

Twin Test: Monark Olympic Vs. Haines Hunter V-17R

Original Story/Pics by Peter Webster

Is a 5.2m runabout the best value/size for an Australian family? According to recent sales figures, many families believe it is . . .*

Introduction

Editing a boating magazine produces its share of headaches and drama in the areas of production, printing and general publishing, but this is largely made up by the all too few hours spent on the water, or the time spent talking boats with our readers.

Lately, as our circulation continues its steady growth, more and more readers are writing or phoning the office seeking comment or advice about a wide range of subjects. In particular, we are spending an increasing amount of time trying to advise and help readers about to purchase a new boat.

We have said repeatedly, it is extremely hard to specifically advise readers over the choice of a boat. However, we do believe it is possible to help steer them in the right

direction, and lately, we have been steering more and more people in the direction so graphically illustrated by this month's twin test.

Why, we argue, spend \$3,000 on a 15-16 ft half-cabin runabout, where more than half the boat is taken up by rarely used space, when the same amount of money will purchase a 17ft runabout? The bigger boat will give you better seating for your family and friends, a more comfortable and spray-free ride, and a greatly increased capacity to do more things more efficiently.

A well planned runabout is a better fishing boat than a similarly sized, or smaller, half-cab. A runabout is much better for waterskiing, if only because of the back-to-back seating, which means the legally required observer — as well as the helmsman, is comfortably seated for what can be many hours of waterskiing fun.

We have also promoted the principles of runabouts vs. half-cabins on economic grounds, as the purchase of a runabout version of the half-cab can save quite a lot of money and/or the same amount of money can be applied to the purchase of a bigger runabout. If economy is a concern, the

runabout will generally perform better with similar horsepower than its heavier half-cab sister.

To develop this philosophy a little further, we decided to choose two of Australia's most popular products - a Haines Hunter and a Monark - and take a close look at the advantages and disadvantages of family boating in open runabouts.

Our choice of products (at first glance) will probably appear very similar to the layman, but each boat is quite different from the other.

Design

Both boats are open runabouts with forward steering and throttle controls, back to back seating for four people with seating for two more moulded into the outboard well transom area. They are fibreglass construction and are designed to carry only one motor.

The Monark Olympic measures 5.05m overall, with a maximum beam of 2.04m and a maximum horsepower rating of 150 hp. The waterline beam at the transom is 2.07m. Deadrise at the transom (the amount of vee in the bottom of the hull) is a deep 20°, and the boat weighs approximately 455 kgs (dry).



****TBM
RETRO
BOAT TEST:
Unchanged, as
first published,
written and
photographed
by Peter
Webster in
November
1976**