have noticeable lower internal freeboard than we have always preferred in Australia.

The Americans don't like deep cockpits in their trailerboats because of the risk of too many people going onto one side and leaning over - and thus creating a

great deal of instability in what would otherwise be a perfectly normal, stable situation.

So all of these things make up the matrix of the factors that determine a boat's seaworthiness and inherent safety. Most of it is just plain commonsense and using your loaf to just look at the boat and think things through. You can do this in a Showroom, you can do it at a Boat Show and it's even easier if you get the opportunity of taking the boat out on the water.

Okay, so how do we buy the new/next boat?

Idea! Why don't we create a buying list and go through step by step, all the bits and pieces you need to think about in the new boat purchase – and this applies whether the boat is being bought off a Showroom floor, or from the bloke down the road who's decided he doesn't want to go offshore anymore.

Anchor Well

It's important to see how

big it is and how big an anchor it can hold - and most importantly, how you get to it.

Do you come up from a cabin hatch? Will you fit? The best way to find out is to actually go into the cabin, open the hatch and try and crawl up and out as if you're putting the anchor down. In most boats in this 5.2-5.8m range is often almost impossible and always difficult – but people don't find out until they've bought the boat and it's their first trip out.

Anchoring is the most fundamental safety procedure in boating. Bar none. You must be able to anchor safely at a moment's notice. Try it in the Showroom or at the Boat Show, you'll be alarmed, I suspect, by how difficult it is to go forward and anchor the boat.

The second part of this equation is to consider (especially if you're a bit older than you were

yesterday!) how or where you would put an anchor winch.

This is not easy in this class of boat – most manufacturers have no idea about anchor winches and leave no room for them at all. Just to add complexity to an already complex situation, it's also vital to keep in mind how the 12v anchor winch would work, given that it has to pull the anchor back up over the bow roller and have sufficient distance so the shank of the anchor doesn't foul the winch itself. (*Oh, what do you mean there isn't a bow roller that will fit the anchor. . . . Next!*)

Bow Roller, Deck Hardware

Yes, it goes without saying that the writer is preoccupied

Apart from being a very pretty, and very well performed boat, this Jonathon Kemp designed ADM built Runaway 6000 (LOA 5.8m) made the GRP competitors of this era look old fashioned and small. None had transom doors, this level of seating - let alone this boat's superb fishing setup - check the teak coverboards!





with the importance of the foredeck arrangement. But when it's all said and done, being able to race forward, open the hatch, lean out and drop the anchor in seconds, could be the difference between being washed up on the rocks or swept into a current or situation you don't want to happen. Been there, done that – believe me there are times when you'll have less than 30 seconds to get your act together.

And yes, this whole process relies on having a bow roller that works, and deck hardware (like a decent bollard) that you can quickly tie off the anchor warp to and trust it will hold. Which brings us back to the original point: will an appropriate sized anchor, chain and warp fit in the available anchor well and can it be deployed in seconds? No? *Next* . . .

Above: This is pretty much the basic, or standard cabin - dash set-up in this class of half cabs. It is rare to get a lockup cabin, although it is easily done if the builder puts his mind to it - but remember, most owners prefer this so-called "3/4" bulkhead - and just put a towel across the handrail (yes, you DO need one here) for privacy as required.

Right: Still contentious and largely ignored by the boatbuilders - getting back on the boat is easy if you are 20-30 and gorgeously fit, but if you are pushing the 60's, carry a bit (!) too much weight, it is just about impossible to clamber OVER the bow of most boats in this class - let alone clamber in through the hatch back into the boat. And trust me - there are many times when you, or your wife, or the kids, CAN'T just 'walk around to the stern'. A ladder like this is a priceless asset, but will have to be custom made.



Bow Access

There are three ways to get to the bow – through the cabin hatch (as mentioned) around the side decks (which is almost certainly impossible in this class) and across the dash as per some American boats which encourage the crew to leap up onto the dash

and through a centre opening windscreen. None of the boats in this class will have that absurd system, fortunately.

We're back to the forward cabin hatch which is the almost universal fitting in this class and almost universally far too small for the job, and almost universally without a

decent mechanism to hold it in the 'UP' position as you clamber through. Um, this of course assumes that it's big enough to actually get through. Most aren't. Try it. Betcha can't go from being seated at the helm to lowering the pick in 30 seconds . . . Oh, and be warned: the crown jewels will be at risk as you

5.2-5.8m Cuddies & HALF CABS

stand UP through the hatch . . . just moments before the hatch falls back down on your neck!

Cabins

The critical thing about cabins in these cuddies and half cabs, is the berths. This is not being facetious, but most of them are not berths because very few of them are actually 1850mm long, and almost none of them are the necessary 800mm that you need in width if you're actually going to sleep on them.

Most people don't, because they almost always pinch in

classes shy away from the installation of even the most basic chemical toilet.

However, if you do look carefully, it IS possible to find boats that do have full length berths, that are wide enough to sleep in, they are high enough off the floor to sit on the berths without hitting your head on the roof (well, some of them) and even more rarely, some even have chemical toilets built in under the berth itself, hard up against the bulkhead where

Ruth stretches out in the classic brochure technique of making the berths look bigger - put someone only 1700 tall on the berth resting UP against the forward bulkhead . . . here, the berths are actually the right length (1850-1900mm) with beaut 150mm berth cushions, and easy access to the chemical toilet.



the middle and they are almost never long enough or comfy enough to actually sleep in.

At best, most cabins in this class are bad weather shelters for youngsters, and even more rarely, they can be adapted to provide private toilet facilities in some situations. However, this is far more complicated than you might first think, and most manufacturers in these

there is maximum head room.

It's all about your priorities. To get a cabin to actually work in this class of craft, the manufacturer must take some space out of the cockpit, so there'll be a bit less fishing or deck space. What's important?

Remember too, kids can't sleep or even sit up front in the cabin of these boats if you are blasting along in choppy

conditions. Try it sometime – the ride is always *terrible*.

If you do get caught in the rough, slow right down, tootle along off plane, and seat the kids back towards the transom on a rug on the floor. This is a good time to remember how to play "I Spy . . ."

It's very, very hard to get a sensible cabin in a boat much under 5.2m LOA unless the manufacturer has specifically set out to create a proper half cabin set-up as per the old 1960s Hartleys which used to

be one of the priorities and the only way to deal with it is to get out your tape measure and haunt the Boat Shows and launchramps.

Helm Position

This is really oblique because very few boat builders know much about setting up a dash, much less a helm position. The universal approach is to whack a pedestal seat approximately at arm's distance from the steering wheel, and the best you can do is pray that the fellow who worked out the measurements didn't play basketball for the Boomers, and was of normal height with normal arms.

Seriously, helm positions can be a real issue with many boats, as the seats or pedestals are put in very poorly without any way of adjusting either the position of the seat or the distance from the seat to the steering wheel.

Best bet is to get in behind the helm, sit on the seat and work it out – because some of the boats are truly frightful. "Ergonomics" is an unknown word in the boating industry in this class of vessel. What you see is what you get, and whilst it might be alright to look at, it could be a real pain in the bum to sit on and use for any length of time.

Incidentally, a very common problem at the moment is to find a place to put everything. It helps considerably if you have a GPS/Sounder/Plotter brand in mind because you can then mentally place it on the dash as you're sitting there, trying to figure out how you can reach the steering wheel and put your feet on the footbrace at the same time.

It's not easy. Often there just isn't space for you to recess a GPS/Plotter on the dash and it will have to sit proud on top of the dash behind the windscreen.

Similarly the positioning of the throttle and the gear shift

levers is of prime concern but is invariably a *fait accompli* in existing boats, but if you are one of the lucky ones who are building or assembling a new boat with a dealer, then you have a fantastic opportunity to jump in, sit on the seat, stand up at the helm, check where your hand falls so that you can then *show the dealer* where you want the throttle positioned.

This is something you're going to be using on and off (literally) for years to come, so if you can get some co-ordination between the seat position, the steering wheel, the throttle controls and vision through the windscreen, then you'll be making real headway.

If you are buying secondhand obviously this is not as flexible, in which case you have to stand there, look around you very carefully and think about what changes you'll have to make.

Remember, moving the throttle and gearshift cables



It's an oldie, but it is still a goodie - positioning the ice chest or freezer box under the helmsman seat was first seen in Noah's Ark! It is simple, space efficient and easy to use.

after they've been installed is a real pain in the whatnot, and more often than not, cannot be changed because the throttle's cables are now locked into that particular length. These are issues to think about when you're buying secondhand but are not quite so locked in when you're buying a new rig.

Windscreens

Well, all of the windscreens in this class will be acrylic and none will have wipers, so we are back to the ubiquitous peeled spud (*kid you not - it works*).

Raw (sliced) potato is a really good and cheap method to keep the rainwater and spray from sticking to the windscreen when carefully rubbed over the windscreen, as the droplets of water just run off.

Alternatively, the professional alternative ("Rain-X") is really good if it's applied properly, and you've thought about how it's

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The secret with Rain-X is to make absolutely – repeat – *absolutely* – sure that you haven't got a grain of salt or road grime on the windscreen when you apply the Rain-X, because the process of rubbing the Rain-X in will create the most perfect haze you've ever seen. This will render the windscreen useless if you ever have to run into the sun.

Rain-X is a fantastic product (it was invented for jet fighters, actually) but it relies on having the windscreen beautifully clean to begin with, with fresh water and a shammy, dried off really carefully and then the Rain-X is rubbed into the perspex.

It works, and it works as well, if not better than windscreen wipers, so keep that one in mind when you're looking at the windscreen in this class of boat.

Other issues concerning the windscreen relate to grab handles – better to have the grab handle on the dash than on the windscreen but it's better still to have a grab handle on the dash plus an inner rail around the windscreen frame itself, as this will add much needed rigidity to what is often a

pathetically weak windscreen frame.

Most windscreens are actually held up by their canopies which is a shocking state of affairs, but that's the way it is folks, and unless you do put an inner frame around the windscreen, more often than not the canopy adds to its strength.

Types of canopies are legion, and every state and waterway has its own adherents to the different types.

From the writer's viewpoint, I still like the version we had here as you can see on the yellow Trailcraft, and that to me is pretty close to the universal set-up; it is set-up as the canopy you have when you are not having a hardtop, because you never take the canopy down.

Similarly with the side clears on the canopies, have them made very carefully because you almost never take them down, once they're up they stay up and although in some very hot climate conditions (such as you'll find up in the north west of WA) you don't have canopies there at all – but for the rest of Australia, side clears very rarely come off, as per the way they are fitted here on our Trailcraft.

Transom

This is one of the author's

favourite areas to criticise, and usually a bone of contention with many of the production cuddies and half cabs in this class.

Most transoms suck – they're poorly designed, they waste space with pretend seating you never use, they do not encourage access from the highway in most cases, and many of them are an absolute pain in the whatnot to come and go from with the kids, when you're just splashing around having a swim.

The transom is almost the epicentre of the boat – so it pays to have a really long hard look at how it's set up and what forethought has gone into its design.

In this class of vessel where we're looking at the classic Australian cuddy or half cab, we have nothing like the spoofy layout and finish of the American boats (bowriders and the like, especially) but instead we have a rather weird collection of ideas that varies from one boat to another.

Let's line up a couple of the priorities.

First and foremost, how do you get into the boat from the road? Today, boats should have a watertight transom door that is hinged, with a pad bolt to lock it in place for safety. The kids need to be able to come and go from the cockpit without having to clamber over or go anywhere

near the outboard and/or its vulnerable controls, cables or covers.

There should be a very well designed, safe ladder that will extend right down within 300mm of the highway, or conversely deep into the water so that Mums can swim back to the boat, and easily put their foot into the lower rung without having to pull off some weird contortion to find the first rung.

Most ladders are way too short for their designed purpose, and a boat with a really good ladder (Trailcraft excel in this field) definitely earn more Brownie points for this feature than many other aspects of the boat.

Coming and going from the boat on the land or in the water, is absolutely critical to the form and function of that boat as a family unit.

Other features of some note include the previously mentioned height of the transom; the inner wall should be the same height as the coamings or gunwales around the topsides of the cockpit and there should not be a cutaway into the cockpit at all, unless it is a properly latched or pad-bolted door.

Study the photographs attached to this report because we're showing quite a few transoms that we think are setting a good standard to obtain in your next craft.

This is a first class set up for the covers and clears – tows at 110 k/ph, and basically never comes down. It's the same as having a proper wheelhouse. Another fine piece of work by the Craft Covers team here on the Gold Coast.



Buying Carefully, Buying Slowly

Reading back through these notes it occurs to me that for someone coming into the world of boating for the first time it all sounds so confusing, complicated and hard to understand.

When it's written down like this, that is how it can come across, and I'm sorry if I've confused new buyers to the process, because it is in many ways, the inevitable result of dealing with so many different subjects in such a small space of time.

However, in discussions with readers around Australia, on the water, at launch ramps and by the many emails we deal with on a daily basis, what really alarms the writer is that people lose faith in boating because the boat they purchased in the first place didn't do it for them.

It didn't achieve the expectations they had for their boating experience and they ring up or email with such sad and worrisome stories about situations which should never have occurred in the first place.

This is one of the reasons why this article has quite unashamedly hammered things like access through to the anchor locker on the foredeck. The number of times people have got into trouble in their boats, especially at the beginning stages, because they couldn't "stop" the boat or 'lock it into position' to given themselves some breathing space to figure out what to do next, or how to do it better, is really sad.

Being able to anchor your boat quickly, firmly and safely is probably the most fundamental lesson boatowners should learn from the outset, and it really annoys the writer to see so many boat builders building foredecks and anchor lockers that make it almost impossible to do this quickly and safely.

So the consumer is hamstrung before he begins, in one of the most basic functions of boating – being able to put the anchor down quickly and safely.

And this is the approach I've taken in this article all the way through; so many of these things are fundamental to the enjoyment and satisfaction you'll derive from your boat, but it's only going to happen if the boat works for you.

Some of the 'blues' boat builders make are just as silly as buying a new car with right hand drive and finding out the gear box only works if you're sitting in the left hand seat. But we do this in boating all the time, because so few people think about the ergonomics or co-ordination of how the boat actually functions.

Worse, we invariably have a situation where the boat builder for the most part makes the boat with all the dedication and forethought in the world, and sends it out to a dealer who attacks it again with a relish from his point of view. But it doesn't necessarily follow that the boat manufacturer and the dealer are working on the same page.

If you think I'm kidding about this, a quick trip to any popular launchramp on a Saturday morning will reveal a whole host of really dumb fit-ups that make it almost impossible for boatowners to operate their boats smoothly and efficiently.

The defining difference between an experienced boatowner who just seems to have everything in 'the right place' where everything runs smoothly and efficiently, and the boat just seems to glide off the

trailer at the launch ramp and goes away fishing, is that one word – *experience*. And that experienced boatowner knows what he wants in his boat.

So in bringing all these issues to a head in this article, I do acknowledge that it is bit confusing, but I urge you to quietly go through it again and again until you've got a grasp of what this is all about.

Footnote: If there are issues here that you find bewildering or hard to follow, don't hesitate to pick up the phone and ring the writer (after 10.am EST, please) or drop me an email (editor@boatmags.com.au) and we'll do our level best to get the issue sorted for you as quickly as we can.

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The walk-through dash makes retrieving the anchor a breeze and the

450 Escape wouldn't be complete without a rear lounge for comfort and relaxation.

Built with the perfect combination of the Millennium Hull and the Flared Bow, together they ensure the 450 Escape is a smooth, dry ride.

The Millennium Hull curls water away from the boat with a sharp entry point and variable deadrise while the concave shape of the Flared Bow deflects spray and aids in lift and recovery.

Complete with a 50 litre underfloor fuel tank to provide maximum time out

on the water, the 450 Escape has room for 5 people meaning the whole family can enjoy the boating experience together.

Quintrex National Account Manger Cameron Wood said the 450 Escape and the entire Escape range are perfect for the family.

'Such an easy and versatile model, I can see families really being able to utilise this boat,' he said.

Standard features on the 450 Escape include fold down drink holders, rod holders, folding skipper seats, pole mount insert

and large side pockets for storage.

But depending on your boating needs the 450 can be optioned up to include a burley bucket, stereo and speakers, rear ladder, bimini and envelope with front and side clears for extra protection, live bait tank and sounder for keen fisherman and ski pole for the water sports enthusiasts.

The 450 Escape is available as a Quintrex Instant Boating Package complete with boat, motor, Quintrex trailer and a three year limited warranty.

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Boston Whaler Launches Dual Console Series

With a cutting-edge dual-console design, the exciting new Boston Whaler Vantage combines performance, comfort, function and style.

The Vantage series debuts with two sizes—23' and 27'. Fully equipped for everything from leisurely cruising to family watersports to serious fishing, each Vantage suits a wide variety of boaters' needs and desires, opening up a whole new view on the possible.

"This is a true no-compromise boat," said Jeff Vaughn, Boston Whaler's vice president of sales, marketing and customer service. "Vantage strikes the perfect balance between comfort, ease and inclusiveness on one hand, and capable, rugged, multifaceted performance on the other."

One of the most notable new features on the Vantage is its revolutionary convertible portside lounge seat, which folds into a variety of positions so that passengers can ride facing fore or aft, partially or fully reclined, or even use it as a leaning post for offshore fishing.

"The convertible seating in this boat is the latest in a series of innovative seating designs from Boston Whaler," Vaughn said. "The next-generation rear bench is much more comfortable than your typical foldaway bench. It sits higher off the floor and has a higher backrest. It's leading the charge in terms of what boat seating can be, and points to the continuing evolution of Boston Whaler cockpit design."

Vantage also offers a host of amenities for the serious angler, including a livewell with light, transom-mounted rod holders and raw-water washdown station.

Watersports enthusiasts will appreciate the sports tower and tow arch options, and the optional beach boarding ladder invites easy boarding all around. Ample storage space will keep every ounce of gear, clothing, toys and accessories out from



underfoot. And for entertaining a crowd, notable options include premium audio and a summer kitchen with refrigerator and grill (available on the 270).

In terms of performance, Vantage really delivers. Propulsion comes courtesy of standard Mercury Verado® 4-stroke engines (single on the 230; dual on the 270), and handling is first-rate.

Vantage features another amenity that all-day boaters will appreciate: a spacious head. Whereas many console-based heads feel tight and cramped, the head on both Vantage models benefit from an offset walk-through to the bow, meaning the portside console with the head is both broader and benefits from greater headroom on the centerline.

Vantage also offers multiple canvas

options to protect passengers from the sun, including a bimini top for the watersports tower; a sun top with boot; port lounge and cockpit covers; and even a weather curtain set with side curtains. User comfort and satisfaction are paramount.

"We couldn't be more excited to introduce the Vantage family of boats," Vaughn said. "Boaters will really enjoy and appreciate Vantage's combination of ruggedness and refinement. You can take this boat fishing all day and then take it straight to dinner—it's suited for just about everything you could dream of using it for."

For more information about *The Unsinkable Legend™*, please visit www.bostonwhaler.com.

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Surtees 8.5 Launched In NZ

“Surtees Boats, in collaboration with Stimson Yacht Design and Yacht Studio are pleased to announce the launch of the new Surtees 8.5 aluminium fishing boat. Naval architecture, analysis and design engineering services were provided for the new hull and structure, with full size computer generated cut files being provided to Surtees Boats Ltd. The 8.5m is the largest model in the Surtees range and represents a technological evolution from their usual non-computerised build design and build process. It features their trademark waterballast system and bullet-proof construction, and cleared 37kn on sea trials with six persons aboard.”



Two decades of development and refinement throughout the Surtees range has culminated in a boat that has it all. The Surtees 8.5 Gamefisher. From bow to stern, it's loaded with features that only a true Surtees can boast.

The non-pounding super deep V hull, original stabilising ballast technology, and an ultrastrong deck system makes the Surtees 8.5 one of the best handling, smoothest riding and stable boats at rest your hard earned money can buy.

Designed using state of the art CAD and CFD computer design systems, this Surtees is arguably the best towable hull over 8 metres on the market.

Taking almost 12 months to



design and build, every effort has been made to get it just right. With large opening rear doors, big windows, sleek design – and so much more – the Surtees 8.5 Gamefisher has certainly been worth the wait.

