



As production boat sales languish at the lowest levels they've been in decades, DIY boat sales are soaring. But there is one very obvious drawback for most people: having the time - and the place - to do it. In this special two-part report, PW considers a radical alternative for boating consumers, that solves both of these problems and saves thousands of dollars in the process . . . when he asks

Isn't It Time . . . To Re-think The Way We Are Buying Boats?

Part 2 of Two Parts

Pro+ DIY Boatbuilding

Last Month: We explained how this special report was created largely at the behest of stunned readers who'd come through the 2014 Boat Show Season in a state of disbelief at the cost of boats, despite massive price drops in several vital areas - electronics being the stand-out.

Nevertheless, the question remained: What are the BOAT alternatives? What choices do boating consumers really have? What if you want diesel?

This was where one Victorian reader was so interesting because he had actually picked up on the 6.2m plate aluminium boat that we featured in August issue (#208) and again here on these pages. There, the PAA kit for the whole boat was costed out and published not 10 years ago, or 10 months ago, but a few weeks ago in ABM August for \$13,900 plus GST – let's call it \$15,000.

My reader quizzed me about my impressions of the boat, my knowledge of John Pontifax's operation (Plate Alloy Australia) and the week-long courses they run down in Melbourne, for would be boat builders.

It was a good conversation and it ended up on the very positive note that he was going to investigate both ways of going about developing a new boat - the BMD composite GRP technique and PAA's DIY ally kitset program. In both cases, I was able to assure him that the craft he had in mind would be absolutely superb with one of several diesel sterndrives on the market.

These include the very well regarded Volvo D-3, a 5 cylinder diesel which runs from 170-220 hp for around \$22,000-\$27,000. Steyr make several diesel sterndrives in this class - not to overlook Steyr's re-manufactured, ex-military diesels for about half their regular new price. There's also the Cummins 2.0L x 170hp (newer, more powerful version of the one we had in the Quintrex 680 project boat - pictured below), Yanmar's BMW based 180hp – but there are



many others out there from the likes of Hyundai, Nanni, etc.

All of them have sterndrives available at competitive prices – competitive being relative to the cost of a similar size outboard motor. At this point I also reminded the reader that you can still buy a beautiful V6 Volvo petrol sterndrive for around \$16,000- \$17,000 for 225hp, and this too has been featured in ABM recently. September issue #214 had a detailed report.

Saving The GST

Look, it behoves each and every one of us to do what we can to keep the GST down to the absolute minimum – and when you think that we have to pay fully 10% of the retail value of (say) a sportfishing boat that cost 70 grand all up, to think that we're handing over seven grand in GST for the privilege, is depressing, to say the least.

Likewise, to pay the current rates the GRP sector are trying to procure for their 5.8-7.6m production GRP craft is also depressing, so it is definitely worth exploring building your own - or, as I'm going to propose, to do a compromise of the kind the writer is now actively pursuing.

The Hot Metal Alternative

My view is to turn the clock back to 1996 when we first met that wonderful South African boat builder, Cliff Joshua, and started building the quite remarkable little 4.3m dory, *Red Ink*. It was the success of *Red Ink* that led to the recognition of the potential of building a bigger craft with Cliff, as we discovered just how experienced and skilled this traditionally trained South African wooden boat builder was, albeit in the world of plate aluminium

Cliff Joshua did a sterling job on the design of Genesis, working from the writer's sketches and discussions. In 7.2m LOA we were able to create a long-range trailerboat to live aboard whilst fishing in remote areas. We sold it to a Dalby family who used it for years all over the Top End - and it was recently sold and re-powered for a third family, starting the process all over again. It was first designed and built back in 1998 and inspired hundreds of similar projects throughout Australia. Note Cliff's unique (still) strip planked forefoot and hull entry - terrific design and build.

boat building in Australia, since he'd brought his family over from South Africa firstly to Adelaide, and later to Brisbane.

Subsequently we built *Genesis*, a 7.2m deep vee plate sports cruiser powered by two Honda 90s . . . and launched a plate aluminium program that continued for more than 15 years, inspiring hundreds and hundreds of readers across Australia to explore the potential of DIY plate aluminium boat building themselves, or to invest in a professionally built platey from one of the many boatyards that emerged in the late 1990s thru to about 2008 when the impact of the GFC really started to take effect.

Well, we seem to be right back at square one, only today a number of mechanical advantages are now possible.

To begin with, we now have a significant group of naval architects scattered across Australia who have all amassed a great deal of experience in plate aluminium boat building to the extent that Australia unquestionably leads the world in this field.

Every one of these naval architects, (and you can see who they are in the list in the separate box herein)