

The 'Runaway' Project

Part 4 of 4 parts. Story and Pics by John Batty and Di Ross



Canopy/covers

When it came to covers we were faced with a dilemma, as in the past, some of the trim tasks we had arranged, produced just average results.

An exception to this was the full camper covers on our dearly departed 550 Signature, which were very well crafted - but the trimmer who did that job, has long since retired.

Based on a recommendation from a marine/auto fabric supplier, we dropped in on Adrian Spencer at Aristocrat Trim Shop in Alberton, conveniently located about a kilometre from the boat build.

We looked at the quality of restored motor vehicles people had entrusted to him, and observed his work both on these, and also a couple of new boats. At that point we were



The Story So Far . . .

As most of the regular F&B readers will be aware, we have been looking for some time to upgrade to a 6.0m boat which could be configured to meet both our on-water needs, and provide a platform for overnight camping at caravan parks as we travel to new boating destinations.

We particularly sought a hull which offered excellent offshore capabilities, two forward berths, incorporation of some galley items, good weather protection and safe roadway access.

Following our test ride in the outboard powered demonstrator boat, we felt SA's Oceantech designer Jon Kemp's raised sheer 6.1m, wheelhouse model, clearly had the right blend of fine entry, broad shoulders and stern height to deliver a boat that is very capable and one which inspires confidence. This is a typical Oceantech design which retains balanced aesthetic lines (evident to us in their family of boats) with a raised sheer line offering a frontal presence on the scale of a 7.0m metre boat.

After extensive assessment and much deliberation, we finally contracted a BMT package through Calibre Boats, in Adelaide. Our Vindicator 610 will be powered by a Yanmar 4BY180Z sterndrive diesel, cradled in a special Calibre aluminium trailer - *John Batty & Di Ross*



confident Adrian could produce our covers to a high standard and he made himself available for discussions with Calibre. This was helpful, as both parties could work towards an integrated outcome.

During construction and in preparation for the canopy and covers, a robust perimeter frame was welded to the rear face of the cab roof, and the engine cover was fabricated with a return edge to provide for fasteners across the transom.

After the boat was painted, nylon strips (40mm x 18mm) were attached down each coaming, to provide for curtain fasteners along the sides and also importantly to ensure rain water (when camping) is directed overboard.

Where fasteners are attached direct to the hull they are separated by the inclusion of a nylon cup.

Cabin Lining

As part of our arrangement with Calibre, the cabin was lined and the cockpit floor carpeted by the trimmer, and with the assistance of Reelax Enterprises, we were able to match the engine cover cushion with the same material used on the Reelax seats. This was appreciated, as we were already struggling with the selection of fabric for the bunk cushions (which we were going to cover ourselves with Adrian's guidance) in that what we had in mind didn't exactly match samples that were available.

The canopy fabric is held in place by rope track across the cab roof and folded back into a zipped envelope over the rear frame and is a very neat solution. We see the canopy being permanently in place to provide additional shade with just the sides and rear curtain to be zipped in place (both to the canopy and each other) to convert the boat into an onsite camper.

When the latter are in use, internal support stays between the transom corners and the overhead canopy frame are added to keep the curtains taught in the wind at night and this might help with the sleeping. They are not necessary on the water, with just the canopy in place.

We are very pleased with the results Adrian has produced, and after incorporating some of his ideas in the covers like the roll down "windows" we believe we have a good balance between providing enough light, ventilation and privacy.

After the trimming was completed, the boat was taken back to Calibre Boats for final detail before handover. This included recalibrating the BEP fuel gauge and a few minor items like the cabin light and access hatches and adding decals etc.

Propeller Change

With all tasks completed we met with Adelaide Yanmar service man Paul Webb (Webb Marine) at the ramp where he