Your Surtees 8.5 Gamefisher start up package will also include battery box, battery isolation switch, navigation lights, switch panel, bilge pump, hydraulic steering, anchor, rope and chain. Because the 8.5's are so much bigger than their predecessors, we've included all these

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(See the ad from Australia's exclusive Surtees agent, Roughwater Marine on Page 16 this issue for further details)

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“Up in the air . . . is it a bird, is it a plane? No, it’s a catamaran . . .”

Living With Airberths

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There are times in the lives of those with an inclination to analysis that are true revelations. Times when you sit back and think: “Yes. This guy has got it right. This is the way to go on this issue.”

I have had many such times. Most are small. Frequently at work I have thought: “Now that is a natty little gizmo. Just the job for this problem.”

Others are bigger; some much more so. Four of the bigger ones spring readily to mind: Sociobiology, transom

For a one-time globe girdling cruising yachtsman settling down to land life in FNQ after 10 years at sea was hard enough, but they had to get their 25 Cougar Cat sorted so they could access the beautiful waters of the surrounding Great Barrier Reef now on their doorstep.

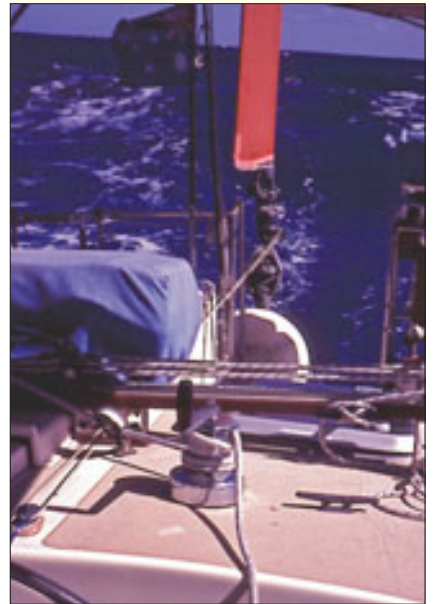
extensions, windvanes and Airberths.

When I put down Richard Dawkins’s seminal book, *The Selfish Gene*, in the late 70s, I felt a great sense of relief and understanding. Revealed within was a mechanism and a level of function that made evolution as a process understandable to me. Now I could work out much of why animals behave as they do and why the world is as it is. Not all revelations are quite so life changing and my choice of the other 3 are of a more nautical application.



Thinks...“Now that looks like a bloody good idea!”

Below: We named our Hydrovane Derek after the genius who invented it. I spent many hours during our 3 week Atlantic crossing mesmerised by its marvellousness. A revelation indeed.



Below: Doing the deed on the hard in Malta before our Atlantic crossing. Grafting another metre and a half onto Stylo's stern looked great, worked well and was structurally strong enough to mount an auxiliary rudder/wind-vane Hydrovane self steerer.





Above: By the time we decided to get back on the water in FNQ we were hard nosed realists as to the conditions up here. B5 is the distillation of all that experience and she performs brilliantly in the seas stirred up by 20-25 knots of trade-wind that are so regular up here. In fact the boat handles it far better than we do. This is no toy, she is a real little ship.

Below: B5 on her trailer is a big lump and the tractor itself is no dainty thing but B5 just dwarfs it. In the end tractor reliability, driver availability and boat yard hours drove us to search for a different solution.



Below: Up on the Airberth both lower units are well clear of the water and the HDPE pontoons. The ladder is a bit obscured by the marina pile but access to the boat is good and the location of the pod and hull drains can be seen.



After Robyn and I met Cannibal and her owners in the Escape River on Cape York in 1991 I came to realise that the lines of a boat aft are both real and virtual. The real ones are where the designer chose to set the physical limits of the vessel but the virtual ones still exist in the projection of those lines back into space. If you can work out a way of fabricating the structure and joining the two together then a part of the virtual can be turned into reality. The one and a half metre transom extension we grafted onto the stern of our yacht *Stylopora* proved a case in point. It made the boat look better, function better and go faster.

Having learned a suspicious appreciation of anything electrical aboard a boat and had many hours of sleep disturbed off-watch on ocean passages as *Stylo's* electrical/hydraulic Coursemaster autopilot grunted away under the bunk I was ready to try a windvane self steerer. Hydrovane seemed to fill the bill. It needed no electricity, by-passed the main steering and it provided a spare rudder while making no noise. I bolted one to our transom extension in Malta and spent many hours mesmerised by its mechanical genius on the long Atlantic crossing.

Then we come to the main topic of this story: The Airberth floating dry-dock. When we returned from our circumnavigation after 10 years living aboard, *Stylo* had almost become part of the family, like some benevolent animate being that had been looking after us through a myriad adventures. Initially we tried to keep her but it was never going to work. A boat that complex needed to be lived aboard, maintained and used as she was intended. In the end it became too much for us and she just sat in the marina at Yorkeys Knob going to seed. It was an emotional wrench but in the end it was easier to see her sail away than it was to watch her deteriorate.

We went boatless for a few years but the pull to be back at sea under our own command eventually became too strong with the fabulous resource of the Great Barrier Reef on our doorstep. Eventually we settled on an old 8 metre Cougar Cat that became *Bandwagon 5* powered by newish 200hp Suzukis. A criterion of our choice was that she must not need to be kept afloat when not in use. From a clean hull to barnacles is 10 days in Far North Queensland and hull maintenance is so demanding that I reckon a boat

kept afloat needs 3 times as much work as one kept carefully on the dry. B5 came with a massive stainless steel trailer that made the rig just legally towable in Queensland albeit with oversize signs, flags and flashing lights and only during daylight. But, big lump of a thing that B5 was, during launch and retrieval it would be hard to keep even a big high set 4WD out of the salt water.

Our solution was to leave her on the trailer in the dry storage yard of the marina and use the club tractor for the launch and retrieval. This was a solution of sorts but a solution with baggage. The tractor had to be working, a driver needed to be available and only between 0830h and 1630h, providing of course that there was not a triathlon in progress or other major tourism event that closed the boat ramp. Our intended use of the boat was upset by all of these on multiple occasions. It was during this time that I first became aware of Airberth and their clones and had one of my revelation moments; "Now that looks like a bloody good idea!"

Initially the dollars put me off but we realised progressively that the main limiting resource in our lives was time rather than money and after a deep and meaningful we decided that it was effective use of our resources to get an Airberth, thus liberating us to use and enjoy the boat whenever we wanted while we were still physically able to do it.

To keep the hull of your boat out of contact with sea water in a marina pen there are 3 commercially available concepts

One is a plastic bag lined with fishing net supported by floats. You drive your boat in, zip it up, tie off the boat and pump the seawater out of the bag. I have seen a couple of these but to me there were so many questions and imponderables hanging over their efficacy and durability that despite their much lower initial cost I never seriously considered them.

Another system is a modular platform with limited submersibility at one end that allows you to just drive up onto it and then refloat the submerged bit to restore a level platform. I've also seen a few of them but they seemed more suitable for tenders and smaller mono-hulls so they did not get a guernsey.

Finally there are the custom cradles supported by longitudinal submersible tubular pontoons. There are a couple of



Above: This is about the amount of tilt we leave on the motors for launch and retrieval. The need for it is not too apparent at this stage but if you forget it the consequences of dunking part of the powerhead would be regrettable.

Below: This is close to the maximum stern immersion during launch and retrieve. The location of the tilt tubes on all outboards make it easy to get the powerheads up and clear of the briny.



Below: What goes down at the back must come up at the front. The forward mooring rope can go to the outside pontoon and thus needs no adjustment but hull and motor access at the back means that the aft rope goes to the dockside pontoon and thus must be adjusted in use.





Above: From the water this is what you have got to aim at. Tolerances driving a catamaran are much tighter than with a mono-hull. Twin motors mounted wide are an assistance but approach to an Airberth in a cat are far from *lassaize faire*. **Below:** This picture is complementary to that of the Airberth ready to receive a vessel. As the knuckle of the bows come onto the forward crossbeam, small ramps (not seen) provide for a smooth arrival on top of the crossbeam and the angle guides do the job for lateral centring. It is still pretty easy, just not as easy as the promo DVD infers.



manufacturers but I liked the look of Airberth engineering in the cradle structures and their generally tidier organization of the side guides and air hoses. After a lot of research there was not much difference, if any, in price and in the end the choice was easy to make.

So what is it like living with an Airberth? Pretty good so far I'd have to say. Their service was great, the materials seem boat friendly, require low maintenance and are bullet proof from the marine environment as well as benign to it. The durability of the electrical component in the form of the blowers that force air *into*, and thus water *out* of the pontoons, will only become apparent with time and like everything related to boats Airberths have their quirks and peculiarities.

For both launch and retrieval it is important to have a bit of tilt on the motors. Cats have a lot of buoyant stability athwartships but much less fore and aft. During the launch the bow really rises so as the stern settles you could easily risk getting part of the engine cowls under water. Modern 4 strokes are complex engines and this is treatment that will not please them. The position of the tilt tubes on outboards mean that as they tilt the powerheads also rise and on B5 a bit back into the tilt range from full trim out seems about right. All boats are a bit different so start out well tilted and find out what your rig needs.

As a general rule there is a lot of fore and aft hull tilt during launch and retrieval so don't load the boat until she is floating, likewise the unload and never have anyone on board during the process. Everybody is best off on the dock, staying alert for any foul-ups and watching the stern rope so the whole thing does not drift about banging into things.

Sequencing is very important in getting the best out of an Airberth. The main routine is to start aft and work

Left: The blower box is pretty easy to handle and it is important to know which switch blows air into the outside pontoon. Air friction means that the outside blower needs to be started first by a few seconds to keep the lift even. When both are running you need to be aft tending the aft mooring rope to make sure the ladder hardware does not snag the marina finger. Once it is all running the process is surprisingly swift.

Right: Attachments to the guides like the ladder and the keeper bollards for the positioning rope are prone to snagging on the marina finger, you need to be alert and close by to prevent it. Non-slip pads on the guides for stepping aboard are essential.

forward. With B5 that means:

- 1) Make sure that the motors are tilted up a bit.
- 2) Check stern and engine pod drain plugs.
- 3) Fully loosen the stern rope to the pontoon.
- 4) Drop both snorkels into the water.
- 5) Take off both air caps simultaneously.

Go back aft and control the stern rope to the dockside pontoon while you watch the action. (The launch takes about 3 minutes and when the Airberth is fully immersed a splutter of water comes out of the nearside air nozzle. The steepest bow-up/stern-down posture in the process happens about 2/3 of the way through.)

With the aft part submerged tighten up the stern rope to stop the end of the Airberth swinging about while you are off fishing and you are good to go aboard, drop both motors to their running position and start them up.

Finish loading the boat up with her afloat and level then drop the stern positioning ropes onto their bollards, back out and away you go

In the promotional DVD they show a guy bringing in a 5 or 6 metre runabout while looking backwards. That may be OK in a small mono but it certainly would be inadvisable in a cat. A mono has only one stem so there are nearly 2 metres leeway on either side to aim at and then let the strong self-centring of the Airberth do the rest. In a cat you have about half a metre max per side and if you get it wrong you will have one of the guides going down the tunnel. Not good! With a cat your approach needs to be much more precise. On the plus side you have the manoeuvrability of twin motors but the negative of more

Right: Down on the pontoons aft checking on the drainage bungs. When she was stored on the trailer in the club park I used to leave them out (unless a cyclone was imminent) Now, poised over the water, in case of inadvertent launching, I leave them in at all times.





Even for an old bloke like me, with appropriate anti-slip protection, access to the pontoons for drains, motor flushing etc is quite reasonable. It is all a lot easier if you have a good hand-hold, as I have here with an aluminium tube in the aft rod holders.



highly wooded topsides making cats more susceptible to crosswind.

To get the sharp knuckle of cat stems onto the forward supports there is a small ramp that you must climb. This will need a little power but not too much, the High Density Poly Ethylene is slippery and it is easy to over-shoot. It is good to develop a reference point on the dock so that you know when to touch the motors astern to stop her. If you have gone too far put on the positioning ropes and give her a bit of thrust astern so that you do not rely on the lifting of the bow to slide her back to the right position. Locating the centre of gravity of the boat correctly with respect to the centre of buoyancy of the Airberth is important. If the lift starts with the boat a bit bow down an airlock can form that can only be relieved by drilling a couple of holes in the aft of the pontoons to vent the airlock. They make it sound pretty routine in the instructions and I am sure no harm is done if you follow the book but drilling holes in your new and expensive toy sounds pretty drastic to me, highly regrettable and best left out of your life. Avoiding over running when approaching your Airberth is a good place to start.

For the retrieval, once again start aft and work forward: place the positioning ropes on the stern cleats and after you have stopped the motors and tilted them up a bit, get out the blower box, hook it up to shore power and connect the air hoses. Now get onto the dock finger, go aft and:

Release the stern rope to the dockside pontoon aft but only a bit. (As the recovery starts the stern will dive a bit deeper and the hulls will settle aft tensioning the positioning ropes).

Make sure both water snorkels are fully immersed which should be where they already are from the previous launch.

Start the blowers, far side first by a few seconds because of the longer air

Left: We were just swinging at anchor in the lee of Double Island about 5 minutes steaming from Yorkey's having an impromptu picnic lunch. Just the sort of thing that the Airberth makes feasible when I thought the light looked nice for a photo opportunity and I said to Robyn; "Look decorative." She grunted back: "I don't do decorative these days but I have a great relaxed. You'll have to settle for that."

pipe run to the outside pontoon

With the blowers running go aft and control the stern rope as the stern initially goes further down and the bow rears higher. When the stern starts to rise make sure the ladder does not get stuck on the marina finger

When both submerged snorkels are venting air let the blowers run for a few seconds before lifting both snorkels clear of the water simultaneously, cleat them off but let the blowers run on a bit as there will still be some water coming out.

Stop the blowers, remove both air hoses and replace with the caps and lock down.

Once again it does not take long. After the initial dive at the back she comes up like a breaching humpback and you want you wits about you because if something hooked up I think everything could turn to shit in the blink of an eye.

I routinely flush my motors with fresh after every use and the only place I can access the lower unit to connect the flushing muffs is from down on the pontoon. HDPE is slippery when wet and Airberth do supply 4 adhesive non-slip pads but I found I needed at least 8 and they were very good at getting more up to me. It is fairly easy stepping down onto the pontoon from the pods, particularly if you have got a good hand-hold on deck.

I use a couple of aluminium tubes that go into my aft rod holders. If your feet were to slip you would at least make a complete ass of yourself and could easily add physical injury to your wounded pride.

This is where I also access the hull and pod drain plugs, which I now routinely leave in when the boat is not in use. In our old hull the seal between the cockpit floor and the aft bilges is far from perfect and a bit of water can collect if the sea has been rough, if it has been raining (and it can up here, like you would not believe) or we have been washing a bit of fish gore off the cockpit floor. Nowadays I drain the bilges off just before we launch and again after the wash down at the end of the day but at all other times the bungs are in.

Early on in the decision making process I debated with myself: do I go cheap with the 3500kg model or play safe with 4300kg? Just that dollar thing again I guess. In the end I went with a comfort margin and I am glad I did. I don't think comparing a 25 year old hull with what they can do these days in the



same LOA helped us in comparing hull mass. Back when B5 was made Kevlar was unknown and cored or composite technology very experimental. So hull and deck cores on B5 won't show anything fancy, just lots of glass and resin. By modern standards she is heavy!

B5 started her life with carburetted V6 2 strokes and at cruise of 27 knots they would consume 60+ litres per hour EACH! So one thing B5 came with was tankage. Robyn is a bit cautious in all things nautical and her attitude was that 35 nautical miles out big tanks with nothing in them except vapour won't be much good. B5 has capacity for 730 litres and Rob feels better when she knows it is full of fuel. The difference in floating level of the Airberth is noticeable when the tanks are full.

The Airberth does not end the boat trailer's life. Every 100 hours or so the lower unit has to be dropped off each engine leg to service the cooling pumps. I cannot imagine too many mechanics happy to do that with the boat on the Airberth and all those tools and boat parts poised over the water. It might be possible to fabricate a walkway aft and one of the clones does offer this as an option but I still don't see mechanics being wild about using it. A non-trailer option would be to go to a local shipyard and do it with a travel-lift. Having a custom trailer already I think we will keep it, at least for a while, and see how onerous the storage is.

With fish like this on offer it's worth the effort to get amongst them but Airberth makes it all a lot easier when the ducks like weather and tides start to line up. I might add that 35 nautical miles out, on the edge of the Continental Shelf things are rarely as benign as this, weather wise.

Has it all been worth it? So far I think so. But having paid up and in the immortal words of Mandy Rice-Davies; *I would say that wouldn't I?*

The main feature is liberation from dependence on other people when we make a spur of the moment decision to grab some nice weather and get out to the reef. The Great Barrier Reef is one of the natural wonders of the planet but coastal FNQ is a rough bit of the world and to see the reef at its best means jumping on a patch of good weather when it presents and we found more than once the good tides for fishing did not line up with club tractor availability.

To be sure it is a fair chunk of change but as far as I can see it will never wear out and when the time comes for us to hang up our rods, a boat like B5, with an Airberth and a custom stainless trailer should make a pretty appealing package, or at least it should if the person contemplating it has the faintest idea of what boating is really like up here in the paradise we call home.

TBM

A combination of a strong Aussie dollar, a weak US greenback and a tired local fibreglass boat building scene, has opened the flood gates for the importation of both new and secondhand boats from various parts of the world into Australia. Boats are coming in, in all shapes and sizes. As a result, prices of secondhand boats are tumbling even further.

In this report, Editor Peter Webster casts a very experienced and a necessarily cynical eye across the marketplace to see if he can help readers find that diamond in the rough - at truly 'bargain basement' pricing.

Buying Secondhand: New Tricks

Older hands in the boating world learned long ago that “all that glitters in boating is not stainless steel” and the old truism that “anything cheap in boating is sure to be worth a lot less than the price asked” has never been so apt.

The trouble is, for people coming into boating for the first time, it's incredibly difficult to sort the wheat from the chaff, especially when you've got a dozen or more very convincing salespeople all believing that their product is simply “miles better” than their competitor's boat 150m down the road.

Each sales person believes with a maniacal fervour that you will embrace financial ruin by purchasing anywhere else except “in this yard, from me, today!”

We've all seen it, we've all heard it. It goes on every day of the week. And the poor first time buyer, often out of sheer frustration and weariness, all too often ends up succumbing to the more subtle of the salespeople who can recognise that the buyer has been “softened up” and is ready for the “kill”.

If this sounds a tad cynical, so be it – and if the cap fits, wear it.

Let's go back to square one. How does a consumer work his or her way through the mire? How do they learn to recognise what is good, or not so good value, in a very short space of time?

Over the following pages, we're going to examine some of the broad-based issues.

We'd like to share with you some of our experiences that we've had, and whilst this is an enormous subject that has been the subject of many excellent publications (including my son Jeff Webster's series of publications - “Secondhand Secrets” *et al*) what we'll try and do here is draw out from the ruck the salient points that will help guide you down the road.

Work Out a Budget

First off, you need a budget – yes, that's bleedin' obvious, but

what I'm talking about is a real budget – not a pretend one, or a bluff budget, I'm talking about a real, fair dinkum, *how-much-money-can-you-really-spend-on-the-boat* sort of budget that you'll share with your wife and family when the crunch comes to buy something.

You can't afford to waste time looking at boats either up or down from your budget, because there are literally thousands to look at; you just won't have enough time in the rest of your life to study the market *that* carefully.

I kid you not, we're talking here about hundreds and hundreds of boats for sale in every classification, so before you begin to do anything, the first issue is to establish what you can actually afford to spend on the new package.

Yep, “package” – that means the whole damn kit and caboodle. The boat, the trailer, the engine, any repairs that are necessary, the insurance cost, brokerage fees, valuations, marina lift-out fees, a survey, etc. All of the costs must come from that budget figure and you've got to be fair dinkum with yourself, because as noted, you'll just end up causing lots of unnecessary heartache and wasting an awful lot of priceless boating time.

Choosing The Mark

Having established the budget, you can pretty safely bet that if you've got (say) \$30,000 to spend on a boat, then you can comfortably look within 20% of that price range. In other words, put a ring around all the target boats from \$34,000-\$36,000 back to \$30,000. Why so? Because most boatowners expect to haggle. It's par for the course.

