



Presenting the first instalment of F&B's resident DIY (Do-It-Yourselfer) Tony Ravenscroft's 7 Part Series rebuilding a Mako 20 from little more than scrap..

Rebuilding The GRP Mako 20

It must have been 1974 and that would have made me thirteen years old. I was working weekends and school holidays at a boat yard on the banks of a beautiful little river on the North Coast of New South Wales. I saw lots of boats come and go during my time there but only a couple stuck in my memory. One of these was a Mako 20 Centre Console.

I don't know if it was because it was the first centre console I had ever seen, or because it was so big compared to the vast majority of other boats on our little river, but even though it was at

the yard for only a few days, I decided that when I grew up I would own one. Strangely, I never saw another one again, but never forget how impressed I'd been.

Just before Christmas in 2003 I was giving a friend some advice on buying a second hand boat when during the conversation the name, Mako 20 came up. He knew of one for sale- and within half an hour I had bought, sight unseen, a very cheap Mako 20. A life long ambition had been fulfilled and a personal promise broken, all at the same time. Yes, I had always wanted a Mako 20 but the price told me

everything I needed to know about the condition: it was going to be a complete rebuild, from the keel up.

In the professional world of boats what I am going to call a renovation, is actually called a re-fit. The process basically involves replacing anything old, worn-out or broken. In a full re-fit, the boat generally has all fittings and perhaps even some structural members removed. Any of those structural pieces are then replaced, new or refurbished fittings bolted back on and the whole thing given a good coat of paint, or correctly, re-finished. But rather than call it a re-fit I'm going to call it a renovation. Probably because I think we are all so used to the term from all those home renovation shows on TV right now.

A house renovation can be as simple as a bit of paint and a good clean up, or as complex as pulling down internal walls and ending up with something totally different from what you started with.

It's exactly the same with a boat, renovating could be as simple as cut and polish the gelcoat, put new marine carpet in the cockpit and replace the cushion covers. Or you could be looking at a major event, new transom, new floor or . . . a full re-build from the keel up.

Having done-up a few boats already, I swore that I'd never renovate another one. Of course by now I should have learned never to say never. Why I do it I not sure I can answer. Particularly as I have never made any secret of the fact that taking on the renovation of a boat, while having many big positives, tends to have a few big negatives as well. If you have ever thought of renovating a boat, perhaps the one you already have, then let me give you the benefit of my experience, success and failures, and see if I can give you an idea of what you need to consider.

First Up . . You should understand that you are doing it for the love, not the money. If you choose to spend a lot of time and effort and renovate a boat, you are doing it because you love to go boating. The boating world's version of real estates "renovators delight" does exist, but is harder to find than you might think. Yes, bought at the right price and properly done up, you can make a few quid. Just don't count the cash too early, and remember that done correctly, it is a lot of hard



This photo was taken soon after buying the boat and it looks pretty good. Just don't get too close and definitely don't look in the back . . .



I said, "Don't look in the back!"

I used to think I was working my way up to something like this. The condition of this Bayliner was in my opinion perfect for a rebuild. I had a quick look around it and I had a mental work list together in minutes. I would have stripped the boat down, completely removing every fitting, all upholstery and trim, and gutted the cabin. Then I could decide if the gelcoat was repairable or if a new paint job would be needed. But the reality is that currently I don't have the space to store it, and definitely not a suitable workspace. If I was to be really honest, I also don't have enough time. So at this stage, a project of this size is not suitable for me to do, regardless of how much I would like to dream. Interestingly, twelve months after taking this picture very little work has been done to it. Perhaps the owner realised the same thing, but too late.



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