



## The Project: **Total Refurbishment Of A 1978 Cruise Craft Reef Raider**

*Why refurbish an old boat? There are many reasons why we do it, but at the top of the list, family finances loom large. To purchase a new rig like the sweet little Reef Raider above, will typically cost \$40-\$60K . . . nice work if you can stump up the reddies, but many people can't. But hang on, if you could buy an old one, and do it up for around \$20K BMT all up and fishing - does that sound like a plan? It did for special guest contributor, Peter Crocos, who kindly agreed to share how it did with this fascinating Three Part Series. Now read on . . .*

**S**ome boats come to the market and really hit that sweet spot whereby they just perfectly suit the tastes and the boating activities of their owners.

There are lots of older boats around that fit this description; just look at the several Haines' boats from the 1970's that are still so well regarded.

For me, the clinker-sided Cruise Crafts of the 1970's hold a special attraction; I just love the traditional

lines, the solid build and the practicality of these boats.

For my range of uses, and the budget I am comfortable with, I feel that the Reef Raider 166 cuddy is the pick of this class, and so is the subject of this restoration story.

The Reef Raider 166 cuddy was one of three models that shared the same hull. The other two were the Raider 166, a runabout, and the Regal 166/503 half cabin.

A chat with Kevin Nichols of Cruise Craft revealed that the concept for

the ¼ cab or cuddy cabin design of the Reef Raider came from requests from a number of dealers in the northern rivers of NSW to have a deck structure that would assist when travelling out through the surf. Back in that era beach launching was quite the thing as boat ramps were few and far between on that part of the coast.

This boat then became broadly popular as it suited fishermen who needed to cross coastal bars to get to the offshore fishing grounds. This