However, very few will haggle past 20% - and if they do, raise your eyebrow, put your wallet back in your pocket, and step back into the car. Anybody that's prepared to drop more than 20% on the spot in negotiations can't be serious, and/or they're too anxious to get rid of the dog, sorry, *the boat!*

But you get the drift of what I'm saying. Establish the



In the perennial quest for real bargains, the Number One Rule is to hunt around for the top brands. Boats like this SeaRay 275 AJ (above) and the big CruiseCraft 685 (below) are prized because even buyer #5 knows they have been very well built, will perform extremely well (if set-up correctly) and will retain top resale if looked after. An unsung advantage of buying 'pre-loved' craft like these is that they are invariably well 'trained', properly fitted out, and set up for immediate action. Better still, the savings WILL run into many thousands of dollars compared to their replacement cost.



budget, look up to 20% beyond that figure as a general rule of thumb, and be prepared to negotiate hard.

It is definitely a buyer's market.

Boat Construction - Fibreglass

Right up front, the next item on the hit list of priorities is whether you want to buy a fibreglass boat, a pressed aluminium boat (otherwise known as a tinnie) or one of the more modern, "plate" aluminium boats.

Let's look briefly at the pros and cons of all three.

Fibreglass is the strongest boat building material ever made. Properly constructed, fibreglass will last forever – literally. Better still, if the gelcoat is chalky or crazed, and/or the wooden bits of a fibreglass boat (transom, floor bearers, etc) are soft and daggy, there is a whole sub-industry operating around Australia that will quite inexpensively attack a secondhand boat for you, and rebuild the transom, floors, cabin bulkheads, etc.

It's important to keep this in the back of your mind at the lower end of the budget structure too, because this is where you can sometimes find some sensational bargains.

Picking up an old classic like a Haines 19C that's in woeful condition can sometimes be a terrific investment. If you can find one at around \$4,000-\$5,000 the engine will usually be junk, but that's actually not a bad thing.

Why? Well, the fact is, you'll have no idea of its history and if it's that old, the outboard is probably better used as an anchor, anyway.

“ . . . but in 99 cases out of 100 the transom will have rotted through, the floor boards will just about be saturated with rot, so the boat will need to be gutted and rebuilt . . . ”

The boat's fibreglass work will usually be pretty good though – but in 99 cases out of 100, the transom will have rotted through, the floor boards will just about be saturated with rot, so the boat's hull will need to be gutted and rebuilt.

This is a major problem, you're thinking?

Wrong – a Haines V-19C could be re-built for as little as (say) \$6,000-\$8,000, meaning your total investment for a rebuilt Haines 19C with a fresh coat of urethane on the outside and ready for another 10-15 years of work, has so far gone up

Buying Secondhand: New Tricks

to \$11,000-\$13,000. I'd like to know where you could buy a hull as good as that for \$13,000 on the new boat market, that's for sure!

So buyers need to think sideways about this sort of activity. The boat might look like the wrath of God to begin with, but you need to have the vision to see beyond the crap inside it, and look at its potential in the future.

Generally speaking, old fibreglass boats are a much better investment than old tinnies of the Brooker, Quintrex (et-al) kind.

Boat Construction – Pressed Aluminium

Pressed tinnies last as well as the owner(s) of the boat have been prepared to look after them.

We've seen some wonderful pressed tinnies that are as good as new. We've seen others that leak like a sieve, have severe corrosion, and you wouldn't touch them with a barge pole –well, at first glance, that is. But again, you've got to haul back and take a long hard look at how serious the problem is, before you decide in the negative.

For example, aluminium is even easier to repair than fibreglass – and just about every country town in Australia let alone the cities, has access to people who can weld in aluminium.

Armed with the aluminium fabricator's favourite tool (the "meat-axe") it's possible to cut whole sides out of a tinnie or across the bottom before welding in a replacement bottom section, or sub-sides, or whatever. Aluminium is easily (and very effectively repaired stronger than new in many cases) and remember, with marine grade aluminium you actually don't have to paint it - so you can 'cut and shut' an aluminium boat with great abandon, and just leave the topsides and bottom unpainted - and still keep fishing.

So once again, the issue is about determining exactly what is wrong with the pressed tinnie without making a negative judgement too quickly that it is not worth repairing.

In fact, many of these tinnies are very definitely worth repairing if only because the cost of replacing them today with a new one, is so incredibly high.

And a good tinnie, as we all know, will last for years. Just ask TBM's Neil Dunstan. His hugely popular DeHavilland Trojan was built in 1974 - count the years of age!

Once again then, we can see that it's as important to establish





the boat's true condition as it is to worry about the money involved in the initial stages. All of these boats, be they fibreglass or pressed aluminium can easily be repaired today – that's not really the issue.

As a boatowner though, it's important that you establish the priorities of what you want, and how much you're prepared to pay for it as a total package.

Armed with a couple of the latest issues of Trade-A-Boat or Trailer Boat, Trading Post and the local Saturday paper, it's time to sit down with a texta colour and commence the research.

As most readers are aware, by the time you've worked your way through to page 700, having read and identified possibly 100 boats along the way, the reader of these classified magazines (let alone the plethora of electronic classified sites) very quickly gets a feel for what is on the market, how much is the going rate, and how popular or scarce particular models have become.

A couple of hours wading through the classifieds will very quickly highlight the models you're after - or their scarcity.

It will also highlight how much you can expect to pay with unerring accuracy.

Boat Construction - Plate Boats

These are a modern aberration in the marketplace because there were very few true plate boats built until the 1980's, and Australia's output even then, was quite small. Only in the 1990's did volume start to occur, so even now, plate boats are fairly scarce in the marketplace – and good ones, even more so.

Indeed, I would venture to suggest that many of the boats we identified over the last couple of months in the classified sites and magazines have in fact been very suspect or poor quality – because almost none of the top brands were listed for sale in any of the hundreds of pages we checked.

Once again, this tells the reader so much. It's like conducting your own feasibility study on the suitability and application of a

How sweet it is - the Cruise Craft 625 of ten years ago is (for all intents and purposes) virtually identical to the more recent versions, but now available for thousands of dollars less - usually because the engine is most likely a dated 2-stroke, and buyers will pay a premium to get 4-stroke power. The moral is pretty obvious, isn't it?

Buying a platey like this 5.2m JBS Walkaround is like all other secondhand purchases - fraught with problems unless you do the research. Look for a top brand (original JBS) AMM, Cairns Custom Craft, (etc) by a qualified designer or architect - and have the boat very carefully checked and sea-trialled in the planned or expected conditions. Be super careful: with this type of boat, many should be just left at the pound.

boat – and importantly, it offers an extremely accurate guide to the future resale potential of that craft.

In other words, if you can't find a AMM 7.3m Tournament for sale secondhand anywhere in the pages of Trade-A-Boat or its sister Trailerboat, then you can rest assured that boat will retain its resale value very strongly into the future.

Because there are so few available second hand, it follows that demand is high. Most buyers are aware of the hand-built nature of these boats, so production will always remain relatively low – suggesting that the top plate builders (AMM, Origin, Cairns Custom Craft, Nautic Star, etc) for example, will always stay in demand and by definition, retain their excellent resale.

All of this can be identified through the pages of these classified magazines by any reader about any boat.

It is not rocket science.

But back to the plot – the advantages of a plate boat are many, but so are the disadvantages. They are a very different proposition to buying one of the big fibreglass brands where you can be reasonably assured that what you are getting, at least started life as a quality product.

Buy a late-80s Signature 1750LE, and you know it's going to be a very well built, and good handling boat. Subject to the usual inspections and surveys, the buyer can be reasonably sure that being an original Signature, the boat will handle properly and was well designed in the first place.

This is incredibly important. You do not have that assurance with almost any of the old plate aluminium boats! They can – and do - vary from boat to boat within a model range.

This is why so many of them are terrible handling and poorly performing boats. There have been more lemons built in plate aluminium than all the other materials combined – and most of them were built in the 1990s when plate boats soared in popularity from small shops all over Australia.

When you buy a platey, you have to be very careful that you buy a good one – and that’s not just stating the obvious. The sad fact of the matter is there have been relatively few very good ones ever built, and those that are, are rarely seen on the secondhand market.

Why? Well, to begin with, most of the plate boatowners who have the good ones, hang onto them like the family jewels.

More often than not, they’re passed down from within the family, amongst mates, or over to a brother or uncle. Once you’ve got a good plate boat set-up it is a jewel – and very few people let them go any further than the family circle, or out to their mates, or the local fishing club.

Buying a secondhand plate boat is fraught with serious problems. There is no guarantee that you’re not just buying a pig in a poke – or to put it bluntly, a boat that has the handling characteristics of a bath tub. And believe me, some of them are truly appalling. Not just in terms of having a bad ride (a common platey characteristic) but some of them are positively dangerous in the way they’ve been set-up, and/or they are as ‘wet’ as a shag on the proverbial. Commonly, their weight placements are all wrong, they are frequently out of trim, and all too often, very poorly ‘balanced’.

How does a beginner spot this? Well actually, it’s not that hard – but don’t trust your own judgement if you’re coming into the business of boating for the first time.

Seek out an experienced plate aluminium boat surveyor, naval architect or alloy plate boat builder who has had a lot of experience with the design and construction of plate aluminium boats.

Just as a quick aside, it’s surprisingly easy to check it out yourself. Have a look at the boat as it sits in the water. If it looks bow down or bow up be a little bit concerned.

If it doesn’t float on its marks (the chine edges aren’t in the water, for example) or when you step onboard it feels a bit

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scary and a bit tender (“tippy”) then keep going, there are much better boats around.

Summing Up The Materials

From the top, fibreglass usually wins hands down when buying secondhand at the lower and middle end of the marketplace.

Fibreglass is indestructible to the extent that it is going to create a massive environmental headache for the world in the future, because fibreglass just doesn’t go away; it doesn’t melt, doesn’t dissolve - doesn’t do anything.

So when you’re buying secondhand at the bottom end of the market, look for a fibreglass boat above all others. Old Swiftcraft, Caribbeans, Savages – any of the well known national brands from the 1960’s (Pride, Bellboy) or the 1970’s (Haines Hunter, Sea Metre, Cruise Craft) let alone the 1980’s are going to be a pretty sound investment in the big picture sense.

In all cases they still need to be checked for wood rot in the transom and under the floor in the cockpit, but generally speaking, a really old boat in fibreglass can be just as sound today as it was when it was built.

Not 200 metres from where I’m writing this report, is an absolutely mint condition 15’6” Bellboy which was a boat I fell in love with in 1963 when we were building our first Hartley half-cab in plywood. At the time I thought this Bellboy was the “bees knees”, and yet here it is today, 2013, still doing service from Runaway Bay. And I can tell you, the fibreglass is absolutely perfect, *fifty* years later!

So fibreglass gets the nod for longevity, but it can have problems – especially when wood is mixed with it – as it was (still is!) invariably used to reinforce and stiffen the transom, and used as stringers under the floor of the cockpit and cabin.

Second cab off the rank is obviously pressed aluminium, simply because zillions have been built, and *thousands* of them

Specialised fishing craft from the top builders such as Bar Crusher, Cairns Custom Craft, AMM, Nautic Star (et al) are always going to be scarce - and more expensive - even secondhand. Look for the ones with high engine hours - in this field, it is actually better to buy a boat that’s been working hard, than one that’s been ‘parked’ in a back yard.



“ . . . There have been more ‘lemons’ built in plate aluminium than all the other materials combined – and most of them were built in the early 1990s . . . ”

are for sale secondhand.

Tinnies come in three groups, starting with throw-away models that are deadset too cheap and highly suspicious.

Then there is the old model that’s been very well looked after – especially look for a lot of the old Quintrex Seaman, Cruise-Abouts, Laze-Abouts etc, from the late 1970’s. These are always good ‘stock’ and if you can find one that’s been looked after (and that’s not hard to identify) this can be very good and sensible buying.

If it does have a few problems – don’t panic – it’s generally fairly easy to affect quick and inexpensive repairs to aluminium. If you’re in doubt about the corrosion issue and the effect it might have had on the hull, just get a little nylon hammer and go for a tap all over the hull.

If, um, that little nylon hammer actually goes through the hull or the topsides then yes, you, ah, um - possibly have a problem with that hull! But not to worry - it might be easily (and quite cheaply) fixed unless it has really severe corrollysis - and you can identify pin prick holes across the bottom.

Time Out: *It’s easy to check for leaks and pin holes - ask the yard or the owner for a hose - and fill the inside of the tinnie up with water, well above the external waterline.*

But in the later years (pressed tinnies from the 1980’s and 1990’s) the industry started to get its act together a bit more. Standards rose markedly in the 1990’s.

Really good buying at the moment are some of the “old” new generation Quintrex’s that started emerging in the early 1990’s. Now 15-20 years old, they still represent extremely good

Put yourself in the picture! I’d love to, but the the writer couldn’t afford to feed ONE of the engines, let alone two, and the cost of maintaining, berthing (and depreciating) the rig each year is considerably more than we can earn these days, so we’d have to sell off some of our Rio Tinto or BHP shares (!) . . . and that’s the main reason why so many absolutely gorgeous cruisers like this ten year old Riv 43 are for sale at hundreds of thousands of dollars less than a new model.

This is a fabulous time to buy a big rig, but unfortunately, in the big cruiser world, the purchase price is not nearly as relevant as all the other mentioned costs. It costs just as much (if not more) to keep a 20yr old Mariner 38 in excellent nick, as it does an equivalent, brand new Riviera or Maritimo.

value. For a long time there, they held their price pretty well, too, but there’s so many of them coming onto the market now, they are now starting to drop in price to more affordable levels.

Plateys? If you’re not experienced in boating, I wouldn’t go there. Buying a platey is the province of very experienced fishermen and boatowners, unless you have access to very competent, experienced advice.

Engines - Age Shall Not Weary Them . . .

You’ve found the perfect Haines Hunter V-17C. It’s in amazingly good shape, the owner has already replaced the transom, and you’ve fallen head over heels in love with it. There’s only one problem: on the transom is a 105hp Chrysler, circa 1978.

Funnily enough, for all the jokes about Chryslers (“white grenades” or “*Let the Force Be Up You*”) there were several models of the Chrysler that were very reliable engines. The old Chrysler 55hp and the 105hp in particular, were very good engines, and some of their smaller models, like the 15 and 35, just go on – *and on*.

However, like anything mechanical, old engines relate directly to how they have been treated.

You can find old engines, some of them up to 30 years old that are in absolutely mint condition because the owners only ever used them on Lake Eucumbene (read freshwater) 12-15 times a year, and came home, gave the boat a wash and polish, before putting it away undercover in the garage. As a result, the boat’s in gorgeous condition 15-20 years later!

These boats do exist. Not so long ago, a 1978 Haines 19C



Some old models, like the superb Haines Hunter V-16C& R, V-17C&R, V-19C (shown) &R, V-213C series from the 1970s and early 1980s still bring big dollars for craft in mint condition. They are hard to find as “bargains” now, as so many pro re-build shops and dealers snap them up, as they represent such a good investment. “Were they as good as their rep suggests?” you ask. Yes, they were, for their era, but by today’s standards, their freeboard is worryingly low (especially around the transom) and owners need to worry about keeping them nicely trimmed and balanced.



hardtop was uncovered in Brisbane with a perfect V-4 Johnson on the back, and an original Tinka trailer. The boat had 11 hours on the clock – having been stored under a high-set house in Brisbane all those years. By the time we found out about it, all we could do was join the queue of people lining up to bid for this remarkable boat.

Buying Secondhand: New Tricks

Finding The Rare Gem

Incidents like this are not uncommon – sure, not with such a remarkably low number of hours on the clock, but it is possible to find some of these original classics in wonderful condition and now available for a fraction of their original cost.

But it’s like winning Lotto – if you are not in it, you’ll never win it. To find the ‘hot property’ buyers have to do the hard yards researching and hunting down these gems. Buyers need to trawl through the classified pages, the Trading Post, the local newspapers or have the balls to do what F&B’s Darren Shiel was doing a few years ago, en-route to saving the deposit for the house he wanted to buy for his young bride, Kathy.

Darren drove around the suburbs looking for boats parked on people’s front lawn with a lot of grass growing around them. If it was a model he liked, he walked up the driveway, knocked on the front door and said “G’day, I’m Darren, are you interested in selling your boat?”

And of course, being the silver-tongued person that he is (Darren comes across like butter wouldn’t melt in his mouth) and he was such a ‘nice looking young man’ that every mother immediately wanted to give him a big hug and reckoned that Dad should sell him that old boat on the front lawn anyway!

Using this none too subtle, but extremely successful approach, Mr Shiel was quickly on his way to becoming the world’s number one purveyor of used craft in modern times, mainly because he offered the consumers cash on the spot – a commodity and a tactic that is almost irresistible.

The point is this – the boats are out there to get, but you’ve got to know exactly what you’re looking for, know exactly what they’re worth (back to the research on the ‘Net, Trading Post and the Trader magazines) and be prepared to negotiate on

The two separate brands Haines Hunter and Haines Signature still confuse the public, but today are radically different businesses. Haines Hunter is now based in Victoria and cutting out a big slice of the market down there, while Haines Signature is based at Wacol, Brisbane, trying to hold on to its share of business north of the NSW border.

Both brands are extremely popular secondhand, with the older Signatures like this one, still grabbing a solid share of national boat sales. This series started as the 535 in 1993, and continued through various upgrades (540, 542, 543) to the present day.





The GRP boat reconstruction and renovation industry these days is much busier than the new boat sector. Here Tim (and Morris) Wells from R.A.M. Fibreglassing in Melbourne, are doing a complete make-over on an old 565 Haines Hunter - and the result will be a beautiful boat for a fraction of the cost of a new one. The trick is to spot the potential reno, and work closely with good people to achieve an affordable, quality outcome. This is happening all over Australia at the moment.

the spot quickly if you're going to proceed with the transaction.

This is something else Darren learned the hard way. "In one case," he told the writer, "I put the offer into the bloke which I thought was pretty crazy, but it was worth a shot – and said I'd ring him the following day to see if he was prepared to accept the offer. The trouble was, I got him thinking about it, didn't I? So he asked his mates at his club that night what they thought about the price – and you wouldn't read about it. One of his best mates said "Hey – listen, I'll give you X dollars more than (Darren's) price for the boat tomorrow" – so I lost what would have been a terrific buy even at his mate's increased price!"

One of the most interesting aspects of Darren's exploits and those of several other traders we've been studying is that none of them give a hoot about the engine involved.

Whether the secondhand boat is fitted with a Mercury, a Yamaha, an old Chrysler or perhaps an early sterndrive, is almost irrelevant to them.

The reason for this is very simple. Because it is just a mechanical object, like any mechanical object, it can easily be fixed by a competent mechanic.

In just about every community of Australia there is a competent outboard mechanic or sterndrive tech who can take even a 'frozen' engine and bring it back to life at varying degrees of cost.

Once again, you've got to do the numbers.

With a boat that is in very good condition, but has an engine that's decidedly suspect, it all comes (then) down to the cost of getting it. If you can buy it at the "right" price, it could still be a really good proposition – even if the engine has to have a complete, 'long' engine recondition.

Let's use this Haines 17C as an example. If you could buy this boat for \$6,500 with the old Chrysler on it, even if you had to spend \$5,000 trading in the Chrysler and upgrading to another secondhand engine from a reputable dealer, the fact remains you're still only outlaying around \$11,500 for a rig that's worth something in the order of \$35-\$40K new.

How far in front are you? Even if you went to the extent of buying a brand new engine, around the 90hp mark (all you'd need with a prop rated engine) and paid \$7,000-\$8,000 for a 2-stroke 90hp longshaft from Parsun, or a grand or so more for a 2-stroke Yamaha or Mercury, the package has still only cost

you around \$16-17,500 (retail) less the few quid you'd get for the Chrysler on the secondhand market, or as a trade-in on the new one.

Once again, the numbers stand up for scrutiny.

Even allowing \$2,500 for trailer repairs, \$2,500 for additional boat repairs (or maybe a new canopy and clears) the buyer would have outlaid a total of about \$21-\$22,000 for a Haines Hunter 17C with a brand new engine, new covers and clears, an upgraded trailer and decent new engine warranties. How good is that?

