



Finding & Buying “Pre-Loved”

Special report by ABM Editor, Peter Webster

For boatowners and fishermen across Australia, there has never been such a good time to buy a ‘new’ secondhand or “pre-loved” craft. Prices of mainstream models have dropped 30-40%, the auction houses are clearing out genuine bargains, and shiploads of boats in every conceivable category have arrived here from overseas countries to compete for your dollar. The upshot is a used boat market that is

becoming very ‘bearish’, with bargain hunters sifting through the offerings to identify the real gems buried in the classifieds. In this special report, Peter Webster casts his eye across the line-up and offers some timely advice for people looking to upgrade their boats to something better and take advantage of the market aberrations ‘whilst stocks last’.

From the outset we need to establish that you’ve sold the old boat, cashed in your Super, sold off the farm or traded in the pet dog . . . It is hard to move forward until you have the ‘reddies’ in your hand.

The used boat market is moving so quickly, with so much demand across the nation, buyers need to be in a position to see something today, test it tomorrow, and settle that night. If not, odds are it won’t be there the following day, because really good ‘stock’ is like hen’s teeth – very, very hard to find.

Even though there are thousands of boats for sale in Australia, the vast majority are pretty ordinary, still over-priced, poorly presented, with smokey 2-stroke engines that will almost certainly need replacing.

They range from prices from “take me away for nothing”, up to millions of dollars. For the purpose of this report though, we’re going to focus on the heavy duty classes from (say) \$15,000 and \$60,000. This is where the bulk of the action occurs, and where most controversy begins and ends.

Before we go there, however, let’s make sure that you’ve taken onboard some of the fundamental Rules of Engagement.

Get It Right – The Rules

The first one is that in order to sell your existing

Top Left: ABM reader Neil Harvey’s Cruisemaster is very typical of this breed of cruiser - always popular secondhand, invariably immaculately maintained - and about half the price of a new one that has not been ‘trained’ and bedded in like this one for true live-aboard week long cruising.

Above: One of the writer’s all-time favourites, the stunning C.Raymond Hunt designed Black Watch 34 as built by David & Bev Stephens. This is one of ‘THE’ great game boat designs, and there are always several original models for sale in Oz now - usually in the \$140-\$150K range. Awesome value for ‘best in class’ . . . still.

craft, boat owners have to work very hard, and turn it back into as-new condition.

Most boats don’t get sold because they are overpriced and represent too much work for the inbound buyer.

Your boat’s buyer wants to go fishing – he doesn’t want to spend the next 6 months cleaning it up, sorting it out, rebuilding or replacing stuffed equipment.

If the buyer sees your boat in that category, he will automatically discount it for thousands of dollars. And not without good reason. Doing up and rebuilding old boats can be a lot of fun; it can be very satisfying and even be quite profitable – but that’s