



My Last Boat Show Season

The boat shows are on again and an opportunity to find out what is new, what has been tarted up to a new model, and what new gear is available. The boating industry, to be financially viable, must continue to sell new and better product, and the shows are all important in achieving this fundamental outcome.

The success of every boat show is essential to all industry operatives, from the builder and his sales organisation, and importantly, through the chain of maintenance, the provision of operating consumables and the berthing or stowage facilities through the life of the boat.

It is in the latter where most boating industry operatives obtain their income.

It is also where many boat owners find the most frustration. Never before has the boating saying "if you have to ask the cost, you cannot afford it." been more appropriate. Fundamental to all this is the fact that boating is a

very inexact art rather than an exact science.

I am continually being asked questions that are impossible to answer in a professional way because the person seeking advice does not have a clue about the engineering aspects of the questions.

Who knows when someone will come back to you with legal action?

What has become blurred is the difference between a major car or electronic manufacturer who provides a technical advice service as part of the sales plan, and a small marine operator who cannot afford to spend a quarter of an hour twice a

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day answering questions from boaters who have no intention of doing business with them.

I have had a frustrating week with persons who have bought a 30 year old Boden design and see themselves entitled to take up an hour of my time and receive free information. They would not expect it of a lawyer or a doctor.

What troubles me is that these people are also frustrated, because there is no one interested in their problems unless there is a dollar in it.

Welcome to the real world.

If you own a thirty year old boat you are fair game to most industry operatives. Why should someone spend an hour advising, when you will walk out because you cannot afford to pay for the correct technical solution to the defect on the boat you have just bought?

Every average guy wants a bargain, and often the best bargains are from a reputable dealer, so give them a fair go, and they will do the right thing by you. Ask around, the good operators have earned their reputation. They are in business to make money and repeat customers are a very effective way of doing this.

I am not saying that you cannot pick up some great buys at private sales, but if you are not an expert, go to your local dealer and give him a few hundred dollars to go right over the boat. This way you will not be taken for a ride and have made a good contact for your future maintenance, technical advice, and resultant boating pleasure.

He stays in business, you get good service and we are all winners.

Time To Move On

I have passed ownership and the management of Boden Boat Plans to a very talented 35 year old naval architect and hands-on designer Troy Munnelly.

(See the wider report on Page 83, in F&B's "Logbook" section – PW).

For several years I have been looking for a suitable person. I wanted some one with talent, experience, and the security of a good family environment, and Troy and his wife Mel, are just the

people.

Cecil Boden first went into business as a consultant naval architect in 1935, and was in fact involved in organising the first Sydney Boat Show.

During WW2 he managed the Green Point Boatyard building hundreds of timber Fairmiles, motor stores lighters, and other craft for the Australian and U.S. Government. He established C.E. Boden Associates in 1946 and the business still runs today as Boden Boat Plans.

Troy will take the business forward into the next half of this century using computer based technology supported by practical knowledge. He has a background working for Incat, and other leading design firms and designed the Z-Cat in 2004.

For myself, quite a lot is planned, and several interesting projects are 'on the drawing board'.

Editor PW is convincing in his argument that he'd like me to keep writing for F&B when the mood inclines, and I must admit, I'm very interested in seeing the new generation SeaBoat 6.1 come to fruition.

So I suspect the answer is a bit of all things – take some overdue time off with the family, keep writing to vent the inevitable steam . . . and be on hand to help Troy and Mel move right into the business.

F&B

*** Brian Poole is a shipwright and experienced para-professional small craft designer. He trained with HMA Naval Dockyard Garden Island and before retrenchment was the Senior Technical Officer (Marine) in the Defence Contracting Office Sydney. Since then, he has run Boden Boat Plans and is a regular consultant to the marine industry, TAFE and others in the educational field.*