That's what buying secondhand is all about. In the engine department take comfort from the fact that there is nothing mechanical that a good outboard mechanic or a specialist shop cannot fix, and in most of the major capital cities there are not one or two, but a dozen or more really first class shops who specialise in rebuilding old engines. Find 'em in Google. Spare parts, generally speaking, are plentiful for all models, and again let me reiterate – very often you're better off to spend \$4,000 or \$5,000 rebuilding an engine, than you are to go and buy a brand new one at today's much greater prices.

Monos Versus Cats

I'd like to deal with this issue because it's one we are asked time and time again: Is a boatowner better off buying a mono or a cat? And how do you evaluate the situation, if you're coming into the world of boating for the first time?

Up front, I'd like to observe that very few beginners, or people who are downsizing from larger craft, actually need the capability of a twin engine catamaran.

There are hundreds of them for sale secondhand – and like everything else, they range from magnificent craft to absolute derelicts.

It's long forgotten now, but there are a number of reasons why catamarans boomed in popularity in the 1970's.

The writer produced the first ever report on the original SharkCat in September 1973. The report caused an absolutely sensation around Australia, especially in the pro-fishing community. However, back then, outboards were nothing like as reliable as we've come to expect today.

They were definitely second class citizens in the reliability stakes, and most commercial fishermen couldn't use them with any sense of responsibility or safety.

Going offshore with a 1972 Johnson or Mercury was fraught with potential problems with the ignition, spark plug failure (oiling up when trolling was one such problem) dirty fuel or crankshaft failure.

When Bruce Harris invented the first SharkCat, the biggest thing he had going for him was the fact that it carried two engines. Therefore, it was twice as reliable as a boat – any boat - with one engine.

The fact that it happened to be an incredibly good handling craft that made everything in its day look ponderous, old fashioned and hard riding, was a bonus.

Needless to say the commercial industry embraced the powered catamaran movement with both arms.

SharkCat was followed by Markham Whalers, which were followed by Powercat, Ally Cat, Kevlacat, and so on.

By the 1980's cats were being made in every state of Australia, although shining through this whole period, the three big brands Noosacat, (nee SharkCat) Mark Hookham's Dominators (nee Markham Whaler) and the Kevlacat brand stood head and shoulders above all the others.

By the 1980's, the big cats had captured something like 95% of the commercial market for such craft in Australia, with search and rescue movements, Water Police, Parks and Wildlife

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(etc) in every state of Australia.

In that time, beginning in the mid 1970's, Mark Hookham brought the concept of the powered cat down to the 'man on the street'

level with his brilliant little 4.3m Whaler. This was soon followed by the 4.9, and 5.5m Whalers. Hundreds of these craft were built in the 1970's and 1980's.

Today, the catamaran buyer has a huge choice of second hand boats available, ranging in age from one month to 30 years old - and the prices change and vary accordingly.

Are they worth buying today? Well, you have to be careful how that question is both raised and answered.

Nobody *needs* two engines to go fishing inshore. It's also very hard to justify two engines if you are just tootling out to your local nearshore reef under the safety umbrella of the local Coast Guard or VMR unit.

Twin engines not only cost a lot to buy, they also cost a lot more to service, and in the older models, this can be a really serious problem.

Fuel consumption from the older 2-strokes is also a BIG problem – because they use TWICE the fuel of a single engined boat.

Didn't matter so much when I was paying 54 cents a litre in Bermagui with our twin 150hp V-6 Yamahas back in the early



Since the closure of Markham Manufacturing just before Xmas 2012, the industry lost one of its pioneers in the now retired Mark Hookham - a boatbuilder who has never been credited for his enormous contribution to small craft safety standards. In the end, there is no doubt whatsoever that the slanderous, irresponsible and ignorant social media campaign waged against the brand was largely responsible for the demise of the business. Beautifully built, soft riding, ultra safe and a fabulous sea boat, about 295, 7.0m Dominators were built - and if you can find one that isn't stupidly over-powered, grab it with both hands. The best have 2 x 135 or (max) 2 x 150hp (Optis, Hondas, whatever).



1980s. These days, cat owners running 2 x V-6 2-strokes are commonly spending around \$70-\$100 an hour just coming and going from the fishing grounds. Work that out for a weekend fishing comp or offshore tournament!

Unfortunately, too, the older cats don't take to heavy weights on their transom at all well. We've been asked this question over and over again,

but the answer remains the same: all of the SharkCats, Powercats, Whalers (etc) of the 1970's and 1980's were made specifically with lightweight 2-strokes in their designer's head.

Cats – no matter who makes them – do not carry weight in their 'ends' well at all, and if they've got too much weight on the bum, they sometimes handle very badly indeed. In some cases, they can become quite dangerous as the bum drops like a pendulum when the boat gets a bit airborne – especially in a bar.

For the record, the answer is not to just whack a pod on the back, either – that just drives the nose in too far, too fast . . . today's buyers must understand that messing around with the hydrodynamics of a cat can have a truly horrible outcome.

That said, most of the cats of those days didn't need anything like the horsepower we now insist on putting on them – so if secondhand buyers approach this cat market with a modicum of caution and a dose of commonsense, they can still achieve a good compromise.

For example, the old 18' SharkCat 560 cuddy was originally designed around a pair of 3 cylinder, 70hp Johnsons in mind. These engines weighed around 110kg each – so putting engines that weigh up to 240kg on each side results in a boat that is appallingly out of balance. A pair of 100 hp Yamahas (at 158 kg each) wouldn't be too bad, but no way would you go any heavier.

I've seen many owners attack this problem by moving their tanks forward, shifting the batteries, building pods out the back (ugh!) and so on with varying degrees of success, but the essential fact remains: those old cats do not handle the over-size engines so commonly fitted to them, and that's why so many people have been bitterly disappointed in the performance of their (second hand) (re-powered) (over-powered) (all of the above) powered cats by any of the recognised cat builders.

Summing up then, the catamaran syndrome is no longer needed as much as it was when cats were invented in the 1970s and 1980s.

That said, there are still countless owners who prefer the reliability and peace of mind that comes with having two engines – and not surprisingly, these are the guys that fish very wide offshore.

This I can relate to – I can't fish wide offshore without two engines either, so I can relate to owners wanting twins on their craft - but note, that applies whether they have a monohull or a cat.

Back to square one: Which is better, a monohull or a cat? That's the next phase in this question isn't it? Today, on a personal basis, I would prefer a good monohull that's been designed for 4-stroke outboards, over a catamaran that was carrying *over-powered and oversized outboards*.

“ . . . in the mid 1970's, Mark Hookham brought the concept of the powered cat down to the 'man on the street' level, with his brilliant little 4.3m Whaler. This was soon followed by the 4.9, and 5.5m Whalers. Hundreds and hundreds of these craft were built . . . ”

Summing up: For most applications (about 98% in truth) I think a modern monohull fitted with a 4-stroke single, still holds its head high above the cats for the general market, but in my experience, cat owners tend to be a breed amongst themselves, so comparos are all a bit irrelevant.

Once you've had a really good cat, it's very hard to go back to a monohull.

Similarly, if you just love having something special in a seaway, then a high performance, high tunnel cat with the right power to weight ratio in the engines, is one of the most exciting boats money can buy.

Whether it's new or secondhand, there's nothing quite like the thrill of a beautifully set-up cat working out to sea early morning to the fishing grounds. Very special. But hey, it's also going to suck fuel at twice the rate of anything else.

That, I think, gives us all food for thought . . .

Conclusion

This is a terrific time to buy a secondhand boat.

There are so many boats coming into Australia secondhand and new, that prices of the secondhand stock in Australia have dropped quite dramatically.

It's really high school economics.

As more stock arrives in Australia, unless demand increases, there's only going to be one outcome – and as we head into the new year 2013, it seems likely that demand will continue to fall, and the industry will be struggling to get back to 'normal' ie, prices will continue to tumble. Although many of the American imports that are coming in have nothing to do with the craft we've mentioned in this report, the very fact that Four Wynns make a beautiful bowrider that tempts somebody to buy the Four Wynns instead of (perhaps) a Signature 610 Bowrider, means that every one right down the 'food chain' is affected.

No, we can be fairly sure prices will continue to 'soften' over the coming months, and there's going to be some fantastic opportunities for shrewd buyers to step onto the pitch and grab themselves a genuine bargain.

For them, the secondhand market is the only way to go, and a three to five year old Haines Hunter is a good investment. The saving is substantial, and everything should still be in excellent working order if you can find a good one . . . and so the search begins.

For the beginner coming into the marketplace the by-words are simple: stick with the big brands.

Stick with Haines Hunter and Haines Signature, Quintrex, Cruise Craft, Stacer, Whittley, etc. The top brands are the top brands for a very good reason – guess what? *They are the top brands!* The best boats.

I kid you not, it's that simple.

But for some reason, people think they're getting a bargain when they rush off and buy some whacko brand of boat no one's ever heard of because it's \$5,000 cheaper than the equivalent year model Haines Hunter or a Cruise Craft.

Three years later, the bloke that bought the Haines Hunter secondhand will probably get all his money back the day the boat is offered for sale in the classifieds, whilst the guy who

bought the lemon that no one's ever heard of, will just do his dough cold, and write-off up to 50% of his investment, having waited 3-6 months to sell the damn thing.

This is why it's so important for people to stick with the top brands.

You can only afford to play those sorts of boat games when you've had a lot of experience in the marketplace and you know the difference between a Grady White from America and a Lazercraft from New Zealand. Both boats are beautifully built craft, with a good rep – but unless you've been in the marketplace and studied the situation for some time, the beginner is not going to know that these are two excellent brands in a field of perhaps 100 very ordinary boats.

The same thing applies (in spades) to all the strange American boats coming into Australia.

What I want to know is this: how are you going to sell them in two, maybe three years time? They might appear to be cheap today, but I can tell you, they will be a lot less tomorrow. But not to worry though, if you're prepared for the hefty write-down, go enjoy your boating!

Otherwise be very, very careful about how much you pay for brands that have never been here before, and no one's heard of – those sort of boats are going to be incredibly hard to sell three to five years out.

Avoid them like the plague. There has to be a better alternative - and if there isn't, then make sure you steal the damn thing, because believe me, three to five years out, it's you who will feel you've been robbed.

This isn't some sort of jingoistic pitch to support Australian manufacturers either – in the writer's humble opinion, most of

Buying Secondhand: New Tricks

the Australian manufacturers have dropped the ball in the last decade and have left their own back gate open. They've allowed these imports to flood into Australia, and unless they are

prepared to dig deep and reinvest in new, contemporary tooling, their 10 year old designs will continue to suffer the fate that they're meeting in the marketplace today.

The local manufacturers are still struggling to come to terms with a simple reality: it is not the imports putting them out of business - it's all the near identical boats they've lazily built for the last 20 years that have come back to bite them: Why would a family pay \$70-\$90,000 for a new rig, when they can buy a near identical 5 year old rig for \$35,000-\$40,000 from that nice broker down the road?

And yes, the ready availability of some fabulous American used boats at very competitive prices, have made matters worse for the locals - so why didn't they build boats like the Trophy series in the first place? These imports didn't just arrive last week - *they've been coming here for years!*

It's a tough world out there, and there's some bloody good boats coming in from America, too.

Be clear about this: boats from the likes of Bayliner (and Trophy) SeaRay, Four Wynn's, Chaparral, Wellcraft (etc) are usually as good as anything produced anywhere in the world – and that certainly includes Australia.

Some of this American stuff is absolutely awesome and represents solid investment value, too.

That said, I reiterate my point that it's all about buying the top brands. From a family investment point of view, it doesn't matter whether the boat comes from California or Melbourne, the moral here is simple.

Stick with the top brands from the longest established dealers, and you'll have the best possible chance of keeping your investment safe, properly looked after and ready to turn over when the opportunity comes along next time to buy a bigger, better or later model craft.

The Whittle brand - especially the older models, curiously - enjoy a deserved rep, with several of them being really prized by the brokers as 'top stock' and fantastic value. The Sea Legend 6.3 and 7.3's are standouts, and the Whittle Cruisemaster 700 and Voyager 580 destined for 'classic' status. Quite a few for sale, too, so take your time when choosing, and be prepared to go interstate.

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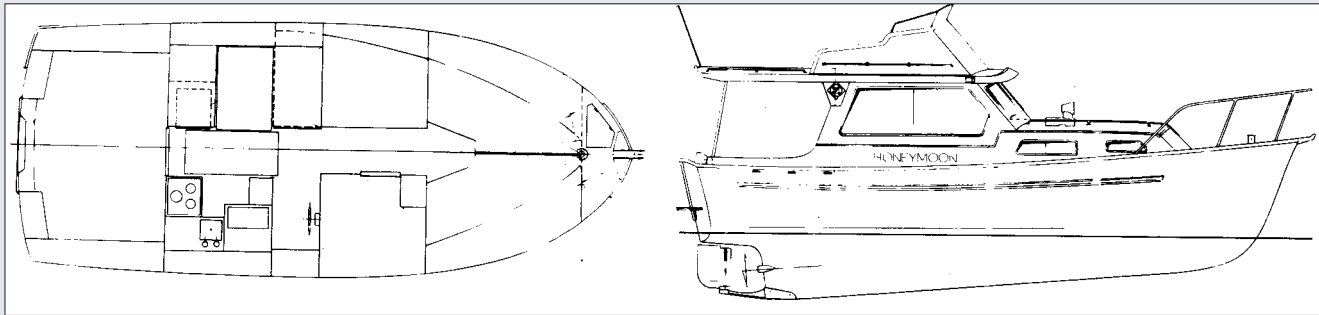
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Honeymoon 26

The Honeymoon 26 is one of the most interesting of the new generation, albeit old-fashioned, diesel cruisers. Designed by Neil Holland from Queensland's Boat Park in Labrador (on the Gold Coast), the Honeymoon 26 owes more than a passing allegiance to the ubiquitous Cuddles 30 cruiser, built by Bruce Harris, next door to Boat Park. For once, this is not a case of one manufacturer 'flopping' or pinching another fellow's design, as the Honeymoon 26 and the Cuddles 30 were not only designed by the same person, the development of one led to the development of the other.

The Cuddles 30 came first, and was very heavily influenced by Bruce Harris' own experience as a professional prawn fisherman in his earlier years. After drawing the lines of the Cuddles 30 for Harris, Holland figured there was yet another stage to go, and spent the following 12 months preparing the lines for what has since become the all-Holland Honeymoon 26.

This new craft differs in many specific ways from the Cuddles 30, so much so that comparison of the two, although inevitable to some extent, is really quite unfair.

The Honeymoon 26 lines are almost totally different to those of the Cuddles; although they share a similar internal layout, the design philosophy of the two craft is almost as different as chalk and cheese.

Design

In a nutshell, where the Cuddles 30 was drawn out to be a traditional double ender with fullish bow sections, firm bilges and almost 'wineglass' sections throughout the

Easily the most significant trend in Australian powerboat design and construction in the last two years, has been the development of the locally-built, GRP displacement diesel cruiser. Demand for these slow, but thrifty, diesel cruisers is increasing as more boating families come to appreciate the many virtues of this style of vessel.

length of the hull, the Honeymoon 26 is more closely comparable to the famous US Maine lobster boats, or to a lesser extent, the Queensland hard chine river and bay prawn trawlers.

To sum up, the Honeymoon 26 is short, fat and stable.

It measures 7.92 metres (26') down the centreline, with a beam of no less than 3.35 metres (11'0") and a draft of only 0.83 metres (2'9"). It is easily the widest of the current crop of displacement cruisers, and this combined with the slack bilges and near hard chine hull shape has resulted in a cruiser that is uncannily stable, with a volume approaching that of the larger 30 foot cruisers.

Particularly noticeable in the wheelhouse, the extra beam takes a little getting used to, because the cockpit (for instance) although it is quite short in length, is no less than 2.49 m wide. The cockpit area of

4.15 square metres is thus much the same as a cockpit of a vessel much longer, but with a narrower beam. In the Honeymoon's wheelhouse there is sufficient beam for a 'walk-in' galley arrangement, a vital improvement for cruising Mums, because they can stand and work in the galley without being in the major thoroughfare along the centreline of the cabin. And you can only do that when you have this sort of beam width. Importantly, none of the other displacement cruisers can approach the Honeymoon 26 in this regard. The unusually high beam length ratio of the Honeymoon 26 also affects the craft's seaworthiness in a very obvious manner.

The Honeymoon 26 is as stable as the proverbial rock, with an unusually short, quick movement reacting to wash or waves.

In other words, where a traditional round bilge hull will tend to roll from one side to the other around its finer, easier bilge sections, the Honeymoon 26 has a short, firm roll movement, more like that of a hard chine planing cruiser than a traditional displacement hull shape. It is very noticeable when the Honeymoon 26 is passed by a larger vessel throwing up a big wake. Instead of rolling madly from one side to the other, the Honeymoon 26 lifts up as the wake passes underneath, but instead of continuing to roll from one side to another (a bit like a pendulum) it simply stops rolling once the wave has passed through. In this sense, it is a very comfortable boat in a beam chop situation, but thanks to the finely-drawn bow with its heavily knuckled shoulder, the Honeymoon is also a very dry boat when punching into a head chop.

Design features abound on the



Foredeck arrangement is excellent - with custom made ground tackle fabrications more than adequate for the displacement of this cruiser.

Honeymoon 26. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the toe rail design (see photographs) which sets a new standard for Australian cruiser manufacturers to consider, and hopefully adopt. The raised toe rail gives marvellous footing around the side decks, reinforces the gunwhale moulding, and contributes greatly to the 'little ship' appearance and feel of this craft.

The internal layout largely follows the now well-ried and proven configuration first pioneered by the Cuddles 30.

To port on the upper level is a dinette for four that converts to a double berth. Continuing below and in part under the same dinette, there is a full size double berth no less than 1.37 m (4'6") across, and ahead of this berth is the forward cabin area with two (and possibly four) berths.

Returning on the starboard side, the head is located forward of the helm, with the shower and toilet being slightly larger than normal, and just enough headroom for the 1.82m (6') author to stand.

Back up in the main wheelhouse, the helm is located to starboard in traditional fashion, and behind this is the walk-in galley arrangement.

The overall layout is both comfortable and practical, with no sign of a compromise anywhere. For once, everything is of the right size, and everything works extremely well.

Of the current range of displacement cruisers now finding such increased popularity in Australia, the Honeymoon 26 has the best internal arrangement.

Upstairs on the flybridge, the layout must be described as excellent - as the author was very involved in its design, there is scarcely anything else one could say! Seriously, when the flybridge was being moulded, the magazine's advice

Above: The rigid hardtop over the cockpit allows super practical drop curtains to be permanently installed. This cockpit is nearly as wide as most others are long.

Below: Designer, Neil Holland, relaxes at the dinette.



was sought as to the best layout, and as usual, we opted for a very comfortable, fully-adjustable seat for the helmsman, surrounded by two fore and aft squabs on either side.

This assessment was based on our belief that in displacement cruisers, it is not at all unusual for the skipper to be at the helm for several hours in a single stretch, and of

all people aboard, the skipper should be given a conning position of comfort, convenience, and sensible ergonomic design. And in this cruiser, that's what he gets.

There is a central, fully-adjustable Rae-line chair, and while the windscreen on the flybridge still accedes to the dictates of fashion rather than commonsense and slopes forward instead of backwards, the helmsman is nevertheless reasonably protected in his chair. As well, at least four more adults can comfortably sit alongside the skipper - achieving a very amicable compromise between the crew's comfort and the demands of the helmsman's position.

Access to the flybridge is fair, with a ladder up the port side, through a hatchway on to the bridge. An additional rail above the hatchway is definitely needed, but this is the only fault we could find. The flybridge floor/cockpit roof extends all the way to the transom, enabling the cockpit to be enclosed with semi-permanent cockpit curtains.

This is an excellent feature, as cockpit curtains give the owner the option of raising or lowering the curtains to suit the weather conditions, wind direction, etc., and creates what is virtually another room behind the wheelhouse.

Fishermen will doubtless find the hard top a nuisance as far as fishing rods are concerned, but this is one instance where the advantages of the hard top far outweigh the disadvantages.

Construction

The Honeymoon 26 is a GRP cruiser, with the unusual feature by today's standards of *not* having a whole range of internal furniture moulds. The basic mouldings of the Honeymoon include the one-piece hull mould, the big deck and wheelhouse moulding, the wheelhouse roof moulding and the flybridge moulding.

