

Formula 233 ReBirth

Report by Jeff Webster. Pics by Jeff, Peter & Cliff Arnold.

Does it get any better than this? A classic Haines Hunter Formula 233 repowered with a state of the art Yamaha 350 hp V8 4-stroke outboard. Now that's what I'm talkin' about! The very best designs from the past and the present meet for this special report.

A few months back (F&B#145) Editor PW was offered a ride in an original, mint condition Formula 233 owned by Yatala Yamaha's Paul Zell. Regular readers will recall Peter's enthusiastic ramblings in his column Blue Hills – as he fondly reminisced about previous tests of this classic craft back in the 1970s-1990s in various configurations.

Anyway, a bit miffed I'd missed the chance of running this classic craft in its original form, I made the point as strongly as I could, that when the Formula's make-over was completed, and we were set to re-run the rig complete with the awesome Yamaha 350 – that I be given the opportunity of testing such a unique rig. *I mean, fair's fair!*

Thankfully, it all come together last month. The Formula 233 had been purchased with the intention of being repowered, so when Paul rang the office to say the repower project had been completed, and the boat was ready for testing, this time, I was ahead of the queue.

The Repower Project

Repowering a trailerboat can be a straight forward job – especially if you are changing an outboard for a new outboard, or a sterndrive for a new sterndrive, etc. But



The Formula 233 was in mint condition when Paul Zell found it.

complications can arise if you change complete power systems. In this case, Paul had decided to swap the Formula's two original 165 MerCruiser petrol sterndrives for a single Yamaha 350 hp V8 4-stroke outboard – mounted on an outboard pod.

With a change over of this magnitude, all sorts of things can go wrong – so it is wise to seek professional advice to determine whether changing the power system will affect the handling of the boat. In this instance, it was imperative that the fitting of the pod mounted V8 Yamaha would compensate for the weight of the two original MerCruisers. This would ensure the

boat retained the same stability at rest, and that it handled as well, or better than before.

For the design and construction of the outboard pod, Paul consulted Brisbane fibreglass repair company, Arnold's Fibreglass. At first there was some debate over the shape of the pod. Should the bottom of the pod extend directly out from the keel, following the contour of the hull - or should it be shorter, squared off flat just above the keel?

There are pros and cons of both designs. The keel extension type pod provides more lift and buoyancy underway – so it is ideal for boats that are stern heavy. However, with some craft, the full pod can act like a



Here, the Formula/ Yamaha 350 combo is dragging its bum as Jeff had to throttle back so the camera boat could keep up! Although the rig was relatively easy to drive, it certainly needed a trained 'trigger finger' on the trim switch. Check the different trim angles on the various pics in this report - and bear in mind Jeff would have liked more negative trim offshore.

