

This month we answer one of the big questions in boating today. How much better, in real, on-the-street-terms, is a 4-stroke outboard compared to a 2-stroke outboard of the same horsepower? Thanks to an unusual set of circumstances, we not only found ourselves in a position to do a specific mid-horsepower class comparo, we ended up testing a boat that is almost literally in our family. This enabled us to produce, arguably, the most accurate performance comparison between a 2-stroke and a 4-stroke installation ever conducted in Australia.

We Test & Compare The Yamaha 60hp 2-Stroke With The Yamaha 60hp 4-Stroke

Is It Worth Upgrading My Old 2-Stroke To A New 4-Stroke?

What makes this comparison test so interesting is that the boat, the 470 Haines Hunter Breeze (cuddy), actually belongs to Gordon Richmond, F&B publisher Ruth Cunningham's partner. They purchased the boat secondhand about 12 months ago and believed it to be about 11-12 years old then. Like many second hand rigs, one can never be too sure about build dates, or date of sale, but for their purposes - family cruising in and around the Gold Coast Broadwater region - it has proven to be a popular choice.

The rig was powered by a 60hp 2-stroke Yamaha, and from the serial numbers, they've deduced it was

Two views of the 4.7m test rig - a handy size for this test report, as it is a bit marginal for a 60hp - but this is precisely what happens so often in this engine class, when the cost (and weight) of even slightly larger engines makes the Yamaha 60hp 4-stroke the inevitable 'best choice'.

probably installed a couple of years later, some time in early Y-2000, maybe 2001. Although it was reliable, it was starting to show signs of its age. The trim seals were going, it was starting to get a bit smoky, and they were having serious trouble with it 'oiling up' as they maintained the mandatory 6 knot passage from their home on one of the Gold Coast's myriad canals, all the way down to the Broadwater - a distance of about half an hour each way, every time they used the boat.

As most readers know, Ruth has had considerable experience with the writer in the development and use of 4-stroke outboards, so it was not too surprising to discover she was getting increasingly restive about keeping the old 2-stroke.

This is when the plot thickened. It soon became apparent we had an opportunity on our doorstep, to do a specific comparison upgrading the 60hp 2-stroke Yammy to the new EFi 60hp Yammy 4-stroke, a swap that was

financially viable, investment wise, and practical in terms of minimal installation crossover difficulties.

From the magazine's viewpoint, it meant that we could run the full performance trials on the 60hp 2-stroke - and then repeat the process under identical load and weather conditions with the 4-stroke, when the 2-stroke was upgraded.

Through this period we were constantly working with Broadwater Marine here on the Gold Coast in our Stacer engine test program, and frequently discussed the possibility of 'trading up' Gordon and Ruth's engine to 4-stroke status. We soon learned it was all quite simple.

Just add money . . .

Well, needless to say, this raised a whole bunch of other issues because Gordon needed to be convinced of the benefits of a 4-stroke. Not having the grounding in boats that Ruth's had, Gordon was sceptical, to say the least, because on the face of it, to a layman (*read: the general public!*) the upgrade