There are no interior mouldings at this stage. Designer Holland is trying very hard to retain a fit-out programme more like a yacht than a cruiser, and although sympathising with his aspirations, it is a bit hard to believe that it will be possible to maintain this philosophy for very long. There is no question that a manual fit-out programme using plywood bulkheads and timber beams, bearers and bulkhead supports, all glassed in, is a very powerful and desirable construction form, but it seems doubtful that such a fit-out philosophy is viable in this day and age of Australian wages and work attitudes. If the



Flybridge layout is first class, with excellent storage in the lockers and under the bridge console. We believe this is the only flybridge with a fully adjustable helmsman's chair made in Australia! Observe the watertight hatch to weather seal the cockpit below.



Here's a galley that really works - the big difference being the manner in which a person can be working in the galley area, without interrupting the traffic flow through the cabin.

Honeymoon was built in Taiwan or Hong Kong it might be a proposition, but it seems unlikely to last here in Australia. As a result, we looked at the construction of the Honeymoon 26 almost with awe, because the amount of work that has gone into the first boat is quite astonishing.

The engine installation is typical. Not content with traditional glassed-in timber bearers, Holland has created two special stainless steel fabrications for the engine bearers, shaped to the complex curve of the lower bilge area. These lay inside the

hull, literally cradling the lines of the hull under the engine, and are in turn cross-strutted with a steel brace. The side braces are then glassed into the hull, creating an engine bed system that will undoubtedly be there for the rest of time! However, in admiring the complex engineering involved, it is hard not to wonder how much extra this is adding to the cost of the Honeymoon - and for what purpose?

The rudder skeg, shoe and stern gland arrangement reflect a similar approach to over-engineering, ensuring that the

Honeymoon 26 if nothing else, is going to earn a wonderful reputation for its quality of construction.

In case you are wondering, we are not criticising the Honeymoon 26 for being over-engineered - but there are many experienced local boatbuilders who will vouch that few people will even notice the over-engineering, much less care sufficiently to pay the extra dollars that must be involved to achieve this standard of construction.

Mark you, we would like to think that between our readers, there are still many who appreciate that achieving the best of anything invariably costs a little more; we urge those readers interested in this style of craft to make the effort to look at the Honeymoon 26 during its construction and fit-out stage - as well as inspecting the finished article.

Performance

We haven't spent nearly as much time on the Honeymoon 26 as we have in the Cuddles yet, but the hours we have spent aboard already indicate the Honeymoon 26 is a most worthy addition to Australia's fleet of displacement pleasure cruisers. As mentioned, the roll movement (or lack of it) is the most outstanding feature, followed probably by the lack of trim change between the performance parameters.

Holland designed the boat to run with a 45 kW four-cylinder Volvo MD21 A diesel engine, and is strongly opposed to the present trend of overpowering this style of cruiser to make them do something they were not intended to do.

The Honeymoon 26 is a displacement cruiser with a wide box keel running the full W/L length of the craft; and although it runs well beyond its theoretical hull speed, there comes a point where adding more power to the Honeymoon will merely increase the amount of stern wake dragged up as it tries to dig a deeper and deeper hole in the water. Thankfully, Holland wants none of that, and insists that engines in the 40 kW region are the maximum permitted for the Honeymoon.

With the four-cylinder Volvo fitted, we timed the Honeymoon 26 along Southport's Broadwater at the best average speed of 10.9 knots, with a maximum (tide assisted) of 12.3 knots, and a minimum (against the tide) of 9.46 knots.

It felt good, and didn't give you that awful feeling of some displacement cruisers, that it is going to take forever to get anywhere! Once you get into this nine



Lower helmsman's station is both comfortable and practical. Observe the Tasmanian oak joinery - a nice change from teak. Where does he sit? Answer: that white flap on the galley folds down on two supports (out of sight) to form a comfortable perch.



Boat Number One opted for an open-look cabin, but in fact it is simpler for the builder to put a full height bulkhead through to separate the double berth area from the forward cabin. Note extensive carpet linings, and good quality fabrics.

to 10 knot region, you cover territory that is proportionally quicker (or so it seems); we were more than happy with this level of performance.

Engine noise below in the wheel-house reflected the lack of sound insulation fitted to this test craft, but Holland has promised that this will be rectified in short order.

Boat handling at all times was positive and responsive.

The steering particularly was very pleasant, with the Honeymoon responding to hard over turns almost within its own length. Playing with the cruiser in the slop just behind the Southport Bar, showed that the Honeymoon has the thrust and helm control to drive itself out of most situations, although we haven't had the opportunity of working with the craft offshore. Not that we would be all that concerned, because the handling characteristics in the sloppy conditions around the Southport Bar gave every

indication that the seaworthiness of the Honeymoon 26 will stand up to any test one could apply to this style of craft. With that great big long and wide steadying box keel, the Honeymoon can scarcely do anything else but track where the helmsman wants it to go, and this, added to the extraordinary beam of the Honeymoon, suggests the craft will be extremely seaworthy and pleasant to handle offshore, arid more than suitable for coastal passagemaking with an experienced crew, having regard for the day to day weather patterns.

Finish & Fittings

If the Honeymoon 26 is to be criticised in any area, it concerns the question of finish and the fitting-out procedure. Frankly, I don't think it was all that wise to test Boat Number One, as no matter who builds it, the first boat down the line invariably reflects many more imperfections than subsequent vessels in the production process. And so it was with Honeymoon Number One. We could be very critical in many areas, and indeed, we ended up spending many hours with the manufacturer going over the boat, bit by bit, pointing out the areas we felt needed improvement, why - and what could be done about them.

Generally speaking, the builders have purchased pretty well the best of everything as far as deck hardware and general boat fittings are concerned. We were mostly concerned about where these things all came together and how they were then finished off.

For instance, the extremely good quality carpet fitted to the wheelhouse sole or floor was not clipped down. When the boat did roll to a passing wake or wave, there was a tendency for the carpet to slip underfoot. A minor but significant problem - especially for older folk. Underneath the carpet, the floorboards were finished off very crudely, and in a most unattractive fashion - a coat of appropriate polyurethane paint or an epoxy finish would only take perhaps an additional hour to complete; if you're going to do a job, it should be done properly.

There were lots of items as small (and some would say as insignificant) as these matters, but in a craft aspiring to be the best, we felt there is still room for a lot of improvement in the final stages of finishing off the Honeymoon.

We have no doubt that as the production process settles down, and the tradesmen settle into a particular routine concerning



The internal fit-out uses the traditional system bonding a series of ply bulkheads into the hull between the inter-connected glassed in "furniture". A very strong, but time consuming building procedure.

the fitting-out programme, the Honeymoon 26 will undoubtedly mirror the quality of finish and fitting that it reflects in its basic design and construction process.

Conclusion

The Honeymoon 26 is one of the most outstanding cruisers we have tested regardless of whether it is a planing or a displacement style of vessel, and it is certainly going to set a cat amongst the proverbial pigeons in the race for market leadership in the displacement cruiser field. A very worthy competitor to the pioneering Kingston 770 Flybridge, the Cuddles 30, Cruisecraft Executive 800

and Clipper Sundecker, the Honeymoon 26 has arguably the best internal layout of them all, and an unusually good hull shape and configuration to boot. Providing the Honeymoon factory can get their act together in regard to the finishing process, there is not a lot of doubt that the Honeymoon 26 could easily become the market leader.

Mitigating against this possibility though, is the choice that designer/builder Neil Holland is going to have to make at some point in the near future. It strikes the writer that he has but two choices ahead of him. To be competitive, and able to manufacture enough boats to be viable in the marketplace, the Honeymoon 26 badly needs a GRP furniture/cockpit sole liner moulding, stretching from the transom through to the stem (like its competitors) enabling the factory to save a great deal of time in the production process.

But Holland is personally committed to the belief that many boating people would prefer to retain the natural warmth and charisma of the all timber fit-out, even with its much slower and more costly building process. Holland argues that there is a very good market for a much smaller number of (virtually) handcrafted diesel displacement cruisers, and if a choice has to be made, then he will opt for the latter.

In either event, for Holland and Boat Park Pty. Limited, the honeymoon is over - now they have got to make the marriage work.

Hindsight, December '12

We knew this model boat very well, as AB's renowned Electronics Editor Dave Jeanes was so impressed by the Honeymoon 26, he actually purchased one himself, and used it happily for years around Pittwater NSW. Reading back through the report is a bit sad though, as our comments about the need to speed up the building process and develop GRP furniture moulds were unfortunately prophetic, as the Honeymoon in its various iterations (including the later 30 footer) never really achieved the success it deserved. Frankly, I think (now) it was a cruiser ahead of its time by some 10-15 years.

- Peter Webster, December, 2012.

TBM January 2013

Make	HP	Model	RRP	4-stroke Carb/Inject	2-stroke Capacity (cc's)	Cylinders	Amp/hr capacity	Weight (Kg)	F&B Star Rating	Emiss HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Honda	2	B2D4 SCHD	\$1,234	4c	57	1	-	12.2	3	24.9	388.2
Yamaha	2 pmx	2CMHS	\$900	2c	50	1	-	16.5	0 est		
Mercury	2.5	1F02201FK	\$1,247	4c	85	1	5A	19.0	3	25.5	434.1
Mercury	2.5	M	\$833	2c	74.6	1	-	13	0	277.1	399.4
Parsun	2.5	T2.5BMS 2C	\$700	2c	74.6	1	-	16	0 est		
Suzuki	2.5	DF2.5S	\$1,048	4c	68	1	-	13	3	24.2	399.6
Tohatsu	2.5	MFS2.5A S	\$1,494	4c	85.5	1	-	13.0	3	24.3	384.5
Tohatsu	2.5	M2.5A2 S	\$894	2c	74.6	1	-	12.5	0	305.3	150.0
Yamaha	2.5	F2.5AMHS	\$1,497	4c	72	1	-	17	2	42.9	466.2
Parsun	2.6	F2.6MBS 4C	\$899	4c	72	1	-	18	2 est	29.8	134.5
Yamaha	3 pmx	3AMHS	\$1,099	2c	70	1	-	16.5	0 est		
Mercury	3.3	M	\$969	2c	74.6	1	4A	13	0	277.1	399.4
Mercury	3.5	1F03201FK	\$1,325	4c	85	1	5A	13.0	3	27.7	468.8
Tohatsu	3.5	MFS3.5A S	\$1,527	4c	85.5	1	-	19.0	3	24.3	384.5
Tohatsu	3.5	M3.5A2 S	\$925	2c	74.6	1	-	12.5	0	305.3	150.0
Tohatsu	3.5 b	M3.5B2 S	\$1,029	2c	74.6	1	-	13	0	280.2	150.0
Parsun	3.6	T3.6BMS 2C	\$720	2c	74.6	1	-	16	0 est		
Mercury	4	1F04201FK	\$1,687	4c	123	1	5A	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Mercury	4	M	\$1,392	2c	102	1	0	20	1	221.9	236.2
Parsun	4	F4BMS 4C	\$1,195	4c	112	1	-	24.5	3	21.8	339.9
Suzuki	4	DF4S	\$1,535	4c	138	1	6A	26	3	19.1	273.0
Tohatsu	4	MFS4BD S	\$1,693	4c	123	1	5A	26.0	3	20.7	263.0
Tohatsu	4	M4C S	\$1,411	2c	102	1	5A	19	1	204.0	258.4
Yamaha	4	F4AMHS	\$1,817	4c	112	1	-	22	3	26.8	254.3
Yamaha	4 pmx	4ACMHS	\$1,468	2c	83	1	5A	21	0	332.3	598.3
Honda	5	BF5A4 SB	\$2,090	4c	127	1	3A	27.0	3	20.5	374.0
Mercury	5	1F05201FK	\$1,775	4c	123	1	5A	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Mercury	5	M	\$1,608	2c	102	1	4A	20	1	221.9	236.2
Parsun	5	F5BMS 4C	\$1,245	4c	112	1	-	24.5	3 est	21.8	296.5
Suzuki	5	DF5S	\$1,619	4c	138	1	6A	26	3	19.1	273.0
Tohatsu	5	MFS5BDS	\$1,746	4c	123	1	5A	25.0	3	20.7	263.0
Tohatsu	5	M5BDS	\$1,536	2c	102	1	5A	19	1	204.0	258.4
Yamaha	5 pmx	5CMHS	\$1,782	2c	103	1	5A	21	0 est		
Mercury	6	1F06201FK	\$1,892	4c	123	1	5A	25.0	3	24.3	468.9
Mercury	6	M lite	\$1,767	2c	169	2	-	26	0	306.1	225.5
Parsun	6	T6BMS	\$1,495	2c	169	2	-	26	0 est		
Suzuki	6	DF6S	\$1,791	4c	138	1	6A	26	3	19.1	273.0
Tohatsu	6	MFS6B S	\$1,851	4c	123	1	5A	25.0	3	20.7	263.0
Tohatsu	6	MFS6BSUL(Sail)	\$1,900	4c	123	1	5A	25.0	3 est	20.7	263.0
Tohatsu	6	M6B S	\$2,013	2c	169	2	6.7A	26	1	220.9	377.3
Yamaha	6 pmx	6CMHS	\$2,153	2c	165	2	6	27	0	322.7	331.7
Honda	8	BF8D2 SHD	\$3,392	4c	222	2	6A	42.0	3	17.9	363.5
Mercury	8	1F08201FK	\$3,054	4c	209	2	6A	38.0	3	20.7	144.4
Mercury	8	M lite	\$1,906	2c	169	2	-	26	0	306.1	225.5
Suzuki	8	DF8	\$3,260	4c	208	2	6A	39.5	3	18.6	214.1
Tohatsu	8	MFS8A3 S	\$3,080	4c	209	2	6A	37.0	3	20.0	296.4
Tohatsu	8	M8B S	\$2,040	2c	169	2	-	26	1	220.9	377.3
Yamaha	8	F8CMHS	\$3,495	4c	197	1	6A	38	3	21.9	325.0
Yamaha	8 pmx	8CMHS	\$2,467	2c	165	2	6A	27	0	322.7	331.7
Suzuki	9	DF9.9	\$3,442	4c	208	2	6A	39.5	3	21.0	231.1
Tohatsu	9.8	MFS9.8A3 S	\$3,147	4c	209	2	6A	37.0	3	20.0	296.4
Tohatsu	9.8	M9.8B S	\$2,188	2c	169	2	6.7A	26	1	195.0	150.0
Mercury	9.9	1F06201FK	\$3,236	4c	209	2	6A	38.1	3	20.7	144.4
Mercury	9.9	M	\$2,398	2c	262	2	8A	35	0	323.2	533.4
Mercury	9.9	EL Big Foot	\$4,290	4c	209	2	6A	43	3	20.7	144.4

Notes: **Shaft length** - representative models shown use the following convention where possible. Up to 10hp, short shaft. 10hp to 150hp, long shaft. Over 150hp, extra long shaft. Up to 18hp, tiller steer. 20hp and over - forward steer. Readers are advised to make sure they check *the latest prices* with their local dealers, before making a purchase decision - and please note, freight costs will vary according to the location of the dealer.

Make	HP	Model	RRP	4-stroke 2-stroke Carb/Inject	Capacity (cc's)	Cylinders	Amp/hr capacity	Weight (Kg)	F&B Star Rating	Emiss HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Parsun	9.8	T9.8BMS	\$1,575	2c	169	2		26.0	0 est		
Parsun	9.8	F9.8BMS	\$2,095	4c	2099	2		38.0	0 est		
Suzuki	9.9	DT9.9S	\$2,401	2c	284	2	2.5A	38.5	3	13.6	104.2
Tohatsu	9.9	M9.9D2 S	\$2,494	2c	247	2	6.7A	37	1	180.9	287.2
Yamaha	9.9	F9.9FMHS	\$3,557	4c	212	2	6A	39.9	3	18.6	267.7
Yamaha	9.9 pmx	9.9FMHS	\$2,656	2c	246	2	10A	36	1	249.6	408.4
Honda	10	BF10D2 SHD	\$3,906	4c	222	2	6A	42.0	3	17.9	336.2
Mercury	10	Sea Pro	\$3,006	2c	262	2	6A	34	0	323.2	533.4
Honda	15	BF15D3 LHD	\$4,274	4c	350	2	6A	46.5	3	15.5	172.6
Mercury	15	15ML	\$3667	4c	351	2	11A	52	3	18.4	150.7
Mercury	15	M L super	\$2,385	2c	294	2	6A	42	1	173.5	270.3
Mercury	15	ML	\$2,594	2c	262	2	6A	35	0	323.2	533.4
Mercury	15	Sea Pro ML	\$3,127	2c	262	2	6A	34	0	323.2	533.4
Parsun	15	T15BML 2C	\$1,810	2c	246	2		37.5	0 est		
Parsun	15	F15BML 4CT	\$2,645	4c	323	2		51	3 est	16.0	221.3
Suzuki	15	DF15L	\$3,443	4c	302	2	6A	49	3	15.4	255.5
Suzuki	15	DT15S	\$2,544	2c	284	2	2.5A	38.5	0 est		
Tohatsu	15	MFS15CL	\$3,858	4c	351	2	12A	52.0	3	16.7	164.4
Tohatsu	15	M15D2 S	\$2,601	2c	247	2	6.7A	37	1	180.9	287.2
Yamaha	15	F15CMHS	\$4,102	4c	323	2	10A	50	3	22.3	229.0
Yamaha	15 pmx	15FMHL	\$2,952	2c	246	2	6A	36	1	249.6	408.4
Tohatsu	18	M18E2 S	\$2,601	2c	294	2	6.7A	37	1	173.5	270.3
Honda	20	BF20D3 LHD	\$4,550	4c	350	2	12A	46.5	3	15.5	172.6
Mercury	20	20ML	\$4,211	4c	351	2	11A	53.0	3	18.4	150.7
Tohatsu	20	MFS20CL	\$4,114	4c	351	2	12A	52.0	3	16.7	164.4
Yamaha	20	F20B MHL	\$4,998	4c	362	2	10A	53.7	3	14.6	311.1
Yamaha	20 pmx	20DMHL	\$3,456	2c	395	2	6A	48	1	201.9	200.4
Evinrude	25 e-tec	E25DTSL	\$5,589	2di	576	2	56A	64.4	3	14.4	144.8
Honda	25	BF25D4 LHGD	\$6,321	4c	552	3	10A	72.5	3	14.1	217.2
Mercury	25	ML	\$5,250	4i	526	3	15A	71	3	14.9	279.4
Parsun	25	T25BML	\$2,635	2c	496	2		53	0 est		
Parsun	25	F25BML FES	\$4,045	4i	498	2		68	3	12.8	152.0
Suzuki	25	DF25L	\$5,026	4c	538	V2 70°	6A	72	3	15.5	205.2
Tohatsu	25	MFS25B (EFI) L	\$5,312	4i	526	3	15A	82.5	3	14.5	282.8
Tohatsu	25	M25C3 L	\$3,384	2c	429	2	6.7A	52	1	160.7	194.0
Yamaha	25	F25DETL	\$6,285	4c	498	2	10A	79	3	201.9	200.4
Yamaha	25	F25AETL	\$5,986	4c	498	2	15A	71	3	14.6	230.5
Yamaha	25 cv pmx	25BMHL	\$3,456	2c	496	2	6a	54.5	1	211.2	326.9
Yamaha	25 pmx	25NMHL	\$3,729	2c	395	2	6A	48	1	201.9	200.4
Evinrude	30 e-tec	E30DTSL	\$6,685	2di	576	2	56A	64.4	3	16.4	139.8
Honda	30	BF30D4 LHTD	\$7,109	4c	552	3	10A	72.5	3	14.6	239.2
Mercury	30	EL GA EFI	\$6,514	4i	526	3	15A	71	3	14.9	279.4
Mercury	30	EL lite	\$3,700	2c	430	2	6A	48	1	164.2	202.9
Parsun	30	T30BML 2C	\$2,660	2c	703	2		75.1	0 est		
Suzuki	30	DT30L	\$3,049	2c	499	2	2.5A	60.5	1 est		
Tohatsu	30	MFS30B (EFI) L	\$5,312	4i	526	3	15A	82.5	3	14.5	282.8
Tohatsu	30	M30A4 L	\$3,384	2c	429	2	6.7A	52	1	164.2	202.9
Yamaha	30	F30BETL	\$7,026	4i	747	3	16A	99.6	3est	237.6	425.6
Yamaha	30 cv pmx	30HMHL	\$4,385	2c	496	2	6A	54.5	1	237.6	425.6
Yamaha	30 pb	30DETOL	\$6,053	2c	496	3	6A	66	1	237.6	425.6
Evinrude	40 e-tec	E40DLP11	\$8,612	2di	864	2	81A	109	3	15.2	66.5
Honda	40	BF40D LRTL	\$8,990	4i	808	3	17A	98.0	3	12.6	87.0
Mercury	40	ML	\$6,498	4c	747	3	6A	93	3	13.0	185.4
Mercury	40	ELPTO	\$6,341	2c	644	2	18A	78	1	142.2	192.3
Mercury	40	MHL Lite	\$4,640	2c	697	3	11	69	1	142.2	192.3
Mercury	40	Sea Pro MLG	\$5,721	2c	645	2	18A	74	1	142.2	192.3
Mercury	40	ELPT EFI bigfoot	\$7,991	4i	995	4	18A	120	3	14.2	188.9
Parsun	40	T40BML 2C	\$3,140	2c	703	2		75.1	0 est		
Suzuki	40	DF40TL	\$8,544	4i	814	3	6.7A	110	3	13.8	235.3
Suzuki	40	DF40AQHL	\$8,147	4i	941	3	19A	104	3	14.8	74.2
Suzuki	40	DT40L	\$4,017	2c	696	2	18A	76.0	1 est		

