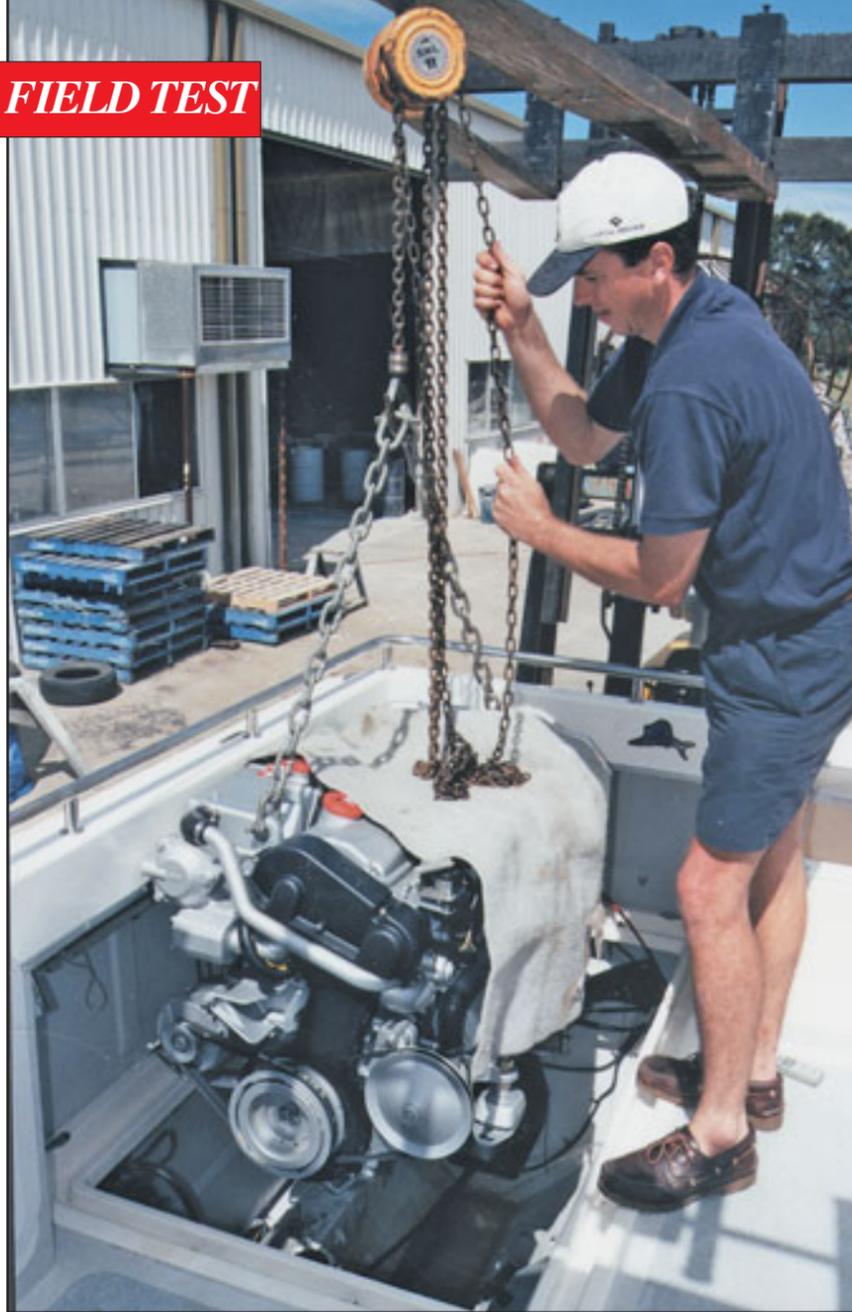


The Olsen Family's 7.2 m Kevlacat "Reelsport" is officially recognised by the IGFA as one of the most successful billfishing boats in Australia, and it is certainly one of the hardest working. Now, after 1300 hours with a pair of V-6 petrol MerCruisers, they are switching across to a fascinating new, super light, Steyr diesel. Damon Olsen explains why they've made the change, and the results they've achieved.



Austrian Steyr 212 hp Turbo Diesel Here

Marine diesel engines are an area of the boating industry where enormous advances in technology have been made over the past decade.

