

Stingray 7.2 Plate Cuddy

The development of new and interesting plate aluminium boats continues unabated as a growing number of plate shops around Australia vie for your business. In the 7.0 m area, competition is particularly tense and the standards of design, boat building and finish world class. According to F&B editor Peter Webster, this Stingray is a mighty fine example . . .

For Tim McCourt, ownership of Stingray has been an interesting experience. Ownership evokes images that stretch back nearly 25 years to when the first Stingray plate aluminium boats were built in north Brisbane.

Years before Tim came on the scene, Stingray Boats were highly regarded and considered pioneers in the field along with Sportfish, Star Boats and a handful of other small yards.

In the early 80's support for plate aluminium was growing, but hardly overwhelming. The market place was dominated by a plethora of fibreglass boats of all shapes and sizes, and some mighty good ones at that.

Back then (all of 20 odd years ago)

plate aluminium boats were seen as something used by the commercial fishing sector, and a couple of hardy recreational sportfishermen who apparently couldn't afford a "proper" fibreglass boat.

The writer knows all about this because back in 1982, when we ordered our first 7.4 m Star plate alloy diesel cruiser, many eyebrows were raised in quizzical fashion. People were perplexed as to why we would spend so much money on a big plate aluminium boat when for that sort of cash, we could have bought a real boat like a Bertie 25 or a big Haines Hunter, etc!

But we and hundreds of other keen sportfishermen persevered and slowly

but surely, plate aluminium boats started appearing on waterways around Australia.

Like us, other fishermen were fascinated by the potential of taking a good hull design and fitting it out to your own special requirements. The plate alloy boat builders were not only keen for our business, they seemed to enjoy the customisation process – and it was not too expensive. As well, we were keen to pursue the potential of long range fishing with diesel power, and in those days you couldn't get diesel in any boat much less 10 m LOA.

Stingray was in the forefront of that activity. I well remember (1984, I think it was) they introduced a spacious 25'