Make	HP	Model	RRP	4-stroke 2-stroke Carb/Inject	Capacity (cc's)	Cylinders	Amp/hr capacity	Weight (Kg)	F&B Star Rating	Emiss HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Tohatsu	40	M40D2 L	\$4,519	2c	697	3	11A	85	1	153.0	150.0
Tohatsu	40 tldi	MD40B EPTOL	\$8,373	2di	697	3	23A	93.4	2	30.6	119.2
Yamaha	40	F40FETL	\$7,774	4i	747	3	15A	90.4	3		
Yamaha	40 cv pmx	40XWTL	\$5,868	2c	703	2	6A	80.7	1	196.6	364.8
Yamaha	40 pb	40VETOL	\$6,780	2c	698	3	6A	88	1	167.5	329.7
Evinrude	50 e-tec	E50DPL11	\$9,487	2di	864	2	81A	109	3	15.2	66.5
Honda	50	BF50 LRTL	\$10,469	4i	808	3	17A	98.0	3	12.6	87.0
Mercury	50	ELPT EFI	\$8,309	4i	995	4	20A	112	3	14.2	188.9
Mercury	50	ELPTO	\$6,750	2c	967	3	16A	93	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury	50	ELPTEFI BigFoot	\$8,472	4i	995	4	20A	120	3	14.2	188.9
Suzuki	50	DF50TL	\$8,975	4i	814	3	18A	110	3	13.8	235.3
Suzuki	50	DF50ATHL	\$9,804	4i	941	3	19A	104	3	14.8	74.2
Tohatsu	50	M50D2 EPTOL	\$6,962	2c	697	3	11A	85	1	167.8	387.0
Tohatsu	50 tldi	MD50B EPTOL	\$8,551	2di	697	3	23A	93.5	2	30.6	119.2
Yamaha	50	F50FETL	\$8,781	4i	996	4	17A	111	3	15.1	128.7
Yamaha	50 cv pmx	50HETL	\$7,051	2c	703	2	6A	87	1	167.5	329.7
Yamaha	50 pb	50HETOL	\$8,263	2c	698	3	6A	86	1	167.5	329.7
Mercury	55	Sea Pro MHL	\$6,939	2c	967	3	18A	100	1	140.1	411.0
Evinrude	60 e-tec	E60DPL11	\$10,437	2di	864	2	81A	109	3	13.4	66.5
Honda	60	BF60ALRTN	\$11,499	4i	998	3	18A	110	3	14.2	188.9
Mercury	60	ELPT EFI	\$8,708	4i	995	4	20a	112	3	14.2	188.9
Mercury	60	ELPTO	\$7,159	2c	967	3	16	99.5	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury	60	Sea Pro Big Foot	\$7,024	2c	967	3	16A	108	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury	60	ELPTO BigFoot	\$7,610	2c	967	3	16A	109	1	140.1	411.0
Mercury	60	ELPTEFI BigFoot	\$8,349	4i	995	4	20A	120	3	157.9	298.1
Parsun	60	T60FEL	\$7,100	2c	1141	3	(tba)	119	0 est		
Suzuki	60	DF60ATL	\$10,322	4i	941	3	19A	104	3	14.8	74.2
Suzuki	60	DF60A	\$10,322	4i	941	3	19A	104	3 (est)		
Tohatsu	60	M60C EPTOL	\$8,995	2c	938	3	11A	115	1	157.9	298.1
Yamaha	60	F60CETL	\$9,200	4i	996	4	17A	111	3	15.1	128.7
Yamaha	60 cv pmx	E60HMHDL	\$7,592	2c	849	3	6A	102	1	168.2	319.4
Yamaha	60 ht	FT60DETL	\$9,325	4i	996	4	17A	115	3	15.1	128.7
Yamaha	60 pb	60FETOL	\$8,819	2c	849	3	6A	105	1	168.2	319.4
Suzuki	70	DF70ATL	\$12,568	4i	1502	4	27A	156	3	12.37	60.28
Tohatsu	70	M70C EPTOL	\$9,045	2c	938	3	11A	115	1	151.4	291.2
Tohatsu	70 tldi	MD70B EPTOL	\$11,994	2di	1267	3	23A	143	2	31.2	91.2
Yamaha	70 pb	70BETOL	\$9,346	2c	849	3	6A	105.5	1	168.2	319.4
Yamaha	70	F70AETL	\$10,412	4i	996	4	17A	118	3	11.2	108.0
Evinrude	75 e-tec	E75DPL11	\$12,087	2di	1295	3	81A	145	3	12.3	69.8
Honda	75	BF75DKO LRTL	\$13,650	4i	1497	4	44A	162	3	15.2	63.6
Mercury	75	ELPT EFI	\$11,936	4i	1732	4	50A	181	3	15.4	336.0
Parsun	75	T75FEL	\$7,200	2c	1141	3	(tba)	119	0 est		
Mercury	75	ELPTO	\$8,825	2c	1386	3	18A	138	1	122.9	401.5
Mercury	75	Sea Pro MLHG	\$9,067	2c	1386	3	18A	139	1	122.9	401.5
Mercury	75 opti	ELPT	\$11,785	2di	1526	3	60A	170	3	13.3	127.5
Suzuki	80	DF80TL	\$13,545	4i	1502	4	27A	155	3	12.37	60.28
Yamaha	80	F80BETL	\$12,376	4i	1596	4	25A	172	3	16.2	102.0
Evinrude	90 e-tec	E90DPL11	\$13,260	2di	1295	3	81A	145	3	12.3	69.8
Honda	90	BF90DKO LRTL	\$15,950	4i	1497	4	44A	163	3	15.2	63.6
Mercury	90	ELPT EFI	\$12,658	4i	1732	4	50A	181	3	15.4	336.0
Mercury	90	ELPTO	\$10,273	2c	1386	3	18A	138	1	122.9	401.5
Mercury	90 opti	ELPT	\$12,312	2di	1526	3	60A	170	3	13.3	127.5
Parsun	90	T90FEL	\$7,400	2c	1141	3	(tba)	119	0 est		
Suzuki	90	DF90ATL	\$14,244	4i	1502	4	27A	155	3	12.37	60.28
Tohatsu	90	M90A EPTOL	\$9,799	2c	1267	3	11A	135	1	147.7	286.0

Notes: **Shaft length** - representative models shown use the following convention where possible. Up to 10hp, short shaft. 10hp to 150hp, long shaft. Over 150hp, extra long shaft. Up to 18hp, tiller steer. 20hp and over - forward steer. Readers are advised to make sure they check *the latest prices* with their local dealers, before making a purchase decision - and please note, freight costs will vary according to the location of the dealer.

Make	HP	Model	RRP	4-stroke 2-stroke Carb/Inject	Capacity (cc's)	Cylinders	Amp/hr capacity	Weight (Kg)	F&B Star Rating	Emiss HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Tohatsu	90 tldi	MD90B EPTOL	\$12,249	2di	1267	3	23A	143	2	31.2	91.2
Yamaha	90 pb	90AETOL	\$10,844	2c	1140	3	10A	122.5	1	161.4	432.5
Suzuki	100	DF100TL	\$14,873	4i	1950	4	40A	189	3	12.37	233.2
Yamaha	100	F100DETL	\$13,928	4i	1596	4	25A	172	3	16.2	102.0
Evinrude	115 e-tec	E115DPL11	\$16,253	2di	1726	V4 60°	133A	167	3	12.5	114.9
Evinrude	115 e-tec	E115DHX11	\$16,847	2di	1726	V4 60°	133A	177	3	12.5	114.9
Honda	115	BF115D	\$17,990	4i	2354	4	55A	217	3	13.8	75.6
Mercury	115	ELPT EFI	\$14,322	4i	1732	4	50	181	3	15.4	336.0
Mercury	115 opti	ELPT	\$12,797	2di	1526	3	60A	170	3	13.3	127.5
Mercury	115	PRO-XS	\$TBA	2di	1526	3	60A	170	2	19.8	170.2
Suzuki	115	DF115TL	\$15,378	4i	1950	4	40A	189	3	12.6	233.5
Tohatsu	115	M115A2 EPTOL	\$12,314	2c	1768	4	27.5A	164	1	199.6	150.0
Tohatsu	115 tldi	MD115A EPTOL	\$15,849	2di	1768	4	40A	173	2	31.1	128.5
Yamaha	115	F115AETL	\$15,834	4i	1741	4	25A	188	3	11.9	246.5
Yamaha	115	F115A	\$TBA	4i	3352	V6	46A	278	3	TBA	TBA
Yamaha	115 pb	115CETOL	\$11,935	2c	1730	V4 90°	20A	167	1	169.4	356.4
Mercury	125 opti	L	\$TBA	2di	1526	3	60A	170	3	12.6	139.7
Evinrude	130 e-tec	E130DPX11	\$16,966	2di	1726	V4 60°	133A	177	3	12.8	122.8
Yamaha	130 pb	130BETOL	\$12,832	2c	1730	V4 90°	20A	167	1	140.0	392.8
Honda	135	BF135A4 LD	\$19,194	4i	2354	4	40A	217	3	13.8	75.6
Mercury	135 opti	L	\$16,904	2di	2507	V6 60°	60A	195	3	14.2	107.6
Mercury	135 ver	L	\$21,626	4i sc	1732	4	70A	231	2	15.4	336.0
Suzuki	140	DF140TX	\$16,233	4i	2044	4	40A	186	3	12.4	238.5
Tohatsu	140	M140A2 EPTOL	\$12,795	2c	1768	4	27.5A	164	1	167.3	355.3
Evinrude	150 e-tec	E150DBX11	\$19,674	2di	2589	V6 60°	133A	190	3	15.2	114.2
Evinrude	150 e-tec	E150DHL11	\$20,361	2di	2589	V6 60°	133A	190	3	15.2	114.2
Honda	150	BF150A4 LD	\$21,126	4i	2354	4	40A	217	3	13.8	75.6
Mercury	150	L EFI	\$14,023	2i	2507	V6 60°	60A	193	1	117.2	282.4
Mercury	150 opti	L	\$17,603	2di	2507	V6 60°	60A	195	2	14.2	107.6
Mercury	150 ver	L	\$22,657	4i sc	1732	4	70A	231	2	15.4	336.0
Suzuki	150	DF150TL	\$19,413	4i	2867	4	44A	211	3	12.9	159.6
Yamaha	150	F150AETL	\$20,210	4i	2670	4	35A	216	3	10.8	222.3
Yamaha	150 pb	Z150QETOL	\$20,746	2di	2596	V6 76°	45A	220	2	30.5	89.2
Yamaha	150 pb	150FETOL	\$15,927	2c	2596	V4 90°	45A	198	1	130.0	354.8
Evinrude	175 e-tec	E175DPX11	\$21,325	2di	2589	V6 60°	133A	190	3	15.2	114.2
Honda	175	BF175A6 XD	\$23,636	4i	3471	V6	60A	267	3	11.5	77.8
Honda	175	BF175 AK1	\$23,636	4i	3471	4	60A	272	3	12.4	89.4
Mercury	175	175ProXS	\$20,312	2di	3032	V6 60°	60A	229	3	15.1	92.8
Mercury	175 ver	XL	\$23,649	4i sc	1732	4	70A	239	2	15.4	336.0
Suzuki	175	DF175TX	\$21,276	4i	2867	4	44A	211	3	12.9	159.6
Yamaha	175 hpdi	Z175GETOX	\$21,957	2di	2596	V6 76°	45A	220	2	30.5	89.2
Yamaha	175 pb	175DETOX	\$17,067	2c	2596	V4 90°	45A	198	1	122.5	241.8
Evinrude	200 e-tec	E200DPZ11	\$25,469	2di	2589	V6 60°	133A	190	3	15.2	114.2
Evinrude	200 e-tec	E200DHL11	\$23,957	2di	3279	V6 90°	133A	238	3	10.6	84.9
Honda	200	BF200A6 XD	\$24,854	4i	3471	V6	60A	267	3	11.5	77.8
Mercury	200	XL EFI	\$15,901	2i	2507	V6 60°	60A	196	1	117.2	282.4
Mercury	200 opti	XL	\$20,141	2di	3032	V6 60°	60A	225	3	15.1	92.8
Mercury	200 ver	1200V13FD XL	\$27,626	4i sc	2598	6	70A	294	2	15.1	278.8
Mercury	200	LW XL	\$24,861	4i sc	1732	4	70A	239	2 est		
Suzuki	200	DF200TX	\$24,054	4i	3614	V6 55°	54A	263	3	13.0	200.9
Yamaha	200	FL200CETX	\$22,871	4i	3352	V6 90°	45A	274	3	12.7	199.9
Yamaha	200 hpdi	Z200NETOX	\$22,827	2di	2596	V6 76°	45A	220	2	30.5	89.2
Yamaha	200 pb	200FETOX	\$18,279	2c	2596	V6 90°	25A	198	1	122.5	241.8

Footnote: Readers are reminded that all the outboard data, and the prices Boatmags P/L has published here, are as accurate as we can make them at the time of going to press. The database is derived from various sources in Australia and overseas, and regularly spot-checked for accuracy. We maintain the lists on a monthly basis, but from time to time, an ammendment will come in too late to make the cut for the following issue, so the published prices and specs can be as much as 5-6 weeks behind the 'street' figures. **Do Not Rely On Them To Make A Purchase Decision!** Always check with your local outboard dealer to get the latest 'deal', 'package' or price before deciding which one to buy - and don't forget to clarify **whether the 'price' includes the propeller, throttle, gearshift and appropriate cables, the engine gauges, and installation charges.**

Make	HP	Model	RRP	4-stroke 2-stroke Carb/Inject	Capacity (cc's)	Cylinders	Amp/hr capacity	Weight (Kg)	F&B Star Rating	Emiss HC+NOX (g/kw/hr)	Emiss. CO (g/kw/hr)
Evinrude	225 e-tec	E225DPZ11	\$25,469	2di	3279	V6 90°	133A	238	3	10.6	84.9
Evinrude	225 e-tec	E225DHX11	\$26,204	2di	3279	V6 90°	133A	238	3	10.6	84.9
Honda	225	BF225A6 XD	\$25,230	4i	3471	V6	60A	267	3	11.5	77.8
Mercury	225	XL EFI	\$19,080	2i	3032	V6 60°	60A	218	1	103.6	248.3
Mercury	225 opti	XL PRO XS	tba	2di	3032	V6 60°	60A	229	3	12.1	278.8
Mercury	225 ver	XL	\$29,190	4i sc	2598	V6 60°	46A	294	2	15.1	278.8
Mercury	225 3L	Sea Pro XL	\$20,450	2i	3047			209	2	26.3	146.2
Suzuki	225	DF225TXX	\$25,654	4i	3614	V6 55°	54A	263	3	13.0	200.9
Yamaha	225	FL225FETX	\$25,840	4i	4169	V6 60°	70A	253	3	10.4	219.8
Evinrude	250 e-tec	E250DPZ11	\$29,332	2di	3279	V6 90°	133A	238	3	10.6	84.9
Evinrude	250 e-tec	E250DHX11	\$27,708	2di	3441	V6 90°	133A	234	3	10.6	84.9
Mercury	250 ver	XL	\$30,689	4i sc	2598	V6 60°	46A	294	2	15.1	278.8
Mercury	250 opti	250 XL PRO XS	\$27,464	2di	3032	V6 60°	60A	229	3	12.1	83.8
Suzuki	250	DF250TX	\$26,879	4i	3614	V6 55°	54A	263	3	13.0	200.9
Suzuki	250SS	DF250STL	\$30,723	4i	4028	V6 55°	54A	262	3	13.0	200.9
Yamaha	250	F250DETX	\$28,772	4i	4169	V6 60°	70A	253	3	10.4	219.8
Mercury	275 ver	XL	\$33,308	4i sc	2598	V6 90°	133A	294	2	15.1	278.8
Evinrude	300 e-tec	E300DPZ11	\$31,777	2di	3441	V6 90°	133A	242	2	29.5	251
Mercury	300 ver	XL	\$34,550	4i sc	2598	V6 90°	133A	294	2	15.1	278.8
Suzuki	300	DF300TX	\$31,036	4i	4028	V6 55°	54A	274	3	13.0	200.9
Yamaha	300	F300BETX	\$31,578	4i	4169	V6 60°	70A	253	3	10.4	219.8
Mercury	350 ver	XL	\$38,527	4i sc	2598	V6 60°	46A	300	2 est	tba	tba
Yamaha	350	FL350AETX	\$40,110	4i	5330	V8 90°	50A	365	3	9.2	216.1

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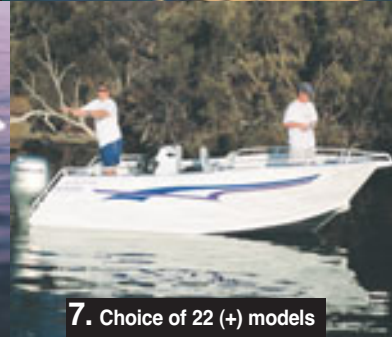
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A Trip With Mike

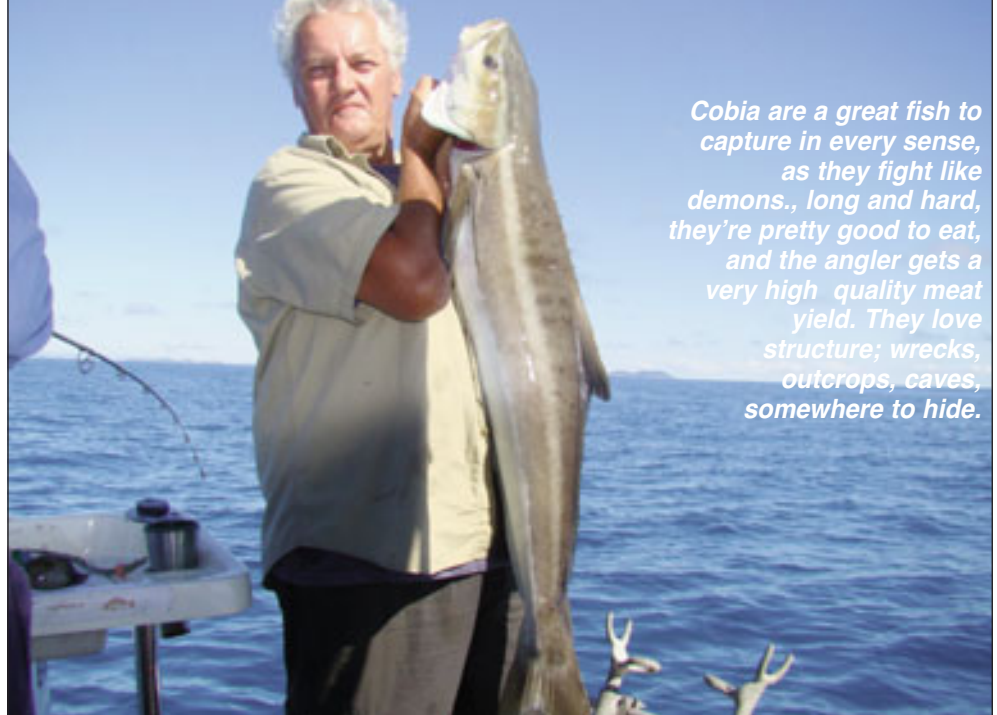
When my nephew Mike arrived at my place for his annual visit to go fishing, he told me that his great desire was to catch a really big spanish mackerel, to which I replied that he was a bit early in the year, but we would see what we could do.

