

The 'Little' Things

(Or, the REAL cost of setting up a second hand rig properly!)



According to FNQ cruising fisho Don Gilchrist, buying the pre-loved rig is only the beginning - and he should know: he's had enough of 'em, culminating in this classic from Signature, the original 'variable deadrise' deep vee - the 2250.

When the first owner of a new vessel takes delivery of his pride and joy, all is sweetness and light. She is, at the time, very close to his idea of the perfect boat for the circumstances. Her style is right, the accessories he ordered are all installed, everything works; instruments, nav lights, pumps, deck shower and all the rest. In her pristine newness everything is still an integrated package. Electronics are cutting edge and hull, accessories, motor and trailer all work together like a well rehearsed string quartet.

This honeymoon state will persist for some time, but after a while, like marriages in the famous comedy "The 7 Year Itch", the gloss starts to come off. The kids grow up and testosterone and oestrogen cycles distract them from wholesome family fun to other more primordial pursuits. The stitching on the awnings and seats is yet to rot, the transparency of the full set of clears is yet to yellow and degrade. The hull is yet to suffer any of the myriad misadventures that rapidly befall even the most modestly used recreational boat.

Motors begin to need more than routine servicing, trailer springs rust, electrical connections corrode, governments change the rules about trailer brakes. Electronics become

dated. It's easy enough to ignore 2 generations of electronic evolution if what you already have does the job and is comfortably familiar. But familiarity eventually breeds contempt and the new era beckons irresistibly. You must have that colour sounder with side scanning ability, or a VHF with DSC, or a colour plotter with a refresh rate faster than sometime next week. What was once the pride and joy starts to look a bit ho-hum.

At some stage the vessel will be moved on and with change of ownership come new ideas, usually cobbled together in a rather ad hoc fashion. Wiring is added, not replaced. Gauges that don't work anymore are left with motionless needles, the information they used to convey now gathered with a greasy, notched dipstick or guessed at. The boat is not used at night and unused nav lights become non-functional, equipment is replaced and the holes left over remain to gape, and leak. Screws work loose, bedding compound breaks down, timber bits get wet and start to rot, window seals perish and leak.

Once cherished, she is now on the downward spiral. If of indifferent design, poor engineering and build quality she is heading for a life in the weeds under a disintegrating tarp with split seats oozing perished foam stuffing, her bilges a



The shower recess was there when I got her, it was just empty. Filling it with something serviceable has been worthwhile.



One of our seat/storage units doing its job. It also houses some fishing gear and our fresh water tank - see pic on page 29.



The repaired front hatch with mouldy, sagging headliner replaced by white flowcoat. A metal reinforcing strip repaired an area where extra GRP was not an option. The hinges had to be lifted by 10mm as it was the camber of the cabin top that caused some of the damage to the hatch. Above: The strut and shock cord limiter have been a useful addition.



Diaphragm pump mounted at the transom allows assessment of water held in out of the way places while afloat. At the moment the outlet line goes to the top bilge. Because I had an available 19mm hole I stepped the suction line down from 25mm. That was a mistake that I will soon rectify.



When we added some updated electronics we kept the old plotter and remounted it for the observer. Pilotage inside the maze of reefs that is the GBR needs all the assistance possible. The old plotter is monochrome but still quite functional.