

Are Used Boats

Special F&B Report by our resident Classified Boats hunter extraordinaire, Darren Shiel.



Good quality examples of the old classics from Haines Hunter and Savage (etc), built in the 1970s, are becoming rare. However, a Haines Hunter 19C (like this) was recently unearthed in Brisbane in mint condition with less than 30 hours on the engine!

The Best Option?

Looking for a new or replacement boat? In the ever competitive and hectic world of today, such a task can conclude costing you thousands of dollars more than it should. In this special report, Fisherman and Boatowner investigates the options when buying a boat second-hand in today's world.

When searching for a new or replacement boat, most purchasers generally find themselves realising a few home truths.

Like 90% of Australians, most families cannot afford to tie up huge amounts of capital in a boat that will rarely be used more than once a month. For this reason, most new and many experienced boaties turn their attention to the second-hand boat market when looking to buy a "new" boat.

However, when newcomers (and

even the old hands) wade through the hundreds of pages of the classified magazines and newspapers, or the hugely popular internet web site "Boatpoint", they begin to appreciate the vast size of the second hand boat market. Indeed, there are so many options and craft for sale, beginners tend to be confused and even turned off by the sheer size and apparent confusion involved.

It needn't be like this however. Armed with some basic information, any buyer can save thousands of dollars, purchase a great boat, for a relatively small cost – and do it painlessly and simply.

The aim of this investigation is not to make a decision for you if you are in this situation, but merely just to open your eyes to a number of available options that could save you thousands of hard earned dollars.

So Where to From Here?

Spending weekends and lunch breaks scouring the pages of the local newspaper and the Trading Post can pay off. No matter what your budget is, there are some excellent buys to be found.

Sometimes the best way to buy a boat is not necessarily to look at the available boats in the Trading Post,

Trader magazines or local papers, but to keep an eye out in your neighbourhood for rarely used boats that may not actually be for sale. After finding a boat and doing your homework on that particular brand, (taking into account the condition of the boat), approach the owner and offer cash on the spot, subject to an engine and hull pre-purchase check. You will be surprised how often a boat not previously for sale becomes available when cash is on the table.

But hey, don't just be content with looking locally, because the new technology we have available to us today, opens up a number of new doors not previously available.

New technology, combined with nation wide super cheap airfares and trucking costs, make it just as viable today to buy a boat from the other side of the country (or the world), as it is to buy one from your local dealer. So here, in the following paragraphs, we will compare some of the different buying options.

Interstate Buying

By investigating the different buying options, you will soon discover different regions, which have cheaper boats.

There is a distinct difference in the

values of similar boats. A Haines Signature 650F in Melbourne for example, will generally be worth more money than the same boat in Mackay.

As a general rule, fishing based trailer boats in Melbourne, are more expensive than those in Queensland. Sydney too is quite expensive, but does have cheaper "pockets" throughout the region.

On the other hand, ski and speedboats are generally a different story. They are generally more expensive in Queensland than they are in Victoria.

These trends are generally indicative of demand vs. supply. Ski boats are plentiful in Melbourne, but not so in Queensland, so are therefore cheaper. More fishing boats in Queensland means they are cheaper than those in Victoria, which is generally starving of decent stock.

The prices of transporting boats interstate by truck or rail generally brings the price in line with what can be found locally, but if the price is good enough, the deal is definitely worthwhile.

Ways to Buy Late Model Boats

Late model boats have always been an attractive option. Today, they generally hold their value even more, for much longer than ten years ago. The key here is to not pay this high price, but to search around for the elusive "bargain", a late model, generally clean boat, one which has faded gelcoat, or has sat in the front yard of a home for a long time with limited use.

Late model boats from the likes of Haines Hunter, Haines Signature, Seafarer, Yamaha, Cruise Craft, Streaker, Kevlacat or Hydrofield will always hold good resale value.

The alloy brigade are also good when it comes to resale, with manufacturers like Quintrex, Stacer, Pacific Sportfish, Stingray, Trailcraft, Stessl and Horizon maintaining their value well.

The main "classic" models from these and other manufacturers will maintain value even more than the majority of other models, regardless of condition.

Bargains Are Also Real

Don't believe that the word "bargain" is a myth. It simply isn't. There are bargains to be had, but

generally the buyer that does his homework will have discovered it (and purchased it!) long before the slacker, less organised buyer gets out of bed. Worse, the latter buyer, who usually doesn't undertake his research properly, ends up with the lemon.

I have a pretty good history with picking the good ones, and have done very well from it.

I once stumbled upon a 5.75m trailer boat in the local weekend newspaper I thought was too good to be true, and I was sure the price was a misprint. I didn't even make a phone call when I first discovered the ad; I was that sure it was a misprint.

Later in the day, I gave in to the curiosity, and made the phone call from work. This late model boat, only six years old, was about a quarter the price of a new boat (still in production by a very respected manufacturer), and about half what I would have expected the value to be. The boat sounded on the phone to be everything it was advertised, and the owner verified the price to me again, after many questions of asking what was really wrong with it, to which he claimed "Nothing!"

Armed with this knowledge, I was sure the boat would sell that day, it was that good. I continued working away for the day, until knock-off time came at six. On the way home, I gave the number in the ad another call just to check. I was told the boat hadn't been sold, and I was welcome to come and have a look.

So on my way home, I diverted course to my new destination. Upon arriving in the seller's front yard, I literally made up my mind to buy the boat then and there. I crawled over the rig for over an hour with the owner, probing and asking questions, to which he was happy to answer and provide documentation to back himself up.

So sure there was something wrong with the boat, I offered the owner another thousand dollars below what he was asking, thinking that I could draw out of him what was really going on. However, he accepted straight away, so I put a deposit on the boat on the spot, and made the purchase subject to every inspection I could think of!

Too Good To Be True?

After passing the surveyors report, mechanical inspection, roadworthy certificate and REVS searches, the boat

became mine. After spending about \$500 on inspections, my mind was clear that nothing was wrong with this boat, and I had found a genuine bargain.

After the deal was done, the previous owner mentioned the boat could have been sold three times over the very next day after I saw it, but because I had placed a deposit on it, the boat was mine.

Immediately after taking ownership of the boat, I took it home and started to clean it up a little. I kept the boat for four months, in which time I spent another \$2,000 on the boat in total. I replaced canopies, buffed the boat up myself and after a decent clean up, put new pin striping and registration numbers on, and painted the drive leg to be like new. The rig looked a million dollars once I had touched it up, but I had done nothing structurally, only cosmetically.

After using the boat in the meantime, I then decided the time was right to sell. I advertised it in Trailer Boat magazine for a very conservative price, just under double what I had paid. To my amazement, within two days of the advertisement appearing, and about fifteen phone calls later, the first person to look at the boat, bought it on the spot. After about another fifty phone calls over the next month, I came to the conclusion I could have sold the boat for at least another five thousand dollars.

My thoughts on buying second hand have changed considerably since then. I now believe in the "Bargain", and have also found other ways to find them.

The Bomb Alternative – Ex Commercial?

Another very smart alternative for the passionate (or patient!) boat buyer is the bomb alternative. You've seen it plenty of times in F&B haven't you, when someone buys a bomb, and rebuilds it to pristine condition.

Provided you are ruthless and budget well before the purchase, you can also save thousands, and get a very good boat.

Buying a good hull that has been seriously neglected, you can build a great project. For those that are limited with time, this perhaps isn't the best idea. For those passionate about all things boating, however, this can work out to be the most enjoyable and