

HAINES SIGNATURE 460 R with 50 hp 'BIG FOOT' MERC 50hp x 4 stroke

Hard on the heels of the 460 C we tested in F&B August issue, comes the very attractive 460 R or "Runabout" model, the second in what will prove to be a cluster of models including a bowrider, the radical new fishing model (see special test next month) probably a centre console - and there's already talk of doing an entry level "Day fisher model". For this month though, we took the opportunity to run the 460 Runabout with one of the much talked about Mercury "Big Foot" 50 hp 4-stroke outboard motors.

When you're buying a boat for the first or fifth time, one of the key decisions that must be made early on, is the configuration of the boat. Many manufacturers in both fibreglass and aluminium, now make a variety of models around the same hull configuration - and this boat is a good example.

We've already tested the 460 C (with the Honda 50 hp 4-stroke), now we're looking at the 460 R with the 50 hp Mercury 4-stroke - and next month, we'll be looking at the 460 F for Fisherman, powered by the world acclaimed Suzuki 70 hp 4-stroke.

Given the factory is already talking about a bowrider, centre console etc, clearly the consumer has the opportunity (in this case at least), of having a long hard think about which type of boat suits him, having decided that this was the best boat for him or her, in a packaging sense, in the first place.

Haines Signature make a big range of boats as everybody knows, but they've been often criticised as being "too expensive" for the average family man.

This argument doesn't hold a lot of water any more, with packages for the 460 C and R coming down into the \$16-\$18,000 area, well within the range of a lot more boat buyers.

And what a special little boat it is!

Design: For many people, the Haines Signature 460 C has too much cabin, and not enough cockpit space - others simply believe half cabins (or cuddy cabins as they're often called), put the emphasis on available space under the

wrong column.

If you're not going to sleep on a boat, or you don't need to lie down, then why lose half the boat length to what is in effect, the sleeping area?

Here, it's a different ball game.

With 2.0 m from the transom through to the dashboard, the runabout model has a considerably bigger cockpit, especially if the optional rear lounge is taken out.

I really like this set-up.

With the family going out for a barbecue on a Saturday afternoon, the rear lounge goes back in, and bingo! You've got comfortable seating for five people - certainly for Mum and Dad and three kids. As well, there's still plenty of space to put away water skis, wake boards, let alone fishing gear, ice chest, etc, so the configuration lends itself to family usage, just as much as the cuddy version, but with the additional spaciousness of the runabout.

From a fishing viewpoint, this is a good set-up. The lounge comes out in a matter of moments, and the whole cockpit is opened up to fishing - with two comfortable seats forward. It certainly lends itself to fishing 'on the pick' and running the rods and lines streaming aft, although the boat is so roomy to walk around, and so stable, it also lends itself to fishing on the drift, but you could argue there's a case to put the rear lounge back in to do that.

It all depends what you like in your boating, and this boat is designed to allow you the maximum flexibility and potential to enjoy your investment.

One of the nicest touches in this runabout concerns the easy walk-

