

F&B Y-2006

Project Logbook

Current Projects



Name Far-Away
Boat 8.2 m Salty 27 - Launched July, 2005
Motor(s) 2 x 150 hp 4-Stroke Honda 4-cyl Outboards
Trailer Tri-axle (AL-KO) custom alloy trailer.
Electronics Simrad, GME, BEP
Skippers Peter Webster, Ruth Cunningham
Based Gold Coast & North Queensland
Operating Throughout northern Australia - Qld, NT, WA
Main Task Refine 'Mothership' concept



Name OTH ("Over The Hill")
Boat (Modified) Ocean Craft 340
Motor(s) 1 x 20 hp Honda 4-stroke
Trailer n/a - travels on Rhino Roof Rack on F-250
Electronics GME VHF, GME 260 Sounder, RFD EPIRB
Skipper RC
Based Attached to "Far-Away" SEQ
Operating Northern Australia
Mission Still & video fishing photography



Name Whim-Away
Boat F&B 6.8m Custom Cat
Motor(s) 2x140hp Suzukis
Trailer Custom Alloy
Electronics GME Communication, Furuno GPS/Sounder
Skipper RC/PW
Based Gold Coast
Operating All-Over
Main Task Camera boat for still & video photography

F&B's TrailCraft Bimini Set-up Explained - In Further Detail



Back in F&B issue #110 we published a double page spread on the folding bimini set-up we built for the 475 Trailcraft Profish, one of F&B's primary project boats though 2005-2006.

The Trailcraft was powered by the wonderful Yamaha F-60 4-stroke outboard and proved to be one of the most successful BMT packages we've ever used.

Just about everybody in the F&B team used it at one point or another, and all came back with the same glowing reports.

To make the boat a bit more comfortable, we invented a special bimini, based around the concept that you could fold the front wing of the bimini down, and back against the targa if you wished to use the forward area as a casting platform (especially necessary with saltwater flyfishing) and/or fold the back bimini down and back against the targa if you wished to use the rear section of the Trailcraft for casting.

Alternatively, you could fold both down in opposite directions and create a massive sun awning that provided real comfort and protection against

F&B's Project Boats Policy - F&B maintains a number of 'project boats' principally to ensure the editorial team is able to keep up with today's rapidly changing boating world.

It allows us to form *our own* conclusions, develop factual reference information for readers, and most importantly, get a "feel" for the product - something you cannot do from a press release, a brochure, or a 30 minute zoom 'around the bay' in perfect weather. Most boats are kept for about 6-12 months, depending on their complexity, effectiveness, usage, cost, and how much interesting editorial we can develop for F&B readers from the project.

When we're finished, project boats are (then) usually sold to F&B readers.



Australia's harsh sun in the summer months.

The whole kit and caboodle then folded down either forward or aft depending on how the garage or house worked – with the highest point of the rig (then) the feet of the folded down bimini sticking up in the air – but it was less than 1.9m, and thus easily fitted into virtually all garage spaces.

We also made a “turtle” or sock like cover to cover the whole thing either in the garage or on the highway.

In the subsequent 12 months or so, we have been besieged by readers wanting to know more about it, and dozens of readers who are not F&B regulars, who had heard about it from their mates or dealers around Australia.

How To Make It

We've now had so many calls from readers around Australia about this darn bimini, we've decided to republish the information again for you – and when this issue of F&B goes off sale, we'll lodge the report in the Sea Library where we will leave it as a community service download (FOC).

The basic targa structure was built in 40mm aluminium tube, with 25mm tube side bracing. The height was based on having 1900mm clear headroom off the cockpit sole,

The angles of the legs was arbitrary *ie., an educated guess!*

We ended up at this shape and size, mainly 'coz in the back of my mind was the need to build a “perch” strong enough for the writer to sit on when taking photographs – hence the 300mm wide, 3mm thick plate ‘flat’ across the top, that also locked the two leg frames together.

One of the biggest challenges in small craft is to eliminate side braces and wires – they are ALWAYS in the way, so we were determined not to have them.

The best way of doing this is to brace them out from the targa – and the best way of doing that is to borrow some techniques from the yachting fraternity.

These consisted of 4 x 450mm lengths of stainless steel 5/8ths Ronstan internal track (and matching “Slide with a Stop”) available from any good chandlery throughout Australia, or by mail order from Bias Marine.

We used the small “lifeline” size stainless steel, adjustable pelican hooks to pull down tension on the forward (and significantly larger) bimini (see pic).

The sizes of the bimini(s) were scientifically calculated. The writer sat down on the ice chest ahead of the console – and we worked out how much shade we’d need to have a cold beer out of the sun. For the record, it took two squints, a bit of thumb wriggling and a six pack of coldies to get it right.

The rear bimini was harder; we made it as long as we could get without it clobbering a rod that had gone back 14.676 degrees over Top Dead Centre (TDC), with *moi* standing comfortably at the transom. We acknowledge that the weight of a





fish on the rod would vary this figure, but by then, we'd got into the second six pack, and decided readers could go work it out for themselves!

How It Works

The trick to the whole thing is the use of the sliding track, which, as you can see in the photographs, is used to enable the horizontal bimini braces to be pushed up to make the bimini rigid with minimal strutting and wires. Or down, to release them.

We liked the way in which Craft Covers' (here on the Gold Coast) Cameron Baker made the biminis so that we can fold or release the front bimini at the same time as we fold or release the stern bimini – thus providing a very high degree of flexibility, vital for many different fishing situations.

Readers are reminded that the targa is the key to the bimini set-up – and it's not a standard Trailcraft fitting. However, as you can clearly see, it is a very simple structure that any good aluminium fabricating shop could

A proper zipped 'turtle' or wrap-around cover was made for the Trailcraft targa (twice!) but as the guys kept losing it, we decided the okky strap system would have to do . . . !



make for you, for the Trailcraft or any similar 'top-ender' or centre console boats.

We made this targa so that you can fold it up and down, (see *double hinged 'feet'*) so this whole shebang can be folded down aft to lie across the transom or you can fold up the bimini(s) against the targa and then lie the whole thing down against the front edges or shoulders of the Trailcraft.

Folded down like this, it only has an overall height of about 1900mm so it easily goes under a highset house or into 99% of most suburban garages.

It's a terrific set-up and an absolute boon to the enjoyment of the boat.

As we noted originally though, in the Yamaha test, there is no doubt it does pull the overall speed down – especially if you're running into the strong winds as we did when we conducted the performance trials on the Yamaha

That said – we still wouldn't have it any other way because it makes the boat so comfortable and so much safer in terms of skin cancer and shade issues.

These are non-debatable issues as far as we're concerned, and if we lost a couple of knots at the top end of the performance envelope, we really didn't give a rats.

We never saw the Trailcraft as a high performance boat – instead it's a ridgy-didge fishing boat that just sits 'all day, every day' on about 18 or 19 knots with a nice, dry comfortable ride.

With the bimini up, it was just so nice to use for hours on end, that any downside to the performance envelope was easily outweighed by all the advantages of this flexible bimini arrangement.

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