



## Buying A (New?) Boat . .

**H**aving just purchased my new 530C Barcrusher 5.3 metre alloy halfcab, I got to thinking about the pros and cons of buying a new boat - as distinct from buying a second hand boat as a project, and fitting it out to suit your requirements.

The main reason for this thought process was the fact that my old boat (a 5.3 metre Stacer halfcab around twenty odd years old, which I sold to my brother in Innisfail) was not that much more inconvenient than my new boat - which has a retail price of around fifty thousand dollars.

The thing that I could not reconcile was that no matter how much I looked around, I could not find anything that fitted my requirements exactly.

I realise that all boats are a compromise of one sort or another, but it was very difficult to get something that had most of the attributes that I wanted - and I don't think that my requirements were all that out of the ordinary.

What I wanted was a boat that was small enough to be handled on the back of my Commodore, was a safe sea boat, had as smooth a ride

# Ebb & Flow

with Neil Dunstan

as possible (bearing in mind that it would be fairly small) and could accommodate my mate and I on board for long trips up to three weeks at a time with all our supplies, water and fuel for that period. Not much to ask wouldn't you say?

The result was my purchase of the 530C Barcrusher fitted with a Suzuki 115 h.p. 4-stroke outboard on an extra strong, single axle trailer. In checking out all the craft available, none of the ones I looked at could do all these things in that size limit and the most difficult feature to



include was decent accommodation and room for a small sink, stove etc.

I particularly wanted to be able to camp in the boat whilst travelling on the road as well as at sea, and almost every boat did not have bunks which could be used to sleep on and were only seats for sheltering.

I purchased the Barcrusher because I knew from the editor's experience that it had easily the best ride of all the small half cabs around and that was a very important feature as I am getting on a bit and can't take too much bashing around as I used to get in my 20 year old Stacer.

The cabin space in the

Barcrusher is compromised by the swish looking shape of the cabin and headroom is limited because of the radical slope of the forward part of the cabin. I mentioned this to Peter Cleland of Barrusher and he said that it was as important that the boat had as much style as head room, because a lot of sales depended on the wives liking the look of the boat.

So once I took delivery of the boat, I fabricated a couple of bunk extensions out of marine ply which I can slip into place quickly when I am doing an

overnighter. This gives me an extra 450 mm length for the bunks. Then I made up some cushions for the extension, and a 100 mm foam mattress was cut to suit the shape of the boat for a full length mattress. These extensions intrude into the foot space in front of the two seats a little but we don't find them too inconvenient and they make the beds quite comfortable. The ply boxes that make up these extensions also have hinged doors that allow access to the storage space underneath and these are the storage space for the two burner camping stove and the two kilo gas bottle as well as lots of other things

that don't need regular access.

The Barcrusher has numerous storage areas and side pockets in which I store all the dry food items, first aid kit etc. and all clothes are kept in overnight bags which are kept on the bunks during the day and then stored under the transom storage area at night whilst the bunks are kept permanently made up.

The boat also has a 120 litre under floor fuel tank plus I can store another 50 litres under the floor in the kill pit in plastic containers which is mostly enough. After having a set of clears and side curtains made up, we can keep out of the weather most of the time and when things get too extreme we have a couple of tarps stored under the bunks to cover up temporarily.

The point I began to make originally was this: even though I spent more than fifty thousand dollars on the boat, I still had to do a bunch of mods to make it do what I wanted. When I sold my old 5.3m Stacer to my brother in law, the price was less than it cost me to fit all the electronics (etc) in the new boat.

Now, for the price of the new electronics plus another couple of thousand for other repairs and upgrades, the old boat will be good for another twenty years and still does everything as well as my new boat - except ride as smoothly.

I wonder what I would do if I did it all over again? It makes you think, doesn't it?

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