



Haines Signature 460 DF (Day Fisher)

This new model day fisher was released at this year's Sydney Boat Show, and immediately developed its own fan club. Most buyers were Sydney or NSW coastal fishos who were looking for an affordable, soft riding fibreglass boat that maximised fishing space, minimised cabin area and gave them the biggest possible fishing cockpit.

Most industry commentators put the high level of interest in the 460 DF down to the fact that it's probably one of the closest GRP boats in production to the original Seafarer 4.74 m V-Sea – a craft considered by thousands of boat owners to be the definitive GRP family fisherman.

However, the 460 Series was actually created to further Signature's stated philosophy of building an entry-level series of family fibreglass boats that would encourage Aussie families into fibreglass, rather than aluminium.

With this in mind, designer John Haines (Snr) knew he had a number of aces up his sleeve, not least of which was the potential to develop a boat that was significantly softer riding than any pressed aluminium boat of this length.

Now, a couple of years later and with a whole range of these 460 models in production, countless independent boat tests have confirmed that he achieved his ambition. Thus far, the factory has developed: -

- 460 C (cabin)
- 460 BR (bowrider)
- 460 R (runabout)
- 460 SF (sport fisherman)
- 460 DF (day fisher cuddy)

and there is a bunch of sportfishing fans (the writer included), who keep nagging Hainesy to develop a 460 centre console along the lines of the original 445 centre console he made umpteen years ago when he was still manufacturing Haines Hunters.

(Time out #1: In case that doesn't make sense to you and you've only just come into the boating world, John

Haines founded the original Haines Hunter boat building organisation in the late 1960's. He built thousands of boats through the 1970s and 1980s before losing the business in a highly controversial takeover by Asian interests. Barred from boat building for several years, he cooled his heels with an earth moving plant and a boat trailer business before coming back with a vengeance in the early 1980s, when he started the business we now know as Haines Signature. Within just a couple of years, John Haines, assisted by his sons John (Jnr), and Gregory, built the business back up to become the number one fibreglass trailer boat builder again – a position they have sustained ever since.

So what's different about the 460 DF from its sister, the 460 C?

Fisherman & Boatowner FIELD TEST



All the factory has done here is removed the berths out of the cabin model and replaced them with what are best described as storage units, This saved money on tooling, berth cushions etc, and they packaged the boat with a slightly lower standard of finish.

Sure, you can still option the boat up to the hilt, but the concept of the 460 Day Fisher was to create a true entry level boat where the emphasis is on getting folks aboard the boat without worrying too much whether the rear lounge is standard equipment or not.

In this way, the entry level price can be kept low.

Getting Underway: The 460 DF with the Yammy 2-stroke is certainly a nice boat to run.

The Yammy 60 was a good choice, too. It had just the right combination of power to make the little 460 DF get up and sparkle, but was very economical and although not as smooth or as quiet as a 4-stroke, was nevertheless an acceptably economical and quiet engine.

As ever, the 460 hull reminded us that there is still a big gap between the ride qualities of these top fibreglass deep Vee hulls with their “variable dead rise” bottoms and even the best of the pressed production tinnies from any of the manufacturers.

Indeed, I think the 460 hull series is probably the softest riding boat in Australia in this class, and can certainly be recommended for older folk who find the bumping and banging about of small craft a pain in the back, hips or wherever.

Here, if the water gets choppy or rough, the skipper just throttles the 460 DF back to sub-planing speeds of around 14 or 15 knots and the boat will come home through almost anything (I kid you not), softly, safely and without scaring its occupants at all.

If ever there was a boat to use as a means of encouraging people to go boating for the first time, this would surely be it – it’s so easy to drive well, and what it does do, it does exceptionally well. In other words, even the most ham-fisted beginner would enjoy boating in the 460 Day Fisher, let alone someone who was a tad more sensitive to issues of trim, load and balance.

And for the guy who really does know what he’s about, the 460 Day

Fisher really has an exceptional hull. So much so, we ended up about eight miles offshore before we realised that we were tootling around the ocean in moderate chop in 15 foot of boat without giving it a moment’s thought. We then turned around and came back in through the Southport bar with nary a drop of water coming over the windscreen and truly impeccable handling through the break.

About the only criticism I would have of this boat is one that you’ll often find in 15-16 footers.

When it comes off the plane, with a couple of big people forward, it drops its nose more than I like, but providing you are aware of this trait it really doesn’t cause any problems – the trick in heavy weather is to slow down by deliberately cocking the bow up into the air. But this will become second nature after you’ve had a couple of hours onboard, and besides, very few people will be using this boat in conditions the rough.

Nevertheless, I know quite a few of the guys that have actually bought this boat, and most of them are heading way out into the blue yonder. So fellas, just keep this characteristic in mind when you are working in short choppy conditions.

(Time out #2: This is a good place to point out that the 460 DF was never designed as an offshore fishing boat. If you know what you’re about, this boat will go just about anywhere – but if you haven’t had the experience in working ocean entrances and crossing river mouths, then don’t use this boat for that purpose until you’ve built up a lot of sea time and experience in the bays and inshore waters first).

Conclusion: Another excellent addition to the growing stable of variable dead rise hulls produced by the Wacol factory of Haines Signature.

As far as ride, handling and performance is concerned it is very hard to see how this boat could be improved.

Internally, I still think there are a couple of areas where Haines Signature are really spoiling the boat with a lack of attention to detail.

Areas of concern include the lack of a cover over the instrument panel and switchboard (from inside the cabin) and the tacky looking fuel pipe and breather inlet which drops down from the transom to run back up under the floor to the centralised fuel tank.

Given that just about every Haines Signature has the same size fuel tank trench, for the life of me I can’t understand why they couldn’t make a nice little fibreglass panel that would cover up these pipes and lend a more finished look to the transom area.

But these are small matters – and in the big picture, I have to agree it is a boat I could easily live with.

For further information about the 460’s, or the name of your nearest dealer, phone Greg Haines at Haines Signature (07) 3271 4400. Boat supplied by JV Marine, Melbourne.

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