As usual as soon as he turned up the reasonable weather we had been having turned to crap, and I was tempted to suggest that he go home to Victoria as he seems to bring rubbish weather with him each time he comes up.

He ignored my suggestions and set up camp in my back yard and for the next two months it absolutely teemed down with some record falls of rain and lots of wind.

Occasionally the weather cleared up enough to get out for the odd day trip and although we caught a few reasonable fish I couldn't find any decent mackerel.

My mate who owns "Cast and Catch" charters told me that they were



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sometimes getting onto large spanish but only well out near the 'Reef, so I assumed that they were not coming in because of the dirty water near the coast caused by all the heavy rain.

Because of the prolonged heavy weather, I suggested Mike should travel further north and do some estuary fishing where the wind would not be such a problem. I showed him some estuaries that my mate JT and I had explored up past Bowen and I drew him a map of the spots that we had found, and places to catch bait with some info on good camping spots.

He took my advice and packed up his slide-on camper, loaded it onto his Cruiser, hitched up his boat and took off.

As soon as he left the weather cleared up quite a bit, and I was able to get

out and catch some good fish but still no spanish mackerel.

I didn't hear from him for a while, but eventually he rang about six weeks later and told me that he had had some success in the places I had suggested.

He had also travelled up past Cairns but didn't have much success as he did not know the country, but had come back as far as Townsville where he decided to stay for a while as he had been made redundant in his job with BHP in Melbourne.

He landed a job at a trucking company in Townsville and set up his camp in their depot yard so he was staying for a while, but again, with no local knowledge he was finding it a bit hard to get onto any decent fishing.

At the end of June there was a long weekend for the Townsville show and I

got a call from him to see if the weather was any good back in Mackay for the three day weekend. My reply was that it looked like it could be a good one, so he decided to hitch up the boat and come down.

He duly arrived on the Friday night around midnight, I didn't even know he was there until I got up in the morning and he was camped in my back yard.

The weather was quite good and I suggested that we take my Quintrex out and check out some of the coastal spots because I had promised to take Mark Lowth (the outboard mechanic who wrote the column in 'The Boat Mag' which caused such a stir with the establishment) out on his days off from working out at the mines - which were the following day.

We decided that we would take Mike's boat out the following day with the three of us on board and head out wide for a spanish as both Mike and Mark had not caught one before.

My trip along the coast in the Quintrex was fairly uneventful as I was checking out some spots

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- Consumer Reports
- DIY Repairs & Renovating
- Electronics
- Engine Reports
- Fishing
- Fitting Out
- Coastal Holidays
- General Features
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Neil's nephew has a pretty good set-up (close to the classic Aussie rig for keen fishos these days) and he has hauled it back and forth from Melbourne several times now, to fish with Uncle Neil - so something has to be working !



Neil Dunstan's *Ebb & Flow*

to catch the big blue parrot fish which come on bite in winter and had no success there, only catching a couple of coral trout - but no parrot or spanish.

Next morning we loaded up Mike's

5.2 metre centre console platey, and called in to pick up Mark, launched the boat and took off around 7.30 in the morning. The weather was reasonably calm and as the wind was a south westerly, the further we went out the better it got, so our first port of call was Knight Island, about twenty three n. miles straight out.

We arrived in reasonable time to run out lures to see if there were any mackerel around.

We try to be on the water with the lures out just after the crack of dawn; the old time mackerel fishermen reckon that when the sun comes up over the horizon it is too late, but we sometimes do okay up until around 9.30 in the morning. We did a fair bit of trolling but couldn't catch a mackerel, just some reasonable coral trout, so I suggested that we head out another eight miles to Jack Rock and try there with some baits as we often catch snapper there in the winter. After an hour of bait fishing we had only caught a bunch of small fish so we decided to have lunch and think about our next move. I suggested that as it was still flat calm I had a series of marks out in the shipping channel where we had a good chance of getting onto some big reds.

After checking the state of the fuel supply I reminded the crew that we were going to be out around forty five n. miles or seventy kilometres offshore when we got out there, so we had to keep a good eye on any change in the weather and head back in as soon as it looked like there was any change coming.

The one thing that made it reasonably safe to be that far off shore in a 5.2 metre open boat was that it was only about eight n. miles back to Double Island where there was good shelter if it did turn bad.

Off we went, and started looking for the fish in the vicinity of the marks

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we had caught only small stuff such as hussar and sergent fish which we used for bait, and eventually we got onto some red emperor - but they were mostly just under the size limit of 55 centimetres, so they were thrown back.

It always seems to me that the size limit for reds is miles too high as a 55 cm fish is around ten pounds or so! The reason given is that it gives them a chance to breed at least once before being taken, but I have caught 35 cm reds which were in full roe so it seems that the science behind the rules is as accurate as most of the crap we get told.

once we got out to them. It is interesting that there are vast areas of flat sandy bottom in fifty metres of water and suddenly there is a small outcrop of rock sticking up two or three metres and that is where the fish congregate.

We have tried to anchor on these spots before but as they are only twenty or thirty metres across and the lines must be right on the rocks, it is very hard to judge the wind, current, etc, so we usually just estimate the drift then position the boat and when the lines go over the side hopefully they will hit the bottom just as we are passing over the spot. Sometimes if the fish are there it is 'strikes on' every line, and when they drift past the spot by only fifty metres or so then it is all over and I have to position the boat all over again.

Usually I check out a number of marks with the sounder to see if the fish are there but in this position I only had three or four marks so we just had to fish them and hope for the best.

After a couple of drifts

In the end we were only getting small fish, sharks and the like, and I was getting pretty disappointed when Mike got hit by something pretty decent. It took quite a while to get it to the boat on thirty pound braid, but when it was alongside Mike made the common mistake of calling it for a shark, but I said that it was a dirty big cobia. I reminded Mike that most cobia are lost at the side of the boat as they go berserk when hit with a gaff - so be ready for it.

I asked him where was the gaff and he said in the side pocket at the back so I grabbed it out and nearly had a fit laughing. The gaff that he had was about suitable for whiting which is what he fishes for in Victoria, so I said "That is not a gaff - it would only make the fish mad!"

Luckily, he had a quite large landing net so we decided to give that a go and landed the fish okay.

After it was all over Mike was shaking like a leaf and reckoned that the cobia was the biggest fish he had ever caught so he



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was pretty excited. As the fish was estimated at around fifty pounds, I thought that it was a pretty fair effort and it was landed on thirty pound braid on an overhead reel which he had bought on the internet from China.

By this time it was getting a bit late as we had only got out to the shipping channel after lunch and as we had to travel over fifty n.miles back to shore, I reckoned we had better get started.

The trip home was pretty uneventful having stopped at a couple of spots closer to shore for only some more small fish. We arrived home just before dark, loaded the boat and went home for a shower, a feed and left the boat and fish till the next day as it was the Monday public holiday.

All in all it was not a really productive day considering the distance



we travelled, but for Mike to catch the biggest fish ever I reckon it was well worth it. As I was coming home I got a call on the radio from my mate who runs "Cast and Catch " charters and he told me that they had bagged out on large reds plus a heap

of mackerel at some spots about fifteen n. miles north of us, but he had to check out about a dozen marks before he found the fish.

I might add that the country we were fishing in is not for the inexperienced as it can get very dangerous quite quickly,

but with a reliable, seaworthy boat, and a weather forecast predicting light winds for three days, and an experienced crew, it was all in a day's work for our mob.

*Neil Dunstan.
Sarina Beach.*

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Chinese built 4WDs, SUVs, boats, trailers, outboards are pouring in to Australia from China.

In most cases, they are much, much cheaper than locally manufactured products. Especially when compared to the cost of marine engines and equipment built in places OTHER than China. Like Australia.

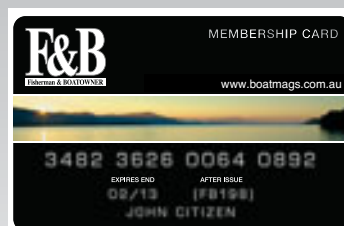
The question facing countless Australian families is this: Who do they believe? Are these Chinese built products any good? Can we trust them to go the distance we expect - and pay for?

This is especially critical for boating and fishing folk. We can't just get out and walk home if the engine won't start, and we're 7 miles offshore. And it doesn't matter how cheap these Chinese products are, if they are NOT 'fit for purpose' and don't work - what are they really worth?

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Beating the 'Black Dog' on the Water

Courage comes in many forms. Following active front line tours with the Australian Defence Force in Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan, avid fisherman and boatie, James Prascevic, turned to boating to confront his biggest demon of all – depression.

Having been medically discharged from the Army after a career spanning 9 years, James found his life changed for worse when he became a civilian. Post-traumatic stress disorder manifested itself in bouts of depression and alcohol abuse.

"About the only time that I felt okay when I was on the water fishing off Lorne," James said.

"So to help myself, and create some awareness of the very real problems of depression in the community, I decided to do a trip from the mainland of Australia to Tasmania and return. If the publicity of my trip helps just one person, than I will be very happy."

Aware of the project, Survitec Australia stepped in to assist James with a kit of safety equipment. This included a Crewsaver CWX 150 inflatable PFD, Kannad Sport+ GPS enabled EPIRB and a Kannad SafeLink Solo PLB.

In addition to the support of Survitec Australia, James had on board a host of other boating organisations as well as the Black Dog Institute, a world leader in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mood disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder.

So, in his secondhand 4.55 m aluminium runabout powered by a 60hp Suzuki 4-stroke outboard, James diligently prepared for the trip and set off from Lorne on the morning of October 29th. On board was 265 litres of fuel, a bunch of satellite phones, 20 litres of water, 3 days rations and the goodwill of the relevant authorities.

"It turned out to be a whole lot easier than I ever envisaged on the trip south," James said. "I landed at Smithton in Tassie at low tide. It took a bit longer than I had calculated, but everything went well."

The return trip was a bit tougher. After a few days of rest and some minor repairs, James departed Smithton at 6:00 am and landed back at Lorne at 5:30 pm on the same day. Between Tasmania and King Island, James experienced some big 4 metre swells, but again the trip went smoothly.

Throughout his hours on the water James wore a dry suit with his Crewsaver PFD donned the entire time.

"The Crewsaver was great. I never felt restricted by it. In fact it was a great comfort to have this on at all times. I kept the Kannad PLB in the pocket of my dry suit all the time, and the Kannad EPIRB Sport+ was fixed to the boat in its bracket."

According to his support crew "The hardest part of the trip for James was the preparation. Once on the water he found it easy and just wanted to keep going."

And keep going he will. Following a surge of national media attention on his return, James is busy working on a documentary film and book. He managed to raise some funds for Black Dog and he continues to get the message out to others like himself who are suffering from PTSD.

"People have to be aware that this is an illness, nothing to be ashamed of. I just happened to become sick as a result of my military service. The key message that I promote is to not be afraid to speak up and get some help. I continue to get some great help, and right now I'm doing okay."

James Prascevic has conquered Bass Strait as one small step of his recovery. The next challenges are already being lined up. There is a trip down the Murray, a



n. spray swept by a violent wind along the surface of the sea



Dometic WAECO'S 'PERFECTVIEW' Camera System 'Invaluable' in Swedish Marina

Dometic WAECO, a leading mobile safety solutions specialist, has come to the aid of a busy marina manager in Sweden.

Experienced fork lift truck drivers usually have no problems manoeuvring their vehicles in tight spaces, but there are situations where an extra pair of eyes can be invaluable. In a cramped boat marina, for example, a fork lift truck driver can be presented with a similar 'blind spot' to that faced by lorry drivers.

In Lerkils Båtsällskap Marina in Sweden, the harbor master has come up with the same solution to his boat



circumnavigation of Australia and then to complete the emotional journey, a trip from Darwin to Timor.

Wherever James Prascevic happens to head on the water, meeting his challenges, Survitec Australia will be there supporting him all the way.

Survitec Group in Australia (RFD Australia Pty Ltd) is primarily involved in the supply, service and project management of marine, fire, life support and gas control equipment to Government Departments and major corporations in the region.

In the marine segment Survitec Group services recreational boating as well as the defence, shipping and aviation industries. Major brands distributed include: RFD, Toyo, DSB, Lifeguard, Beaufort, Plastimo, Kannad Marine, Comet, Hammar and Compact.

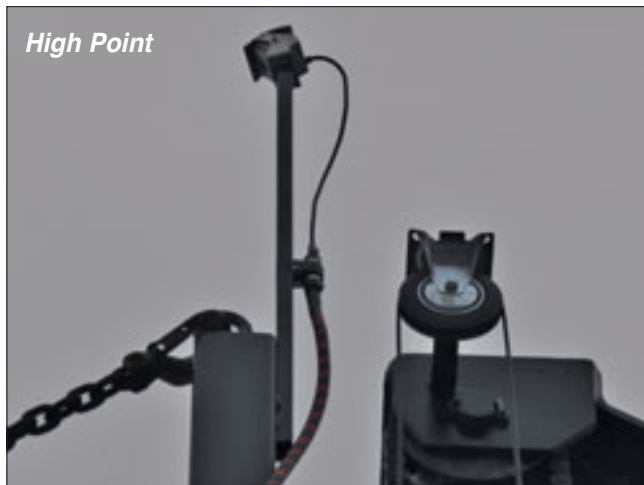
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TBM



Stern View



High Point

moving 'blind spot' problem that lorry drivers have been using for years.

He's installed a Dometic WAECO PerfectView camera system so that the fork lift driver can see over the top of the boats that are being moved. This solution is particularly useful in Lerkils Båtsällskap Marina as the Harbor Master and fork lift operator are often the same man. Harbor Master (and fork lift driver) Mr Pär Hildingh commented: "I am extremely pleased with this new WAECO camera system, we should have installed one of these long ago."

With a Dometic WAECO PerfectView camera system on board, drivers no longer have to take chances; they can face every situation with confidence and a clear sight of their surroundings.

Systems include favorably priced and well proven entry-level models to heavy-duty LCD systems for use under the most rigorous conditions.

And the investment is worthwhile: the camera system will pay for itself with the first collision it helps to avoid. Boats are expensive items and, even more important than the price, each boat stored in the marina is someone's pride and joy – so anything that can be done to prevent damage is a sensible investment. Harbor

Master Pär Hildingh has been known to move several thousand boats each year – and much of the time he operates the fork lift truck singlehanded.

The range of camera system options are comprehensive, starting from the extremely robust and reliable CRT reversing video systems that have stood the test of time for over a decade. They afford powerful performance at a small price, are dustproof and waterproof according to protection class IP68 and thus fit for use in tough work environments. State-of-the-art technology and safety according to the latest standards are provided by the new Dometic WAECO PerfectView reversing video systems with LCD monitors.

One solution designed by mobile safety technology specialist Dometic WAECO combines an ultra-compact ball camera with a seven-inch LCD monitor. The latter



features an Easylink mount, a fast and secure mounting system for the monitor. Its base is firmly anchored in the cockpit. The monitor can be attached and detached with a click. This mounting method makes an ideal anti-theft protection for vehicles like fork lift trucks – provided the driver remembers to take the monitor with him. Moreover, the LCD system can be upgraded into a fully-fledged reversing video system simply by adding a second camera.

The components in the Dometic WAECO PerfectView heavy-duty range are designed to withstand extreme conditions, such as vibration, moisture, dust and impact. All single components of the modular system can be combined to suit specific applications and environments. Heavy-duty design, high-quality materials and perfect workmanship guarantee impeccable operation – even in extreme weather and surroundings.

Besides new cameras, shutter cameras, monitors and perfectly complementary accessories, the Dometic WAECO PerfectView systems provide even more benefits: for example, the new LCD monitors come with large, illuminated, easy-to-use operating keys, a USB port for convenient recharging of MP3 players as well as lockable plug-in connectors. All of this adds up to a



professional package that is easily adaptable to suit whatever vehicle you are operating in whatever environment, as the harbor master at Lerkils Båtsällskap Marina has proved – all you need is a little imagination.

For more information about the Dometic WAECO PerfectView range, please visit www.dometic.com/marine.

GME's New Digital TV Antenna - the AE3000

Ever since television was introduced to Australia in 1956, boat owners have struggled to receive a decent signal when bobbing around at the marina or swinging on an anchor line. The reality is that TV reception on boats presents a totally different challenge to that of domestic reception; on board television reception has been plagued with picture fading, ghosting and interference.

Standard Communications Pty Ltd, GME's corporate entity has been at the forefront of the television reception industry since its foundation in 1959. This 50 plus years of expertise is clearly reflected in the recently launched AE3000 digital TV antenna.

Greg East, GME's senior TV design engineer, who alone has over 40 years of TV antenna and amplifier development experience expanded further on the AE3000; "With the switch off of analogue TV transmissions and the full transition to digital TV to be completed in Australia and New Zealand by late 2013. It was essential that any new amplified antenna design utilise the latest low noise componentry to ensure optimum performance in both strong and weak signal conditions."

The stylish Australian designed and manufactured AE3000 operates across the 174 to 860 MHz Free-to Air digital TV band.

It comprises of an Omni-directional dual loop antenna combined with a 20dB amplifier housed in an attractive weather and UV resistant radome.

East continued: "We based our amplifier design on advanced GaAs MESFET

technology which has exceptional frequency handling characteristics, high signal to noise ratios coupled with superior third order intermodulation properties, providing outstanding interference immunity across all channels. Such technology is often found in high specification military communications and radar systems."

Operating from a 12 volt DC supply and measuring a mere 280mm in diameter by 55mm high, the lightweight AE3000 has the advantage of multiple mounting options making it equally suitable for marine, caravan or RV installations.

As one would expect from GME, full installation hardware is provided, and all screws and bolts are of marine grade stainless steel.

The antenna is fed by a 10 metre length of low loss coaxial cable which carries power to the integrated amplifier and feeds the signals to the television receiver.

The AE3000 is now available through GME's national dealer network, further information can be found at www.gme.net.au

Comprehensive New Narva Catalogue Sets Benchmark

With the addition of more than 1,000 new part numbers the 2013-2014 Narva catalogue, containing in excess of 500 pages in full colour, sets a new benchmark for the most comprehensive automotive lighting and electrical catalogue ever released in the Australasian market.

Evident in this edition is Narva's continual advancement in product development taking full advantage of the major advances in technology in every category within this extensive range of products.

Not surprisingly L.E.D technology is the biggest contributor, moving from the 'Be Seen' applications like truck and trailer lighting to 'See With' products such as driving lamps, headlamps, work lamps and interior lamps.

Technology advancements are however not confined to L.E.D with H.I.D now even brighter with 50 watt ballasts and more competitive pricing. Performance globes are more powerful and provide a whiter light without crossing the legal boundaries of ADR or 'E' approval.

Some of the catalogue highlights include L.E.D Headlamps, Driving Lamps and Free Form Headlamp Inserts. Intense white light is projected from the energy efficient Compac 70 L.E.D auxiliary lamps and the 90mm L.E.D Headlamp assemblies. There is also Australia's most comprehensive program of Free Form Headlamp inserts in the popular round and rectangular sizes.

The **Emergency Lighting segment** shows the biggest expansion of new products with lamps such as the world's most popular style Work Lamp with





modern new slimline lamps and a vast array of L.E.D options available to meet every transport need and legal requirement.

The new 2013-2014 Narva catalogue is arguably one of the greatest sales tools ever released into the market. It is a great read and it's now available from leading Narva distributors or from Narva sales offices.

TBM

integrated handle, waterproof switch, virtually unbreakable polycarbonate lens and spring loaded pedestal mounting bracket, now available with high powered L.E.D's and ultra-low current draw. The toughest heavy duty inspection lamp ever built by Narva is retained with a new and even tougher lamp currently in production using SMD L.E.D's. 'Legion' L.E.D Light Bars with stylish low profile styling are introduced with their amazing light output and range of selectable light patterns. Versatile mining / utility vehicle bars have also been introduced with unique features such as ease of access to wiring and connections to add or service lamps.

