

JBS 5.2 Heads For North Queensland

Setting up boats for other people - with their money - can be heaps of fun, so when asked to help a north Queensland family set-up their new JBS 5.2 Centre Cab to fish and explore the Barrier Reef islands, we didn't have to be asked twice

Fitting out a plate alloy boat in the 5.2-6.0 metre range is quite complex, and if you live a long way from the capital cities, it can be extremely difficult to do. Then, if you are uncertain as to what you should have through a lack of experience and knowledge about the subject, it's even harder, not to say almost impossible.

For the Chazen family in Ingham FNQ, it was a case of *(D) All Of The Above!*

So when they made arrangements to purchase one of the first 5.2 JBS centre cabs with a "Hi-Lift" transom, the prospect of fitting it out was more than a little daunting.

Regular readers will remember the Chazen family originally had a 4.3 m Markham Whaler which they took on a

camping/boating holiday through the Whitsundays and then on up through to Hinchinbrook. The report on their adventure (F&B #42) was very well received, and inspired many families to undertake their own north Queensland trailer boat holiday.

However, with the Whaler on its last legs, the Chazen's two children getting decidedly bigger and the family now based in north Queensland, the call of the warm, clear coral waters around Hinchinbrook Island and the outer Barrier Reef was too strong to ignore.

Having chosen the 5.2 JBS Walkaround, they sought F&B's assistance in setting up the boat, to ensure it would fulfill the role they had planned for it in the future. We happily agreed because it's always interesting to look at these projects from the

perspective of our readers, and it helps keep *our feet* firmly on the ground. The Chazen's were certainly typical of today's families where, despite the trend to double incomes, the ownership of a good boat is always a big stretch.

As school teachers, parents Symon and Sonia Chazen had a typically tight budget. Equipment had to be purchased shrewdly, with an eye to both capital cost and longevity.

Making The Wish List Heading their "wish list" was the desire to incorporate full camper covers, so all four of them could camp out on the boat. This is not easy to do in a walkaround type boat – so this was one of the first jobs we tackled. Once we'd determined the budget for that, we could then work backwards down the





The JBS 5.2 Centre cab with the new Hi-Lift transom is getting very, very close to the definitive Aussie family do-a-bit-of-everything seventeen footer. Note the excellent Craft covers, Honda 90 4-stroke, Ruhle trailer and the Humminbird NS 25 GPS (C-MAP NT) plotter/sounder - it's all good gear!





A great deal has been written about what constitutes the 'perfect' family boat, and whilst recognising that in every length (or size of boat) there is another list of nominees, this 5.2 m (17 footer) plate aluminium centre cab from veteran Cliff Joshua's stable, must be getting awfully close. A fantastically beamy boat (almost the maximum allowable at 2.4 m) it is remarkably stable, soft riding - and unsinkable, thanks to the massive, full length sealed bouyancy chambers on either side of the centre "trench". One of the rare boats this size that can easily carry a true self-draining cockpit, it works beautifully with 4-stroke outboards in the 90-115 hp range - and only needs a good quality single axle trailer. At around 1.5 - 1.8 tonnes, it is easily handled by the family Commodore or Falcon, let alone the mid-size 4WDs (Jackaroo, Prado, Pajero, etc) and beyond. The walkaround layout is brilliant for fishing, and the new Hi-Lift transom ideal for the kids just mucking around swimming and diving. Fish the shelf - competantly and safely - on Saturday, run the wakeboards out with Mum and the tribe on Sunday . . . at around the \$30,000 - \$37,500 mark, it is not hard to see why Cliff is flat out keeping up with the demand.





list with sensible, affordable equipment. But as the covers were a hand made, one-off job, we had to start the project's financial management at that point.

Once again we turned to the team at Craft Covers here on the Gold Coast for more of their inspiration and magic in that department. And didn't they do a beautiful job? As you can see, they created a fully enclosed camper cover to convert this two berth centre cab into a four berth overnight cruiser. Throw down a couple of air beds or a swag in the back cockpit and *Voila!* Your very own waterfront room in this mobile resort.

We then chose the NS25 Humminbird combined GPS plotter/sounder for them, because at \$2,215, (plus \$339 for the Cairns-Townsville C-Map NT cartridge) it represents such terrific value for money. It's a true C-MAP NT chart plotter and it's an extremely good depth sounder as well. The viewing screen can be split to have either a fish finder or plotter picture to view, or combinations of both.

This excellent mono (one colour) unit has been largely overlooked in the budget GPS plotter-sounder market, where the most fashionable set might not always be the *best value*.

Other electronic items included the

GME pigeon pair – the 27 MHz and VHF radios, a brace of Reelax gunwale mount outriggers and stainless steel rod holders, and one of Peter Rhule's first-rate Platinum Series trailers.

All this was backed with a silky smooth Honda 90hp 4-stroke, which still 'takes the cake' as our favourite engine in this class. With a cruising speed economy of 15 l/ph at 20 knots, it is a very affordable engine, too.

Summary The end result is a beautiful family boat easily capable of cruising along the coast safely and comfortably, small enough to poke up into rivers and creeks, and a wonderful fishing and diving platform for the family.

Hopefully, we'll be hearing more from the Chazen's as they get to know this new member of their family, and have the time to enjoy boating in that most stunning part of the world - between Townsville and Cairns in Far North Queensland.

For further enquiries about the JBS 5.2 Centre Cab, call Cliff or Lilian Joshua on (07) 3806 1787 or email jbsm5@powerup.com.au

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