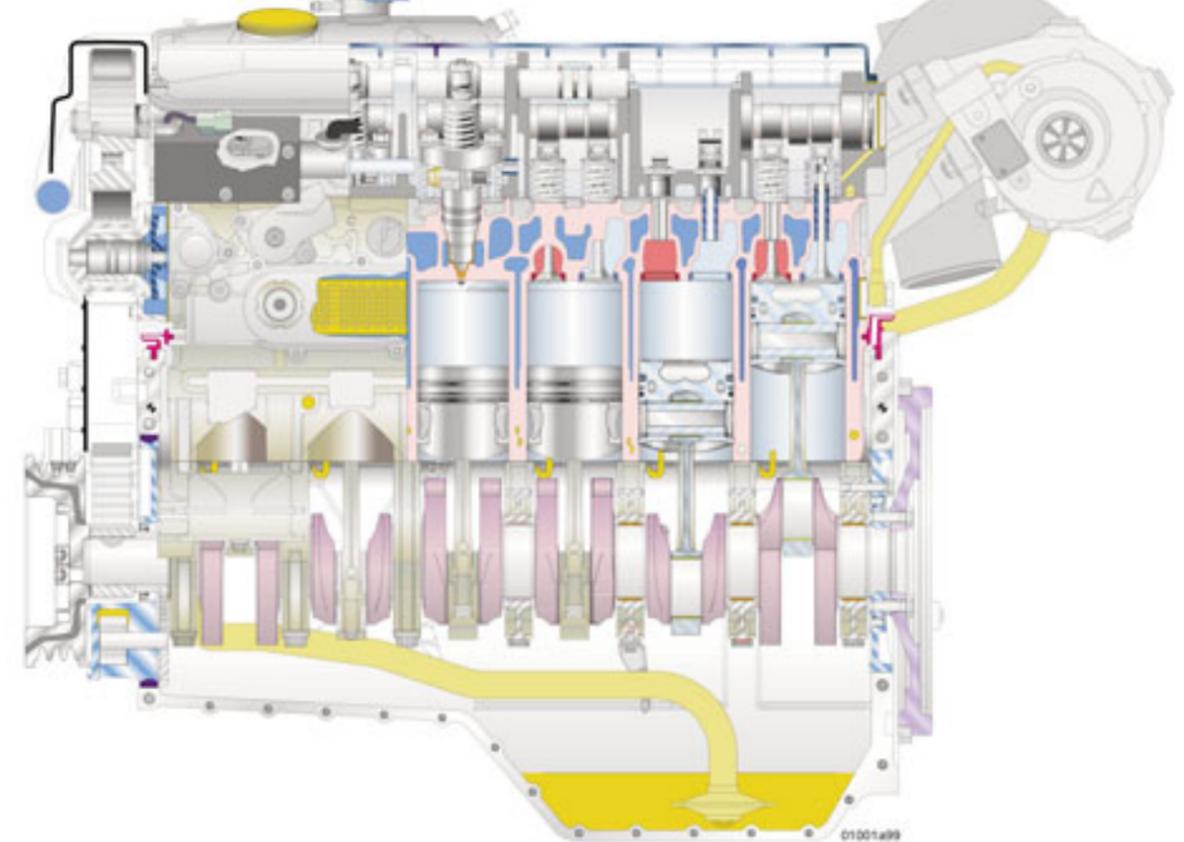
Engine manufacturers have released compact, high powered diesel engines suitable for marine applications. These engines have been of particular interest to owners of boats mainly under 40 feet. However it is the smaller end of

the market, under 35 feet where the real benefits of this new technology are most obvious, as the power to weight ratio of an engine is much more important in smaller boats.

For those not already familiar with the name, Steyr is the manufacturer of a relatively new line of high powered, compact marine diesel engines. The Steyr name may be new to many, however they have been around in

Australia now for a number of years. They manufacture a number of different sized engines ranging from 65 hp up to a 260 hp jet drive model, which is currently in use in a jet boat on Sydney Harbour.

Recently our 7.2m Kevlacat 'Reelsport' was repowered with a pair of 236 model (212hp) Steyr diesel engines. There were a number of reasons for the repower and a number



ENGINEERING CENTER STEYR GmbH, Steyrer Strasse 32, A - 4300 St. Valentin

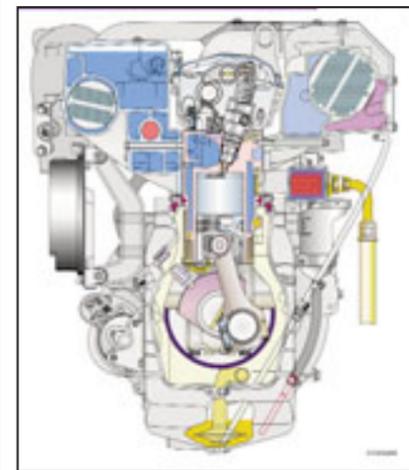
of advantages we have gained from it. Why Re-power The Kevlacat?

As many readers are aware, our Kevlacat was initially fitted with a pair of 210hp V-6 EFI MerCruiser sterndrives fitted to a pair of Bravo II legs. Attached to these legs were a pair of 19" diameter x 21" pitch props. These engines were in the boat for nearly three years, over which time we had ample opportunity to come to grips with the performance of the MerCruisers. After logging over 1500 hours in three years, the MerCruisers were getting tired, and it was time for a change.

F&B has had a reputation for telling it like it is, and I'm not about to start changing things however much it may offend some people in the boating industry.

The MerCruiser engines were technically good engines, which were relatively economical to run and were fairly quiet. However, there were a lot of problems with them over the three years. In fairness to the MerCruiser engineers, they were probably not designed to run one of the hardest working gamefishing boats in Australia for three years.

However the real problems with the engines were in the service department, and it is here that your scribe has the harshest comments for the MerCruiser



team. When the engines did break down, or have a problem, it was near enough to impossible to get any sort of service or spare parts for them.

It would quite often take the mechanics months to get our engines back together and working again. Yes you read that correctly - MONTHS. It commonly took anywhere up to 3-4 weeks to obtain certain parts from the service centre in Melbourne.

What is the point of a service centre if they are not going to keep good stocks of every spare part for each engine they manufacture? It really just wasn't good enough. A company would certainly not last very long in the automotive industry treating customers

in this manner, that's for sure.

The only saving grace in all of this was the fact that certain people fairly high up in the company did make concerted efforts to help us to get better service on many occasions, and were often extremely helpful.

The real problems in this scenario always occurred further down the chain. Inadequate training of some (but certainly not all) mechanics, and a total disregard for timely service from the spare parts division were usually the problem.

Am I being too harsh in this situation? Well, after three years of dealing with these engines I'm certainly not being too harsh, just telling it like it was. Unfortunately, they've got a reasonable product but do not have the service and personnel to back it up.

So as you can see the basic reason for the repower was the fact that the MerCruisers were no longer able to do the job. And after being without a boat for 11 weeks around Christmas last year due to lack of service, it was time for a change.

Why Steyr Diesels? When it came to deciding what to put in the Kevlacat it was a fairly simple choice - diesels or diesels.

The only issue was choosing which kind. In this regard there were only