Long Life and Performance Globe options are set out in an easy to read layout with all variants available for selection on the same page. Narva's updated and easy reference globe vehicle application chart is also contained within this colour coded section making it a very valuable sales tool for the trade and resellers.

The **Switches and Power Accessories** segment includes a host of new products for recreational vehicles, 4WD and heavy transport applications with a special emphasis on power accessories designed for high current draw capabilities and DC power options. An all new section contains vast array of sealed rocker switches, switch panels and descriptive symbol stickers.

Stylish slimline L.E.D interior lamps, L.E.D tape and interconnecting strip lamps are just some of the dramatically expanded range providing something for all interior RV and transport applications.

For Narva new developments and stylish modern designs in world class truck, bus, and trailer lighting never stops. The Truck and Trailer section reflects this with



How to Clean A Waterline . . While The Boat's Still In The Water

When working on a waterline, it is important to know what type of bottom paint has been used. While owners want to clean the scum line,



they should also be conscious of not removing or damaging the anti-fouling paint.

Additionally, since the boat is in the water they do not want to work with any harsh chemicals that may hurt the environment.

Owners looking to work from the boat or dock will need a bucket filled with properly mixed boat soap, Shurhold extension handle with a soft brush, medium brush, curved adapter and light-duty Swivel Scrubber. Owners looking to watch the video showing how to clean their waterline with these tools can go to

<http://shurhold.com/article/clean-n-simple/how-do-i-clean-my-waterline/>.

Working from the dock or the boat, owners will want to clean a small section at a time. They should start by rinsing the area to soften and loosen the scum with the pressure from the hose. When they begin to scrub, they'll want to start with the softest tool and only move up as needed. Also, Shurhold's curved adapter will help them reach those odd angles from both the dock and the boat.

If the boat has a very soft abrasive paint, owners will want to only use a soft brush and be careful not to smear it. They should only brush along

the scum line above the paint from side to side or use one-directional strokes down. Pulling up could bring soft paint onto the clean hull sides.

Another technique to cleaning the waterline is to do so from a small work raft, kayak or even standing near a sand bar and doing it up close and by hand. In these situations, owners will need a spray bottle filled with properly mixed boat soap, soft brush, light-duty Scrub Pad, Magic Eraser Sponge and Suction Cleat.

The suction cleat is key. This will give owners something on the hull to hold on to while they scrub so they don't keep pushing the boat away. As before, it's important to work a small section at a time and spray it with the boat soap. Then work that area in a horizontal scrubbing motion to loosen and get rid of the scum. Tougher areas that leave some staining are then easy to address with a Melamine sponge, like the Magic Eraser. Using this same motion with the sponge users will find that the staining and scum come right off.

Nothing looks worse than a boat cruising around with a dirty scum line. Remember just hitting the waterline with nothing more than a soft brush once a week can keep the hull looking good with little to no effort. If owners let it go a bit longer, then a little elbow grease will do the trick.

Dedicated to educating boat owners, Shurhold provides key tips for boat value preservation at www.shurhold.com <http://www.shurhold.com>

Inventor of the One Handle Does It All system, Shurhold manufactures specialty care items and accessories to clean, polish and detail.

Contact Shurhold, 3119 SW 42nd Ave., Palm City, FL 34990 USA. +1-772-287-1313; Fax: +1-772-286-9620. www.shurhold.com <http://www.shurhold.com>

Chris Guppy Joins Power Equipment

Long serving and highly respected marine industry identity Chris Guppy has signed on with Power Equipment, the authorised Distributor of Yanmar and JCB diesel engines. For Chris, this appointment represents a return to home, having worked for Power Equipment a decade ago.



Footnote: Chris is well known to countless readers for his help and guidance with Suzuki matters over many years; we wish him well in his new role with Yanmar

While Chris has a wealth of experience in diesel and petrol engines, his talent at Power Equipment is to be channelled into the Power Products division. Chris Guppy has been appointed to the role of Power Products Area Manager for Queensland.

"I will be working with OEM, trade customers and end users to assist them with their needs with the Yanmar and JCB line of diesel engines," Chris said on his appointment.

"As a small farmer, I can very much relate to the needs of people who work on the land."

Returning to Power Equipment, Chris noted that the multi faceted growth which has occurred in the company and their products over the past decade has been incredible.

"I've watched at arm's length the changes at Power Equipment over the past decade and its nothing short of mind numbing. The expansion of the Yanmar range both in terms of engine models and the gen set range is staggering."

"Another important factor that drew me back to Power Equipment is that the company is very soundly based and administered. Management is very sincere in its focus on customers and dealers, delivering 100% support on a first rate product."

Commenting on his appointment to Power Equipment, Business Manager Noel Heritage can't speak more highly

of Chris Guppy.

"We were looking for a high calibre candidate to replace Geoff Tickle who has retired," Noel Heritage said.

"Geoff has been with Power Equipment for a long period of time and was highly valued by both our customer base and everyone at Power Equipment. Chris is the ideal person to move into the role vacated by Geoff."

"Chris spent ten years in the role of National Service Manager for Suzuki. He is well qualified with engines and a good fit for Power Equipment."

Power Equipment is the exclusive and authorised Australian, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and South Pacific Distributor of Yanmar Marine and Industrial diesel engines, JCB DieselMax, MASE diesel marine generators, Gori high quality folding sailboat propellers, PSS Shaft Seals and Electromaax products.

For more information contact:

Noel Heritage,

Business Manager Power Equipment Pty Ltd

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Premium Quality PFDs for the Smallest Boaties

When it comes to the safety of children on board a boat, there can be no compromise whatsoever. That's the underlying premise behind the release of the latest PFDs from Australia's leading safety manufacturer, RFD.



The range of children specific PFDs have been designed in Australia to the new Australian Standard AS4758 with three factors in mind - Fit, Form and Function. This is every parent's assurance that their child will be fitted with a comfortable, high quality, high performance PFD.

Within the extensive RFD range of PFDs, child sizes are included in the Sirocco, Mistral, Diablo and Hurricane ranges. This means that the entire family, from toddlers right the way through to adults, can be decked out in matching PFDs.

Child sizes in the Sirocco and Mistral PFDs begin with an XS to suit a body mass of 10 kgs to 15 kgs, incrementally increasing to Child Medium. The Hurricane and Diablo PFDs are available in Child Medium.

The Sirocco and Mistral models are both 100N performance jackets that are suitable for general boating. The child versions of both these PFDs feature a crutch strap and grab handle on the collar for additional security.

And of course comfort rates top of the scale with the Sirocco and Mistral as these jackets are designed to be worn for extended periods while on board a vessel.

The Diablo and Hurricane are rated to 50N and have been specifically designed for children who want to participate in a range of fun water activities such as tubing or riding as passenger on a PWC. Both PFDs are soft and flexible with a generous cut around the arms and neck for comfort.

"We understand that children are an integral group in the boating community," said Mark Barker, Managing





Director of RFD.

“In developing our new range of RFD PFDs we devoted just as much effort to the children’s line up as the adult products. Children need to be safe and they need to be comfortable, otherwise families will turn away from boating.”

“At RFD we are proud of the PFD products that we have developed for children.”

Parents can feel comfortable that when they select a RFD branded PFD for their child, they are getting the best there is.

RFD is a world leading supplier of marine safety products and inflatable watercraft marketed under a range of brand names. Some of these brands include Plastimo boating equipment, ACR lights, Kannad Marine and Comet pyrotechnics.

Beginning in 1920, RFD is primarily involved in the supply and service of marine, fire, life support and gas control equipment.

For further information on this story contact:

Mark Barker Managing Director RFD Pty. Ltd

Phone: +61 2 9330 7000 Fax: +61 2 9330 7098 Email:

mark.barker@rfdaustralia.com.au Web: www.rfd.com.au



Dependable Toilet Offers Freedom From Clogs

With Raritan’s Atlantes Freedom Toilet, boat owners can declare their independence from clogged heads. Now this excellent performing toilet features the company’s Vortex-Vac discharge system.

This technology creates a vacuum internally, so no remote vacuum pump or tank is required. It also eliminates the need for foot pedals and other mechanical components that can fail. Unlike typical vacuum toilet systems, a convenient, built-in shredder with stainless steel blades transform waste into small particles to reduce clogs. A unique discharge loop eliminates odors and enables the bowl to hold water, similar to home toilets.

Vortex-Vac creates the quietest, most efficient flushing action of any comparable toilet on the market. Ensuring a sound night sleep for guests aboard, it performs at a noise level of less than 63 decibels.

Raritan’s Atlantes Freedom is a one-piece china bowl that also offers low-power consumption and low-water use of only 2 pints. It features a reliable, heavy-duty stainless steel flush handle. The handle has timed

The GOOD NEWS Corner . . .

We’re trying to encourage readers to share their ‘Happy Days’ boating experiences with fellow readers. We



reckon it’s time to remind each other about all the wonderful things you can do in a boat . . . It is not about literary or photographic skill; it is all about putting together a summary of a special day, or weekend, you’ve had in your boat. We’ve got subscriptions, tee shirts and sunnies on offer as incentives . . . and yep, we are particularly keen to see family pics with the youngsters involved. We’d also love to hear from readers boating and fishing some of the more unusual and remote areas of OZ.

Enquiries to editor@boatmags.com.au

operation with a fail-safe mode. This means if the timed operation or circuit board fails, the handle will still flush the toilet momentarily or as long as the handle is being pushed.

A Smart Toilet programmable wall switch offers water saver mode, an optional holding tank full indicator and momentary multi-function control. Raritan’s FlushSense control is also available and enables users to operate the head without touching any panel or push-button.

The Atlantes Freedom with Vortex-Vac is available in 12V, 24V, 120/240V AC. Options include the Smart Toilet wall switch, timer control models and a Sea/Fresh flush water select system.

Contact Raritan, 530 Orange St., Millville, NJ 08332 USA. +1-856-825-4900; Fax: +1-856-825-4409. info@raritaneng.com; www.raritaneng.com.

TBM

Hydraulic steering systems



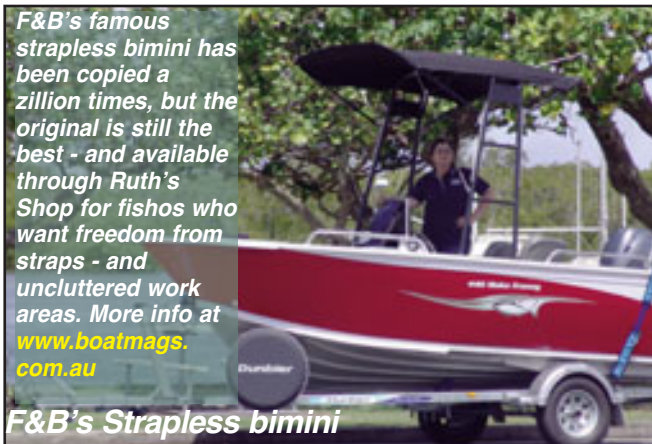
Hydrive is a South Aussie company which makes world class hydraulic steering to suit ANY application. We've used them on a huge variety of boats for many years. Contact head office on (08) 8243 1633, or check out their informative web site www.hydrive.com.au

SEQ Stainless steel work



For truly beautiful stainless steel work, and a remarkable eye for 'line' SEQ customers need Drew McKenzie on their team. The big guy is a legend - and has done all our s.s. work for years. Phone (07) 5665 8920 or email gcfab@bigpond.com.au

F&B's famous strapless bimini has been copied a zillion times, but the original is still the best - and available through Ruth's Shop for fishos who want freedom from straps - and uncluttered work areas. More info at www.boatmags.com.au



F&B's Strapless bimini

Bennett trim tabs



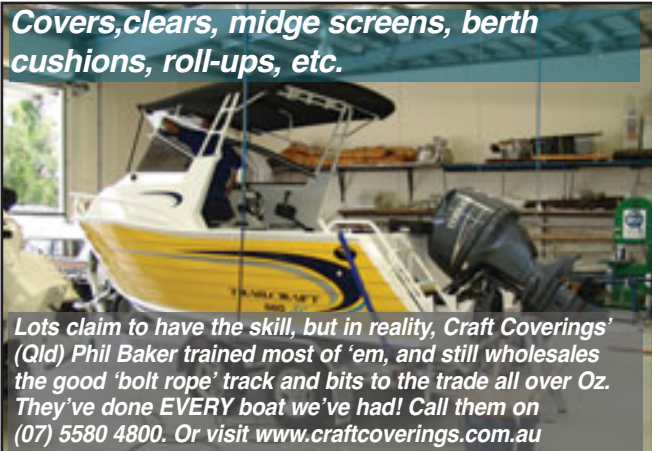
PW's favourite accessory - and in our opinion the best of the best - but they are a bit harder to install, and very powerful. Available in OZ through any good chandler or marine dealer. Learn heaps more at www.bennetttrimtabs.com/

Manson NZ anchors



Some of the claims made for anchors beggars belief - but with the proudly Kiwi Manson brand - the real ones, that is - the claims can be trusted. They have the numbers on the board. Available all-over in good chandleries and marine dealers. Check their web site for their background & know how. Worth the visit: www.manson-marine.co.nz/

Covers, clears, midge screens, berth cushions, roll-ups, etc.



Lots claim to have the skill, but in reality, Craft Coverings' (Qld) Phil Baker trained most of 'em, and still wholesales the good 'bolt rope' track and bits to the trade all over Oz. They've done EVERY boat we've had! Call them on (07) 5580 4800. Or visit www.craftcoverings.com.au

iPod, USB stick compatible marine AM/FM radio - the GME GR9200




Upgraded over the years, GME's AM/FM radio is a beauty; designed from the ground up for marine use, genuinely rain or splash proof. From good chandleries everywhere.

Wavemaster seat dampener



Recently featured in TBM, the Springfield Wavemaster dampeners "put the glide back into the ride" and whilst your tinnie isn't going to float across the water on a magic carpet - the dampeners sure as heck take that awful 'crack' or 'bang' out of it. A must for blokes with bad backs, hips or knees. Available thru Ruth's shop www.boatmags.com.au or with more details from Wavemaster at www.wavemaster.com.au

Superb cork flooring



Upfront we must concede we've always believed cork planks produce the best marine flooring for internal or external use. Beautiful to look at, nice & safe underfoot, virtually nil maintenance - the secret is getting it laid properly. More info, quotes, talk to Len Perry at Eagle Catamarans at Steiglitz (near Brisbane) on (07) 5546 2900 and tell him Peter & Ruth sent you!

The KLM team of v. clever sparkies . .




When you can't find someone in SEQ to install the tabs, that new sounder or rip out the shitty electrics and do it properly - you need the team from KLM. Talk to John (that's 'im on the right) with Simon (centre) and Cody (L) Phone (07) 5546 1466

Maxwell quality winches



You might think it is hard to stop the ageing process - but with a 12v Maxwell power winch you damn nearly can - this can add years to your boating life, as it takes the whole back-breaking struggle out of anchoring. Check them out at www.vetus-maxwell.com or talk to our friend Jamie (Qld) on (07) 3120 9704

QL trim tabs



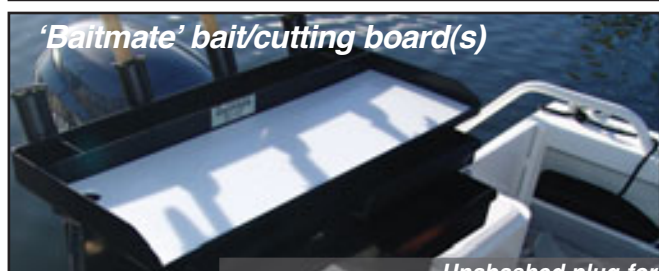
Made by Volvo, the QL's are the easiest tabs to install and operate - a vertical 'blade' drops down from the above 'box'. Popular with the trade 'coz they are so easy to rig. Find 'em at any Volvo Penta dealer.

Metho (NOT BUTANE!) Stoves



Boatbuilders need to think more about installing some of the comforts of home - like this beautifully made, Swedish Origo metho stove. Easy to install, takes bugger all space and is completely safe. From BIAS Boating - see their ad P-93.

'Baitmate' bait/cutting board(s)



Unabashed plug for the "Baitmate" baitboards. Extremely well designed and ruggedly made in powdercoated ally. Several varieties and sizes, available nationwide. More info in Ruth's Shop at www.boatmags.com.au

Parsun 3.6hp Outboard



Folks, stop asking - this little 74.6cc, 16kg, 3.6hp one-lunger is a ripper and just keeps on going. And going. For around \$750 rr, it is a long term winner!

More info (& other Parsun models) from www.islandinflatables.com.au

Relax helmman & passenger chairs



The Relax team make more than outriggers and rod holders - they also produce the best helmman and passenger chairs. A beaut range to consider - (07) 3299 6666, or www.relax.com.au

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The Boat Mag's SEA LIBRARY is a unique research resource containing hundreds of boat and F&B (1993-2011), a growing number of Peter's 1970-1990 "RETRO" boat tests - and more



Welcome to the SEA LIBRARY!

This is a very special resource comprising hundreds of boat tests, engine reports and feature articles covering just about every aspect of boating in Australia.

It is free to all F&B's Boat Mag Members, or carries a small charge per download for some of the special articles, technical reports and tests. Articles downloaded can be read on screen - or printed out in b&w or full colour on your PC's colour printer to file and keep handy. Most articles are simple, easy to print PDF's that can provide the answers to those questions (24/7) around the BBQ once and for all - and give you bragging rights in the process !

Please Note: Some of the bigger Consumer Reports where page turning technology is used for maximum convenience, cannot be downloaded (as such) but can still be easily printed out as required. Typically, the Sea Library runs a couple of months behind the monthly magazine, but all the major feature articles and Surveys end up archived or filed in the Library for future use and research.

[CLICK HERE & Go Straight To The Sea Library](#)

NEW Reports Added These Past Xmas Months:

(READER'S NOTE: We have had big block of approximately 80 new test and product reports going up on the web site in December - check them out next time you call into the Library.

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engine tests, consumer reports, fishing and feature articles published over the last 20 years in recently, The Boat Mag. It is updated every month, and is free to all F&B's Boat Mag Members.



● Available NOW!



TBM's Sea Library Good Read Pick Of The Month

This is a great bush yarn from Mike O'Neil, one of the most popular contributors on the original F&B team, who specialised in his once a year trip to the Far North from his home base in northern NSW. Usually aided and abetted by a mad bunch of mates, their main mission in life was to explore the Top End, catch a barra or three, and enjoy a coldie as the need arose! Great read, good humour, lots of useful info.

[Click Here](#) For The Limmen Bight feature in the Sea Library



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Hi,

We trust you are enjoying the revised F&B format in The Boat Mag, as much as we are producing it, in its new 'clothes'!

Whilst retaining all the core F&B values of credible, 'hands on' editorial, it's been good to branch out into other areas - working with second hand boats for example, where many craft are simply amazing value. Or recognising that imports are here to stay. Or that there is a definite trend towards larger boats being kept at a marina - whilst many big trailerboat projects are being down-sized to be more easily trailered behind today's smaller SUVs and 4WDs . . . never has the Australian boating world been in such a state of change, at every level.

We are all worried about the shift of so many boating industry components - boats, motors, parts (etc) to China-based manufacturing, and the likely impact this will have in our world in the months and years ahead. Given that so much product is now being sourced from (mainly) China, we have to re-double our efforts checking and trialling these products ahead of our readers.

These are issues that effect each of us in different ways, but we believe it's more important than

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Andy Myers: NT Jewfish
From Bynoe & The Perons



ever that you can count on The Boat Mag team for fast, independent advice, whether you are planning to buy a 'pre-loved' rig, a Chinese built 2-stroke (or 4-stroke) outboard, or renovate that lovely old timber bay boat you've been admiring . . . as a subscriber, you can count on the prompt, experienced support of The Boat Mag team and all the resources we can muster within the industry, as required.

We look forward to working with you, helping to ensure your boating experience is even better than you'd planned!
Kind regards,

Peter (editor@boatmags.com.au) &

Ruth (admin@boatmags.com.au)



Ruth



Peter

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