

Plate Alloy Australia's 5.0m Sportfish



Shown here and below: Tricked up as a full competition fishing machine, the new 5.0m tiller steer can be set-up to suit individual preferences i.e side or centre console.

Part Three of Four Parts

'School' Is In For This Terrific DIY Ally Boat Building Course

Re-introducing the latest plate alloy kit from the Plate Alloy Oz team in Melbourne, where these guys are having heaps of fun with their week-long, ally boat building courses.

People are travelling to Melbourne from all over Australia, from all walks of life - with a common goal: they want to learn how to build their own plate alloy boat at home. Sensibly, safely, soundly, and yes, to professional standards.

Although the Plate Alloy team supply professional yards and amateurs across Australia, the word has spread that for people who just don't have quite enough confidence to take on the project by themselves, the PAA Boat Building Courses have been a god-send.

During the week's course, the small classes - usually eight people - are taught everything they need to know about setting up a kit, stitching it first, the welding out, finishing. By week's end, with everybody usually staying in the same motel, firm friendships are made, many laughs are shared and the week ends up with a boat launching and a BBQ.

Intended use - 5.0m Sports Fisher.

With regard to the fitting out of any vessel; The fitout will depend on how you intend to use your boat.

This vessel is designed for the Northern Waters of Australia; it has plenty of open deck space for crabbers or those wishing for extended trips to hunt for those 'special' fish found up North.

This type of vessel is also ideally suited to those on lakes, rivers and sheltered waters, with loads of deck space, excellent load carrying capacity, stable and room to roll out

a swag if desired.

We will be using this vessel as a demonstrator, mainly in Port Phillip Bay, but it may make a trip or two to the Gippsland Lakes, and even some family weekends to Lake Eildon or the Murray River.

Fishing in the Bay will be mainly using plastics, so deck space is what we want. So this will have an influence on how the boat is fitted out.

Power Options

We have chosen a 40 Hp Yamaha 4 stroke engine, economical on fuel, and enough power to get us going,



and with lower fuel consumption compared to a larger engine, we will have a greater range. A portable tank is what we want with this vessel, many users of this type of vessel will have no fuel stations close by for filling, and portability and simplicity is the key.

Carpet is the chosen floor covering, though I am sure the crabbers amongst us would not like this idea, they would prefer to perhaps seal the floor with an anti slip product.

But, there's not many 'muddies' in Victoria, so carpet it is.

With all the aluminium (hot works) completed, it is time to tackle the fit out.

With a small vessel like this, we will keep the fit out simple and functional.

Firstly, with any boat, you must think about what is **under the deck**, as anything under the deck must be accessible, and in most cases, powered things go under the deck. Items such as fuel tanks have sender wires, hose in to fill the tank, and hoses out to supply fuel and vent fumes. Also bilge pumps have power to operate, and outlets to send bilge water overboard.

All these under floor items require careful consideration when planning the vessel fit out. At the build stage, before you fit the decks and swim platform, you need to think about these issues.

Many under floor items require tubes for cable access and holes for grommets and wiring.

Before you commence the fit out, do a final check before you pack away the welder. Have you welded on all the handrails you may require, maybe a small grab rail at the swim deck in case you go swimming? How about a transducer bracket, or maybe you may want to fit a removable live bait tank pump external to the boat, and you need an extra bracket for the little 12v pump, or a scoop. When funds permit, you may want to fit a Minn Kota electric?. If so you may need an Anderson plug at the bow area, so buy the plug and fit the mounting bracket and engine bracket for later on. Are you the swag and overnight camping type? A couple of small tubes welded to the handrail may allow the fitment of some rolled fibreglass poles with a tarp to cover the boat at night. Think about how you will use your boat and what little extras you may need to weld on before you commence the fit out.

If you think about these items now, it is easier to do the welding now before the boat is fitted out.

We will not be painting the boat, the raw aluminium sanded finish is what we will have...forever.

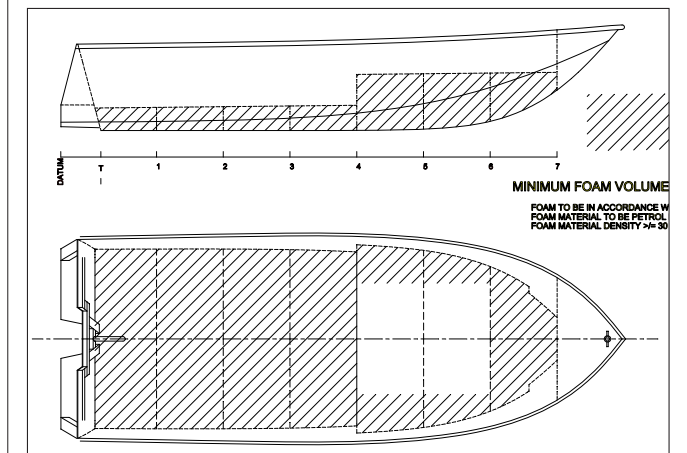
So the sequence for fit out for this vessel is as follows:

- 1: Fit buoyancy foam according to drawings and data supplied with the boat kit.
- 2: Mount bilge pump, (confirm outlet position and wiring route)
- 3: Prepare floor plates, test fit the floor panels, remove, seal and cover with carpet.
- 4: Fit carpeted floor in vessel, and secure in boat.
- 5: Bolt on engine (normally this is done by your local dealer)
- 6: Fit and mount battery box
- 7: Mount battery isolator.
- 8: Run wires to navigation lights, anchor light and bilge pump.

- 9: Mount and wire switch panel
- 10: Fit and secure Fuel tank.
- 11: Fit Australian Builders Plate (ABP)

Starting with the Foam.

With all kits, we include a foam drawing showing the required foam for the vessel. We use and recommend the closed cell type and this is supplied in sheets 2m x 1m x 50mm thick. This foam is the same foam we use in the commercial vessels that we build. Each sheet has a volume of 0.1m³, so looking at the drawing below, we will "round up" 0.46m³ to 0.5m³, and fit 5 sheets giving a total fitted foam volume of 0.5m³.



The first thing to do is test fit the floor panels. We will be carpeting both the front casting deck and the rear floor of the boat.

Shown below are the rear floor plates fitted in place. Make sure that the edges of the ply are sanded and all tags removed. Remember with this boat, there is no sealed deck, so provision must be made for any deck water to flow underneath the hull into the bilge. The bilge pump may then be used to pump under floor water overboard.



Looking forward we can also test fit the ply deck panels to the casting deck. Again these panels will be covered in carpet before being screwed or riveted in place after fitting the foam. We recommend painting the ply with a clear coat for extra protection before applying the carpet. The carpet may be glued over the ply, or screwed along the edges, or held in with Velcro. We have decided to