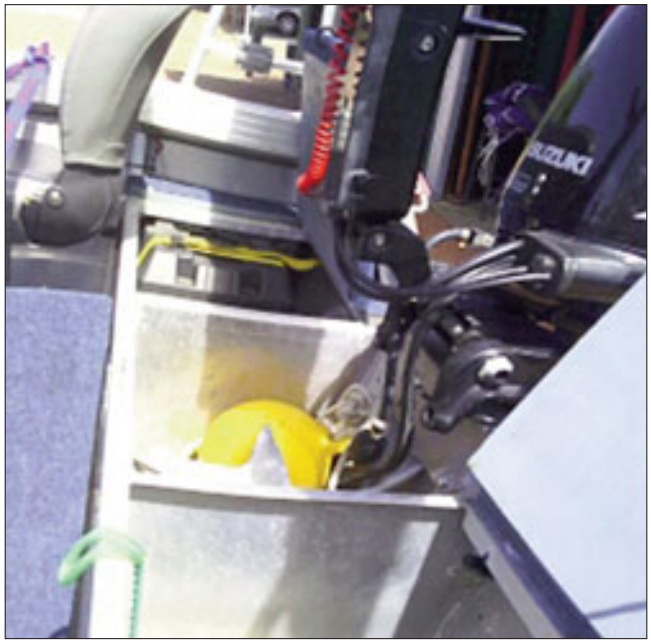
Shane Vaughan's Tinnie

There are few things quite so personally satisfying as setting up your own tinnie - the way you want. Sometimes it takes a few weeks, but it commonly takes a year or so, and plenty of readers will probably never finish the rig, as the tinnie evolves, trip by trip. It's why we love 'em; why they are so special. Shane Vaughan is nearly finished . . .

I would like to share my story of the rebuild of my 4.2 metre, wide body Quintrex Dory, but firstly, a bit of history. This tinny was originally set up by Hunts Marine in Blakehurst, Sydney for the Sydney Boat Show at Darling Harbour in Y-2000.

Hunts had included in the package, 150mm wide gunnels, bow rails that formed part of the bow roller, side rails, side pockets, running and anchor lights. They did this to show people what could be done to a boat of this size.



Jump forward to 2004. We all packed up and departed the rat race in Sydney (Sutherland Shire, to be exact) and moved to Townsville. At this point I have to ask WHY do boat dealers have to put the biggest boat possible on the smallest trailer? This was where minor problems started to show themselves. The 10 inch rims on the trailer were not really suited to long distance driving, and the 35 hp Johnson was a tad unreliable, to say the least. Every time I went on the water, something would go wrong, and a tow back to

the ramp was a common occurrence. I do not wish to denigrate Johnson, however this motor was from the time that OMC was going bust. It was a definite disappointment, as I had owned very reliable Johnsons in the past.

Once settled in to our new home the time had come for water to once more flow under the keel, and so the never-ending search for the almighty Barra began. It was then I discovered the setup of my pride and joy was all wrong for tropical fishing, and so the rebuild was initiated.

For many nights and much manna from XXXX, a plan was formulated for the new fit-out which was made possible by the patience and boat building knowledge of Andrew from ABR Engineering in Townsville. This man is pure genius with his knowledge of boats, but he is also a keen fisherman, which helps a lot. If ever I wanted some one to build a plate alloy boat, it would be him. Anyway, after much discussion, changing of designs and advice from Andrew, we were on our way.

The lack of a built-in live bait tank was an essential as by this time I had become quite proficient with a cast net. This one item dictated everything that was to happen. I tried to contact Quintrex to ascertain what problems would occur if I were to remove the aft thwart which was filled with styrofoam for floatation.

The only way I could contact Quintrex was through their dealers who thought that I was mad by wanting to "do-up" an old boat and were more interested in selling me a new boat than going to Quintrex for answers to my questions. Quintrex need to know I will never buy another one of their boats whilst they are too aloof to speak directly to their customers; sure they can't talk to everybody – but is it that hard to have a customer service section? Or a help line?

Anyway the fit-out was started regardless of the lack of any Quintrex input. Townsville Marine removed my 40hp Honda and serviced it while waiting to refit it. Andrew started by removing the rear thwart and rebuilding the transom by putting in a bulk head 500mm from the rear. He then sub-divided by making (from port side) a storage bin, live bait tank, anchor well and battery/storage box. The bait tank fills when underway through a tube welded to the bottom of the bait tank pump bracket. This alleviates the need to run the pump all the time.

He then cut out a forward bulkhead and fabricated a 37 litre under floor aluminium fuel tank. It was my job to fit it, however, I had Townsville Marine do this when they refitted the 40hp Honda.

To create a casting platform I had Andrew weld a bracket between the forward thwart and storage shelf under the bow deck to hold a 45 litre ice chest.

It sounds like it would be bit on the small side, but it comfortably holds a 95cm king salmon and a 87cm barra at the same time. Andrew also fabricated a side console to house my Garmin GPS, Raymarine colour sounder and VHF radio. His work was then done, and his costs were extremely reasonable.

It was about then that I reckoned I could teach myself to weld aluminium and so purchased a MIG welder to make the frame to raise the floor.

Back at Townsville Marine the Honda was refitted along with the new fuel tank and I took my pride and joy home to finish the fitout by raising the height of the floor by 50mm. This gave me an extra 300mm in the width of the floor without effecting the stability of the boat and I filled the spaces either side of the rod locker with swimming pool noodles to replace the buoyancy lost when the rear thwart was removed.

It also left me with a 50mm void above the fuel tank which enabled me to turn it into an under floor rod locker which holds six rods out of the weather. The floor and the casting deck were shaped from 15mm exterior ply and then sealed, before covering with carpet.

Now for the technical stuff, like the wiring. My mate Paul (electrician and fishing partner) rewired the whole boat. He fitted an isolating switch and a circuit breaker switch board. A smaller switch board was fitted under the bow for crew to use – a forward deck light switch and a hand held spot light. It's amazing how much light a small LED puts out, and there are four of them, two forward and two aft.

After all this, the time for a test run had come. The 40hp Honda had enough grunt to eventually get out of the hole and plane along at 22 knots. I was not happy with this performance, so I returned to Townsville Marine to purchase a power trim and tilt, electric start 50hp Suzuki. This motor had enough of those manly things to punch the boat out of the hole very smartly, and trim out at 28 knots with two people and our gear on board - gas stove, billy, food, tea, coffee, ice, bait etc.

The old Redco trailer was looking very sorry, so my second project was to build a new aluminium trailer with 13 inch alloy wheels. I must admit that my welding did get better as the trailer progressed.

The only hold-up was that I started the trailer at the end of the barra season (30th November) and ordered a galvanised axle at the beginning of December. Due to the galvanisers closing for Christmas and their backlog of work, the axle did not turn up until two weeks after the barra season had recommenced on 1st February.

By this time I decided that I needed more light for night time crabbing and fishing, so I made a bow to go over the rear of the boat and fitted two 100mm LED worklights. To the bow I fitted a standard size 3000mm x 1800mm tarp and made two poles that mount into brackets upfront and allow the front of the tarp to be tied to the bow railing.

Footnote: I am currently building a 24' plate ally displacement hull, and have promised PW that I will keep readers informed about its progress.

TBM