



Haines Signature 542RF Runabout

In the three years since Haines Signature first introduced the 540 F, it quickly assumed a Top Three position on the national sales chart, underneath the phenomenally successful 520 Bowrider and the evergreen Haines Signature 493, which will soon be approaching its 1000th release from its 490/492/493 guises.

Although this is an incredible achievement, if the figures are analysed carefully, the 540 F will ultimately overtake its smaller cousin if only because it has sustained an even higher level of interest from the day it was first introduced.

There is no real mystery about why the 540 F has been so successful. It's a beautiful hull, incorporating the best features of "Hainsey's" variable deadrise technology. So it has "the" magical combination of being an extremely stable fishing platform that is easily driven by economical engines (such as all the popular 90/100 hp outboards); it enjoys a remarkably soft

ride, has two berths, space for a 'loo in the cabin, and an excellent deep bodied fishing cockpit. All this, and it can still work on a single axle trailer being towed behind a regular family Commodore or Falcon. And it packages from the low \$30's to the high \$40's with truly astonishing resale value.

Is it any wonder that it has been so successful?

Hans Tholstrup was certainly impressed. So much so, he chose this boat to jump in to for his little odyssey from Darwin up to Japan, a voyage of no less than 7000 kms - and made even more remarkable because Tholstrup just bolted a Honda 90 4-stroke on the transom, built a bimini and a splash cover for the cockpit - and took off!

Not for Hans months of preparation and the meticulous building of a one-off ocean going specialist craft - *No, Sir!*

His boat quite literally came off the production line one week, had the Honda bolted on it the following week

and was on its way to Japan a fortnight or so later.

New Models: This month, we look at one of several new models being spawned from the 540 moulds. This is the new Runabout version, designated the 542 RF.

So it is a true sister of the classic 540 F. We're told it will be joined in the very near future by the 542 CC (yes, the long awaited Centre Console) as well as a surprise new model, the 542 C - the 'C' standing for "Cabin".

The 542 RF though, has also been eagerly awaited, and especially in the southern states where fishermen like the runabout configuration ahead of the true centre console, for the very obvious reason that the runabout provides considerably better protection than an open, exposed centre console in southern waters. It does, however, preserve a fabulous fishing cockpit, not quite as long as the centre console but nevertheless, substantially bigger than the cuddy or cabin versions.

