

BOAT FEATURE

CHOOSING A BOAT



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THE SHOE FITS

With so many different boats on the market, picking the perfect one can be near impossible. Jack Murphy considers your options.

Buying a new boat is kinda' like buying a new pair of shoes. There are thousands of different brands, shapes, sizes and colours to choose from. But every shoe has its purpose. In this feature I'll detail which boat suits your style the best. Is it the thong of the boating world, the open and exposed centre console? Maybe you're a Crocs sort of boatie and would prefer a comfy bowrider? Whatever your style, you'll find the right shoe to fit your foot in these here pages.



STABICRAFT 1600 FISHER

SUB SIX-METRE CABIN BOAT (R.M. WILLIAMS BOOT)

The trusty RM boot. They're safe, versatile and if you keep 'em shiny they can be damn sexy. Just like the RM boot, the sub six-metre cabin boat is all of these things and more. **Ideally suited for:** the weekend warrior with two or more ankle biters. They're often busy and need a boat that'll take the crew fishing on the shelf one day, while still being able to take the family for an island picnic the next.

PROS

- Protection from the elements
- Extremely versatile (family, fishing, water sports, diving, etc)
- Usually a cosy cabin for extra storage or Sunday siestas

CONS

- Often no walk-around capabilities
- Can be a struggle fitting one in your garage

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Evolution 552 Platinum
2. Stabicraft 1600 Fisher
3. Haines Hunter 580 Classic
4. Cruise Craft Explorer 530
5. Haines Signature 575RF

SIX-METRE PLUS CABIN BOAT (COWBOY BOOT)

Colossal and classy with a 10/10 on the head turning spectrometer, the cowboy boot demands your attention. Just like a big six-metre plus cabin boat does at the local ramp. Don't stare for too long though, or you might just be challenged to a duel. **Ideally suited for:** the trophy hunter that wants a fridge-freezer, three downriggers, a davit lift and every other optional extra in the catalogue.

PROS

- More mod cons than your house
- Will handle the seas in a category two cyclone

CONS

- Often no walk-around capabilities
- Can be hard to manage solo
- You need a serious 4x4 to tow them

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Sailfish S7
2. Evolution 652 Hardtop
3. Stabicraft 2050 Supercab
4. Haines Hunter 760R
5. Barcruher 670 HT



SAILFISH S7

**SIDE CONSOLES
(CONVERSE ALL STAR)**

They look good, they're fuss free and they feel natural. The side console is no doubt the Converse All Star of the boating world. **Ideally suited for:** the boater that wishes they could simply fish out of their car. With a familiar seating layout and usually plenty of open space. The side console is a great option for sportfishing in inshore waters.

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Haines Signature 485SF
2. Anglapro Bandit 454 Team
3. Quintrex F450 Renegade
4. Tabs 5000 Territory Pro
5. Formosa Classic 430

PROS

- Heaps of fishing space
- Ergonomic layout

CONS

- Exposed in the elements
- Can have trimming issues if not setup correctly



QUINTREX 460 RENEGADE



WHITEPOINTER 730 HT

**COMMERCIAL
WORK HORSES
(GUMBOOT)**

They excel in the slop and live forever. The tough old gumboot never went away, but somehow they're back in fashion.

Ideally suited for: fishermen who treat seats as optional extras. They can catch live-bait by just staring at them, and prefer a cord hand line to any gold plated Saltiga. Still popular in trade circles, commercial boats are growing in popularity with boaties who keep breaking their boats – and backs.

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Edencraft 233
2. WhitePointer 730 HT
3. Bass Strait 6m OceanPro
4. CootaCraft 21 foot Big Ram
5. WhitePointer 243L

PROS

- Fears no sea
- Bounces off everything
- Other boats give way

CONS

- Not the ladies first pick
- Typically heavy
- Long lead time for building



ROBALO R207

**BOW RIDERS
(CROCS)**

Crocs are a serious fashion statement. Some people love 'em, some people hate 'em. No matter which side of the fence you're on, there's no denying they're damn comfy – just like a bow rider.

Ideally suited for: family fun, in the sun. Bow riders dominate the inshore family boat market. There's plenty of seating for the girls and more than enough horsepower for the guys.

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Chaparral 257 SSx
2. Robalo R207
3. Regal 2100 Bowrider
4. Quintrex 530
5. Bayliner Element

PROS

- Super comfy
- Usually very stable
- Safe for the family

CONS

- Often not overly versatile
- Can be exposed in bad weather



QUINTREX 450 HORNET

**TINNIES
(BAREFOOT)**

No shoes. No worries. Why bother wearing them anyway, they're just going to get wet after all. In some ways the humble tinny is the pinnacle of boat ownership. They have very little ongoing costs, they're easy to manage and don't have you losing sleep when you scuff them.

Ideally suited for: First boat owners and adventuring fishos.

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Surtees 485 Work Mate
2. Quintrex 450 Hornet
3. Clark Predator 395
4. Stabicraft 1410 Explorer
5. Quintrex 390 Explorer

PROS

- Light and easy to tow
- Can easily manage solo

CONS

- Can be unstable if overloaded
- Limited offshore
- Not many creature comforts



MALIBU 22VLX

**WATER SPORTS
BOATS (FOOTY BOOT)**

Fast, agile and plenty of grip; the footy boot is to a freshly manicured pitch like a water sports boat is to a glassy freshwater river.

Ideally suited for: tubes, skiers and wake boarders. If your idea of fun is towing around the kids like a giant fishing lure, or watching your buddies pull off an epic Indy Backside 180, then the water sports boat is your ticket.

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Malibu 22 VLX
2. MasterCraft X55
3. Chaparral 284 Xtreme
4. Supra SE 450
5. Rolco Paragon

PROS

- You can usually change your wake to suit your water sport
- Lots of creature comforts
- Look like F1 cars on water

CONS

- Often not overly versatile



HAINES HUNTER 525 PROWLER

**CENTRE
CONSOLES
(THONGS)**

Thongs, pluggers or jandles. It doesn't matter what you call them, they scream summer days and a relaxed demeanour. However, wear them in the wrong weather and you're going to have a bad time. There's no doubt, centre consoles are the thongs of the boating world.

Ideally suited for: the angler that demands maximum fishability even at the cost of potential hyperthermia.

JACK'S TOP FIVE

1. Contender 23 Open
2. Edgewater 188CC
3. Robalo 206 Cayman
4. Evolution 552 Axis
5. Haines Hunter 525 Prowler

PROS

- Ultimate fishability
- Less weight than a comparative cabin boat

CONS

- Exposed in bad weather
- Not ideal for the family