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ON THE SHELF

YOU'D LOVE TO BE OUT ON YOUR BOAT ALL THE TIME, BUT LIFE HAS OTHER IDEAS. SO WHERE ON EARTH ARE YOU GOING TO FIND THE SPACE TO STORE YOUR PRIDE AND JOY? WORRY NOT, WE'VE GOT IT COVERED.

"THE FIRST TIME YOU DOCK AT A MARINA, IT'LL FEEL LIKE YOU'RE PARKING AN ELEPHANT BETWEEN TWO DOMINOES"

Compromise is the bedfellow of boat owners. We spend endless hours deliberating the virtues of weight, length, construction and power plants. Boat storage

typically isn't a talking point, but it's a growing consideration – especially for people upgrading to bigger boats. The changing shape of our home hasn't helped the boat owner's cause, either. Garages and yards have shrunk to accommodate larger homes on smaller blocks, and street parking is getting harder to find. So where are you going to store your pride and joy? We've put together a few options.

THE HOME-AWAY-FROM-HOME

Marinas offer the comforts of home for you and your boat, offering facilities such as power, water and internet. Your boat lives in the water full time, ready and raring to go whenever you are. If you're prone to getting angrier than Barry Hall at the boat ramp in snapper season, a marina berth might be the best option for you. But beware: the first time you dock at a marina, it'll feel like you're parking an elephant between two dominoes. They're social places, too; like-minded people gather on Sunday afternoons sharing fishing spots, a rum and stories of the sea.

UPSIDE

- Ideal for bigger boats
- Your angry neighbour will get off your back about the boat taking up valuable street space
- None of the stress that can come with boat ramps, and no waiting for your turn to launch
- Most marinas have good security systems with locked gates and CCTV
- Meet and socialise with like-minded people
- Close to amenities

DOWNSIDE

- Ongoing costs, including anti-fouling if you don't have a Sea Pen or FloatBricks
- Not easy to take the boat away on holidays
- Your boat likes to rub shoulders with other boats and pylons
- Docking a big boat takes some practice

HANG LOOSE ON A SWING MOORING

A swing mooring is a length of chain and rope connected to a cement block, typically found in sheltered bays and waterways close to residential areas. They're a good option for big-boat owners who don't want the expense of a marina.

UPSIDE

- Generally pretty affordable
- Boat is ready to go
- Easier to moor than a marina berth

DOWNSIDE

- You need another boat to get there (unless you consider a morning swim a positive thing)
- Your boat is exposed to the elements
- No security
- Anti-fouling costs

AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT

At-home trailer-boat storage is the most realistic and cost-effective option for most boat owners. You can admire the boat from the lounge room, and fish wherever they're biting. The garage tools are always on hand, and you can escape the missus or husband with a spot of virtual fishing in the garage.

UPSIDE

- Flexibility to fish or ski wherever you want
- Your boat goes on holidays with you
- It's a good talking point whenever your mates pop over
- Modern trailers are strong and sturdy enough for long-term touring

DOWNSIDE

- Space is the nemesis of trailer boat owners
- Security can be an issue
- It's you versus the world at the boat ramp when the snapper fishing is hot
- Trailers come with cost and maintenance issues
- If you don't have a garage it will be exposed to the elements

BOAT STORAGE YARDS

If the front yard, garage and street parking are full, a boatyard could be a good option. Recognised companies like Kennards and Storage King offer realistic rates. The service usually includes secure parking and 24/7 entry via a pin code. Boatyards can also include open parking in a marina, or even privateers offering land for rent.

UPSIDE

- Affordable
- Usually close to water
- Generally secure

DOWNSIDE

- Can be exposed to the elements
- Access hours might be limited
- Can get a bit tight

FLOATBRICKS

Another storage option is Float Bricks. The bricks are a modular configuration, offering a safe, sturdy platform, high above the waterline. The Float Bricks are ideal for PWCs and smaller boats up to 6m. The Float Brick is not just a boat storage dock. It can also double up as a platform or temporary bridge.

UPSIDE

- You're on the water before the bite cools
- Boat or jet ski sits well clear of the bugs
- Offers a wide working area on the water
- Upgrade FloatBricks as your boat grows
- It's Lego for grown-ups!

DOWNSIDE

- Limited to boats up to 1300kg
- Max out at about 6m

RACK AND STACKING

Dry racking is a good option for owners of small trailer boats. Your boat is stored in a cradle within the safety of a building or shed. When you're ready to go fishing, call the storage facility and they'll forklift it onto the water for you.

UPSIDE

- You don't have to get your hands dirty
- They'll wash and rinse your boat for you
- Generally safe and secure
- Skip the ramp queues

DOWNSIDE

- Not ideal for bigger boats
- Monthly fees
- Boat might still be exposed to elements including salt air and sea birds
- Risk of forklift damage, so check your insurance cover

SQUEAKY CLEAN SEA PEN

Boats stored on-water need protection from organisms and other nasty things in the sea. Painting the hull with anti-foul is the most common way. Another option is a sea pen, a fitting similar to a swimming pool liner. It's operated by driving your boat into a pen that resembles a swimming pool. As the water is pumped out, a flexible liner will shrink-wrap to the outside of the boat like a second skin. In between the pool liner and the boat is a woven roving mesh, which creates an air gap so the boat is totally dry. The sea pen eliminates the need for anti-fouling, improving on-water hull performance and reducing running costs, including fuel bills, anti-fouling paints and slipping expenses.

UPSIDE

- Removes the saltwater bridge which causes electrolysis
- Special polymer material doesn't need cleaning
- Forget the anti-foul
- Better hull performance
- Lower running costs
- No pollutants
- You'll be on the water in three minutes
- You can enjoy the lawn again

DOWNSIDE

- Initial costs for the pen, though this cost will be recovered over time
- If the fishing is hot in Bermagui, you'll have to get it on a trailer
- You can't admire your boat when you come home from work (unless you're lucky enough to live on the waterfront)



"BOATYARDS CAN ALSO INCLUDE OPEN PARKING IN A MARINA"