Same length, similar weights - but oh, so totally different! The Stacer (below) is a product of the late 1970s. The BarCrusher is a current model in this top selling range. One rides far softer than the other - one is far more comfortable to overnight. How do consumers assess these conflicting standards? What priorities should they apply? Neil Dunstan's experience is invaluable.

ANOTHER MAN'S BOAT

There are several trailerboating issues which will forever remain the subject of many 'barbecue' debates. Topics include GRP boats vs Platies (which are "better"?) or Cats vs Mono, or this one - Pressed Ally boats Vs Platies. This is the subject of an excellent report by the man who has done hundreds of hours at sea in both, and caught more fish in both than most of us will see in a lifetime. It's a good read, and will almost certainly inspire more debate . .

Neil Dunstan Report and Pictures

Pressed Tinnies Vs. Plate Boats: Is One Better Than The Other?

During a recent telephone conversation with the editor regarding an upcoming exploratory trip to Far North Queensland by the "silly old farts" team of myself and John Turnbull, in particular the area around Innisfail, I mentioned the fact that I would be calling in on my brother-in-law Len to see how my old boat *Pedro 1* was performing.

Peter said that this would be a great idea for a story. His thought's were to take the opportunity to explore the difference between a modern alloy plate boat and an old fashioned pressed alloy tinnie of the 1980s.

This would be particularly appropriate as I had owned *Pedro 1* for thirteen years and had sold it to my brother-in-law around eighteen months ago, and had since purchased a Barcrusher 530 C which is of similar size to the old boat.

Pedro 1.

Pedro 1 was originally built by Stacer boats in Melbourne and then shipped to the talented and eccentric Ralph Morgan of Try Gullwing fame where he finished it off with lots of his extra idea's and then sold them as the Searay 525.

These boats were of the old fashioned" fat and flat" design and had a very wide beam with a fairly flat bottom of around 9 degrees. The hull bottom was pressed from around 3mm pressed ally, with a series of running strakes, and the sides were from 1.8 mm pressed ally with lapstrakes also pressed in so the construction was fairly light, but this was supported by a substantial sub frame with sufficient ribs to support the skin.

The big mistake they made with the hull was to use an extrusion for the join between the bottom and the sides which was extruded from an alloy that was slightly different from the sheeting which was welded into it.

This resulted in corrosion developing between the two metals and whilst it was not too big a problem, it was a nuisance having to grind out patches of corrosion every two or three years and reweld the joins.

The general design of the hull meant that it was extremely stable at rest, could carry very heavy loads without unbalancing the boat and could be powered by a fairly small outboard.

The downside to this was that the ride was very hard in anything over ten knots or so.

However the wide beam meant that there was a lot more room inside the boat which suited us as we often lived on board for up to three weeks at a time.

This also meant that the boat had quite wide side decks which allowed access to the foredeck for working the anchor, unlike most modern boats, which access the anchor via the cabin and forward hatch. This is a nuisance if the boat is loaded with all the gear for a long duration trip.

The boat was a half cabin and was quite high compared to modern boats but this was better for us as we wanted the head room and width for our sleeping accommodation.

It also had the windscreen well forward again for extra cabin space, this gave the boat a fairly ungainly look but suited us with the extra space.

It also had many additions such as seats mounted on alloy boxes with hinged doors and rollout shelves with the whole unit was mounted on rollers and being connected to a full length tube along the side pockets, could be positioned any where along the whole length of the cockpit.

There was a built in fuel tank which was not the norm for the time, which was positioned across the hull in a good position to balance the boat. This did not affect the balance of the boat when accelerating onto the plane as most modern boats do. They usually have a large fuel tank built in along the hull, and when accelerating all the fuel rushes to the rear despite the baffles and makes it very hard work for the motor to get the rig up on the plane.

The transom was of the old style with a full width twenty inch transom and full width well - all of which wasted a lot of space. Because of the flat bum and wide beam at the stern, she could carry a fair bit of weight on the transom as we had a seventy hp outboard plus a 9.9 hp 4-stroke auxiliary which weighed over fifty kilo's.

This was without any pod or other