



Introducing one of the most interesting projects we've undertaken in recent years - the Do-It-Yourself Phil Curran (pictured) designed 4.85 "baby" plate alloy boat. Now completed and tested, It has exceeded all of our expectations by a considerable margin. In this, the second installment of a Two Part report, we carefully explore the prospect of readers building this boat at home with Mum and the kids – and reach some fascinating conclusions.

**Report & Pics by Peter Webster & Ruth Cunningham**

# CURRAN's 4.85

## Build It Yourself "Kit"

# RUNABOUT (P-2)



SPECIFICATIONS	
LOA	.5.29 m
Length	4.80 m
Max. Beam	.2.04 m
Depth	0.915 m
Deadrise	.15°
Bottom Thickness	.3.0 mm
Sides Thickness	.3.0 mm
Hull Weight (est)	.390 kg
Fuel Capacity	.65 L
Weight BMT (est)	.1.04 tonnes
Rec Power	.40-70 hp



## Curran 485 DIY Runabout . .



**W**hen this project was first mooted about 12 months ago, we had some reservations about it. The launch ramps and waterways of Australia are littered with Do It Yourself or Built It Yourself boat projects that have gone horribly wrong.

But as the enquiries for kit boats increased, we decided to look anew at this perennial dream – the idea of building a boat at home that was cheaper, better, exactly what you wanted and could afford to build ‘along the way’.

We were aware of Phil Curran’s CDM (Computer Design Marine) business and the very considerable effort he had put into the concept of using powerful computers to pre-cut plate aluminium. This eliminates the traditional “lofting” process wherein the boat builder is required to have a very high level of skill in order to transfer the architect or designer’s offsets and calculations on to the timber, plywood or aluminium sheet.

By using modern computers to drive the plasma cutters, Curran’s team pioneered much of the modern process of plasma cutting aluminium sheet. In so doing, Curran also revolutionized the world of home boat building.

By eliminating the lofting process, and cutting out the plate to 2 mm accuracy, Curran virtually removed the possibility of the amateur having a major cock-up and building something that was potentially dangerous.

This is just like a big jigsaw puzzle. The pieces are so accurately cut, that if they don’t fit together, then the home boat builder knows he has done something wrong!

By using plate aluminium, Curran also moved home boat building into the new century. Plywood and timber has many virtues, but they pale by comparison to the advantages of using plate aluminium.

Plate aluminium does not warp or twist in the sun. It’s virtually impervious to salt and the ingress of water, can’t suffer osmosis, and whilst it can suffer from certain types of corrosion, it is as close to maintenance free as any material thus invented. Better still, it’s easy to drill, can be tapped for threads, sawn with a jig saw, cut with a hacksaw, chiseled and planed just like a piece of timber! It’s also clean, toxin free, and safe to use.

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