

Refurbishing, Restoring & Repowering

Refurbishing A 1988 Haines Signature 1850 L



Do It Yourself
-with F&B!



This is young Nicholas Hall, standing very proudly in front of the family's fully restored 1850L.

Introducing a very interesting report by Ray Hall in Mt Isa, Qld detailing how (and why) he worked - and re-worked his faithful Haines Signature through an engine change-over, a new trailer - and finally, the big hull make-over. It is a fascinating tale with lots of info to absorb by other readers with similar projects in mind.

After months and months of looking for a new boat (or new to us), we decided, after much debate, to keep what we had, and refurbish. This article is about how an average Joe like me, with no boat yard, or painting experience, refurbished a 1988 Haines Signature 1850L.

We've all read any number of articles on how 'so and so' stripped their hull and had a professional boat yard refurbish their hull. I went about it from a different point of view: I wanted to do it myself. I accepted that probably the most important aspect of the refurbishment was the actual laying of the paint, and decided to contract the spraying out to a professional.

Before I delve into the actual process of refurbishment, let me give you a bit of history on the boat.

Finding The Signature

Having been transplanted from the 'States some 7 years ago to the central coast of NSW, I was fortunate enough to befriend a number of charter operators working out of Terrigal. While working for fishing time, I was able to learn quite a bit about the local area and how to fish in 'foreign' waters.

After a couple of years of this, I decided it was time to go it alone, especially as I had by then, acquired a family of four. My wife loves to fish, and we have 2 boys aged 8 and 10 now.

We needed a boat that could handle a number of functions, be reasonably towable by a family sedan, be capable of operating offshore up to say 20 nautical miles, and if needs be, pull a water skier.

Again after many months of scouring the newspapers, Trade-A-Boat, reading magazines, visiting boat yards up and down the central NSW coast and Sydney, we found the "Perfect Boat".

A 1988 Haines Signature 1850L powered by a Johnson 140 hp outboard. She came to us at a reasonable price, however most of her life was spent fishing inshore waters, as the danforth anchor had just 30 m of rope, and the rod holders were of the plastic bolt-on type.

I couldn't imagine what would happen to one of them when a 40 kg yellowfin hit with 8 kg's of drag on my 24 kg standup rig, however she was clean and at a reasonable price.

We then set about outfitting her for light tackle game fishing, and bottom fishing off Terrigal. This included HD rod holders, new 27 meg radio, EPIRB, 12 ft outriggers, live bait tank/ cutting board, rocket launcher. It's interesting to note that over the past few years I've read a lot of magazines, and some books on older boats in Australia, and

in swell. When they did finally catch up they were soaking wet and complaining that they were bashing so hard their electronics were shutting down!

Needless to say, we were all dry and the kids were just happily playing on the floor during our one and half hour run. (We also managed seven yellowfin that day over 40 kgs to boot, but that's another story!)

Upgrading The Outboard

After a number of good years, I began to worry about the engine; the old 140 had performed flawlessly, but now had 850 hours on the clock. We'd had one ignition coil fail, and one day while out with the kids in a 20 knot nor'easter, she lost the oil injection pump.

I nursed her home by mixing all the oil in the injection bottle into the tank and went home just above idle.

After talking to a number of mechanics, they indicated to me that at this time in the engine's life (recreational use, not commercial) that between 850 - 1200 hrs it's common to



have yet to see the Signature 1850L (or the 1750 or 1950, for that matter) listed.

However, I'm here to tell you she's one hell of a boat. After the modifications listed above, we've regularly taken her offshore to the 'Shelf for yellowfin, marlin trips, numerous dolphin fish and hours of bottom bashing. She has performed flawlessly.

In one instance, 4 years ago, we'd had a 25-knot Sou'easter blowing for 3 days, and on Sunday morning it was forecasted to ease to 5 to 10. We loaded up with 240 litres of fuel, 100-litre esky with ice and bait, 3 adults and 4 kids aged between 6 and 8.

Off we went to the 'Shelf, some 25 nautical miles away with good mates alongside in their 5.5 m plate boat for company. I had to stop 3 times for them to catch us in a 2.0

start having some "Major" problems.

So now the consideration soon became - do we rebuild, or re-power?

Once again, we researched via magazines, friends, Internet and local boat shops. During this period as well, we'd spent considerable time pulling lures for marlin in our waters with very little success.

We'd hooked a few and managed to land one of about 50 kg. However, we could be right next to my mate's charter boat with a diesel engine, pulling the same lures in the same water, and not raise a fish - and he'd raise five, and tag three!

We began wondering about the old wife's tales concerning the traces of oil in the water from a 2-stroke outboard, and another obvious difference - the sound of the 2-stroke versus