

HONDA V-6 225 4-Stroke (700 Hours Later!)

* Special Report by VMR Skipper &
F&B Contributor Darren Shiel

For an engine to survive on a rescue boat, it needs to be bulletproof. So the decision to put a pair of 225hp Honda four-stroke engines on our 8.00 m Noosa Cat, was not taken lightly.

Volunteer Marine Rescue Southport is, as the name suggests, a volunteer organization. Each day, up to 15 volunteers give up their spare time to help out people like you and me, when we get into trouble on the water. They man three rescue boats, day and night, training and carrying out any rescue work that may come to hand.

This includes everything from assisting the boatie unfortunate enough to have his engine breakdown, right through to assisting surf rescue in whitewater rescues, or sailing boats running for cover from cyclonic seas. Their weekend generally sees around 10 engine hours put up on each of their three boats.

VMR Southport currently runs three boats, all Noosa Cats. We run

an 8.00 metre primary rescue boat, built in 1994. This boat is set up totally as a long range blue water rescue boat, and is fitted with extras such as a full fibreglass cabin and seating for four people, radar systems and GPS, plus long range 800 litre fuel tanks.

With a 30" transom set up on pods, this boat was formerly powered by twin 1998 225hp Mariner EFI outboards.

The Mariners were great engines, reasonably reliable, but gee, were they expensive on fuel! Overall, they averaged between 50 - 100 litres per hour, per engine, depending on what it was used for. Now this made them extremely expensive to operate, especially when fuel these days is set at just under \$1.00 per litre.

Due to this growing expense, the 8.00 m Noosacat saw less and less use. We found it was easier (and cheaper) to use the 7.00 m boat, even if we had to go without the larger boat's all-weather protection.

Eventually the boat got to the point where it was no longer a viable option to repair the engines, and the boat was barely being used because it was so expensive on fuel.

Subsequently a meeting was held between all the VMR skippers responsible for the boat, to discuss replacement of the 8.0m's outboard engines.

