

The author's 5.5m Nova Tribune photographed on Pittwater in 1974. Powered by a 4 cylinder Volvo sterndrive, this craft was soft riding, dry, comfortable and with features no longer found in modern GRP craft

About THAT Cuppa And A Good Lie Down

When Di Ross and her partner John Batty published their story concerning their frustration at finding a replacement for their long serving Haines Signature 550, they touched a nerve that set off a reaction right around Australia.

Few issues have generated so much interest and so much traffic as this one, as it seems the problem Di and John, two of F&B's favourite contributors are having, is a problem shared with many readers of F&B.

Over the last two months, we've received more than 100 letters, emails, faxes and phone calls from readers voicing their concern and wanting to share their experience(s). Most had worked on their existing craft with conversions and renovations that range from elementary to amazingly sophisticated and complicated set-ups. Many readers have submitted drawings and photographs to support their work and we thank them sincerely for the trouble they've gone to. Their efforts have not been in vain because we will be continuing the theme for some time, and when space permits, we'll publish another set of reports such as we have here.

Even choosing these three reports to publish was difficult because the input from readers covers an incredible diversity of boat types. So what we've done here is selected three that were representative of many other submissions ie, there's a DIY Hartley plywood cruiser which budget wise, forces all of us to stop and think about the cost of building modern craft;

clearly, a DIY plywood cruiser is still an extremely viable option – especially if money is tight. And for my part, I can't remember a time when money wasn't tight!

The second report we've published is from Bill and Jayne Dennis in Melbourne, who have made a very professional submission surrounding their 1987 Pride President. We selected this one because it was such a classic example of what's gone wrong with modern boats. Here is a 20 year old boat with more features, more inherent comfort for a family going boating, than almost anything on the market today – and that's the reason why they've still got it.

The third one in the set is from a Cairns-based couple who did what a lot of other people have done, by taking a popular production model and then adapting it for the weekender role. Tom and Mary's boat is probably an extreme example, but truly, I 'dips me lid' to a fantastic effort and an extremely good outcome on one of Australia's best selling family boats.

One hopes that Australian boat manufacturers, especially Telwater, are going to read these articles very carefully and take onboard the groundswell of opinion that suggests there is trend very firmly away from stripped out, bare-arsed "fishing boats", as people are looking for more cruising or weekend oriented craft. This could have a profound impact on the way the boating industry is directed at the moment.

There's also a fourth leg in this

series which we've published on page 56 from Col Svensson's Fisher Boats. Col makes the very valid point that he can build (as can most plate boat builders) specific craft in aluminium extremely efficiently and customise a boat to the 'nth' degree. By way of an example he's sent over a range of photographs of a superb platey he's built for a lucky owner who's going to use this wonderful craft up at Stannage Bay in central Queensland. Whilst it's easy enough to say 'Yes, sure, if you've got the budget obviously you can go and build anything you want', but Col is the first to point out that whilst this is an extremely good example (and quite an expensive craft) an awful lot could be achieved if true production methods were applied to what is (in this example) a totally customised, one-off production boat for a very, very experienced owner.

It's a fascinating subject, and one we have an abiding interest in sustaining, as it's very near and dear to the F&B philosophy of having a boat that you can use for more than just a day on the water, a dozen or more times a year.

We believe boats should be used constantly; to do that, boats will need to offer a lot more to families – especially those in retirement mode - if we are going to justify the cost and investment involved in a modern power boat.

PW, Editor

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Is DIY The Answer?

By Graeme Jones, Evatt ACT

In reply to Di Ross and John Batty's dilemma to find a boat around 6.0m to basically be able to have a rest on or spend the night on in some form of comfort.

The manufacturers are not building them so build your own.

The Hartly that I built has most of the creature comforts for my wife and myself, but I am still making modifications as we use it.

Last weekend (18/11-19/11) two of us used the boat on Burrinjuck Dam NSW and stayed onboard for nearly 22hrs, clocking up 88 km traveled. No real problems came up except that we couldn't get TV reception to watch the game between England and Australia - we had to turn the radio on!

The Porta Pottie fits in a cupboard and I carry plenty of water. Hot coffee came using a 12v jug as I forgot to put the single burner gas cooker on. Lucky we were able to have sandwiches. The bunks are 2.0m long and I made them a little wider than specified on the plans. That allows for more storage under the bunks for clothes, the water I carry and fishing gear. The rods are mounted on the side and roof of the cabin away from the cooking area.

Two cupboards are built in for the Porta Pottie, four life jackets, safety gear and what ever. There is storage in the cockpit under the seat boxes for more fishing gear, small eskys, small rubbish bin and whatnots. Access to the rear of the boat from the ground is by using a plastic crate and using the fold up ladder to step onto the transom next to the motor and going over the motor well. I set the motor well up by making a hinged door that folds down when



the motor is up. When on the water, the door is closed up so as to have more room in the cockpit.

We go out often with four of us on board for a day's fishing. The boat is powered by a 100hp 4-stroke Yamaha capable of speeds up to 55 k/ph and so it is quite cheap to run. All up towing weight on a (home

built) dual axle trailer fully loaded with fuel and water is around 1800-1900 kilos. Taking out the fuel, water and clothes would make it around 1700 kilos.

The length of the boat is 6.1m, and the all up cost to date, including motor, is around \$20,000.

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