

'Makeovers' of every description are the current trend on T.V. Shows such as Backyard Blitz, Changing Rooms & Location Location attract millions of avid viewers every week. Indeed, watching the transformations wielded upon everything from old fridges to entire backyards makes for compelling viewing. According to contributor Neil Loughead, if they want to start doing TV makeovers of old boats - he's going to volunteer to join the cast. Looking at this report, he's well qualified too! Mark you, what Neil hasn't pushed strongly enough, is the vital importance of starting with a really good old boat in the first place...



This group hardly needs a caption, does it? Old, original equipment is slowly replaced by new or refurbished gear for a complete (and very professional) makeover. In the end, the author ending up spending a total of around \$12,000, putting him streets in front of new boat costs - and the project was ultimately sold for a tidy "profit".

instrumentation or any of the niceties that come as standard equipment on modern day rigs.

The outboard (an '84 70 h.p. Johno) had been well maintained however. The owner assured us it had been fresh water flushed after each excursion and sprayed down with CRC. A full service history also came with it. A boat without a reliable motor is useless, so the condition of the outboard was of paramount importance to us.

She had been used exclusively for fishing, the owner advising that he did about 10 trips out to the reef each year to keep the freezer stocked with fish. The transom felt as solid as a rock, and enquiry revealed that it had been rebuilt about five years previously. A reinforced cockpit floor had also been added, which also felt very strong. Being a cautious type I trundled the rig off to my mate Steve at the local boat yard. After a thorough inspection he pronounced boat and motor to be in remarkably good condition albeit outwardly showing their age.

We continued to vacillate for a few days. Size wise, it was perfect. Not too cramped and poky, and not too heavy to tow behind our Holden sedan. The 70 Johno, although possibly lacking a little in the power department for a weighty 16 footer, would be economical to run.

We decided to ask for a test ride and a test ride we got! A 25 knot southerly was blowing and the seas were running at one and a half metres. Apparently the owner thought he would impress us with the handling characteristics in rough seas. If you are familiar with the hulls of the early Savages, you will know that they are real thumpers in a heavy sea having only a moderate deadrise hull. After a ten minute thrashing that felt like a bronco ride we suggested that being suitably impressed, we would like to return to the ramp please.

It should be noted here that we are not die-hard 'blue water' boaties. We

Savage 'Pacific' Makeover

My wife and I moved to Cairns, (from Adelaide) in 1996 and quickly discovered that just about every other household owns a boat of some description.

The vast majority are of course small tinnies, but small pleasure and fishing craft are also very popular. The climate and waterways in this region are superb incentives for anyone who enjoys boating. We envisaged day trips to Green Island, Fitzroy Island, The Franklin Islands, the Daintree River, etc. Further inland, beautiful Lake Tinnaroo situated on the Atherton Tablelands (perhaps one of North Queensland's best kept boating

secrets) offers boaties an experience akin to boating on Eidon Weir in Victoria, but the scenery is far more spectacular.

I had not previously owned a boat, but had spent many enjoyable hours cruising and fishing in my father-in-law's beautifully equipped Haines Signature 1750LE. Our budget didn't stretch to acquiring anything in this league, so we began casting our nets in the 'budget' end of the second hand market.

Choosing the right boat

For some time we eyed off an old Pride Montego which was sitting out in

the weather, 'For Sale' sign affixed. The bloke who owned it would sell for three grand. The hull itself was basically valueless, having been seriously used and abused. The outboard however was of interest. A '93 oil injection Yamaha 140. Investigation revealed that it was an ex-Australian navy motor and had probably run up hundreds of hours. Closer inspection also revealed advanced corrosion in the skeg and trim tilt assembly. Ugh! Big money there.

The next boat to capture our interest was an eighties vintage Haines 14C with 70 hp Mercury. The owner wanted

four grand, but we knew we would probably get it for three and a half. He let us take it out for an afternoon's test run and we found it to be a trim little craft with a soft riding hull. It was well maintained, but just a little too small for our requirements. We wanted cabin space that would allow us to comfortably stretch out for a snooze on lazy afternoons on Lake Tinnaroo or Trinity Inlet.

Several weeks later an ad for a 16'6" Savage Pacific caught my interest. This bloke wanted \$4,500. My aforementioned father in law had previously owned a 15' Savage Tasman half cab and we knew it to be a very

solid and versatile little craft.

Our first inspection of the Pacific was a little disappointing. She was not a pretty sight and obviously dated back to the seventies going by the faded apple green and cream colour scheme. The original serial plate was still affixed to the stern, so we phoned Savage to try and ascertain the build date but alas, all records had been destroyed in a factory fire back in the eighties. The gelcoat was in bad shape, all chrome fittings were oxidized, the trailer was basically unroadworthy and the canopy had seen better days. No creature comforts existed. Not even a decent helm seat, let alone grab rails,