



Mac 3.6m Setting up for Sportfishing Pt.1 by Sam Mossman



Over a year ago I did a boat test on a Mac 3.6m dinghy for this magazine. The boat impressed me with its relative soft riding abilities, quietness, and particularly its excellent stability. I was between boats at the time and missing the ability to pop out for a quick fish on the harbour whenever the fancy took me, so when I had got together the dollars, I bought a Mac 360. I think I get almost as much fun out of setting up a boat as I did from using it. Readers with good memories may remember the very first articles of this occasional series that I wrote on fitting out a 12 foot tinny nearly a decade ago – I still sometimes get calls about them.



A basic Mac 3.6

The basics.

The trick with small boats is to make maximum use of space, but maintain flexibility. And simplicity. I thought long and hard about the lay-up of this boat even before I picked it up from the Mac factory in South Auckland. The company Galloway International Ltd, have a finishing department and I asked them to do some basic work that I would struggle to do myself with limited equipment and space.

I had them cut a one-piece ply deck for the boat with two long hatches in. they also cut two oversized seats from play, and mounted them just under gunwale level.

Hiding behind skirts.

Spray skirts are a good move on small boats, greatly increasing protection from wind and spray, especially for a forward passenger. I had a set of blue canvas skirts made for my old tinny, and the only problem was a loss of forward vision. The guys at Metal Designs (makers of Commando Boats) were just down the road from the Mac factory, so that was the next stop, to discuss the

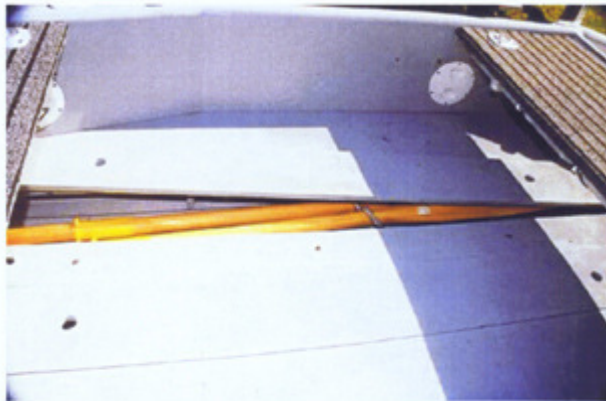
design with genial boss Bruce de Baugh. The guys came up with a strong mounting system, and made a beautiful job of the rails.

North Shore Canvas had made the skirts for my earlier boat, and I returned to them. We followed the same system of using caravan awning tracking to hold the skirt to the hull, and used eyelets and plastic cable ties to secure them to the rails. The new skirts were made from clear material, improving forward visibility a good deal. This was all the professional help I needed – the rest I could do myself.

Finishing the deck.

With safety and the long-term preservation of the ply in mind, I finished the decks with proper deck paint and a non skid finish. My mate Ross allowed me the use of his large shed, and we set to one wet weekend. With rollers, the painting did not take long. Undercoat, first topcoat, sprinkle in the non-skid stuff while wet (you can use the professional powder of just clean sand), then a final topcoat. This has been great so far, giving good footing. Sealing the ply while dry has avoided warping.

Oar and gaff storage



The oars tuck away neatly in the underfloor storage compartment.

Oars and rowlocks add to the cluttering the boat, and that is specially what the facilities in the deck were for. To get the oars out of the way when not being used, and also to store gaff and other poles. I could have mounted these items on clips on the sides, but wanted to keep this area free of protrusions that might snag a fly-line while casting. One side of each hatch rests on the edge of the central plastic rib that supports the deck. Aluminium strap is screwed to the underside of the deck and supports the other side of the hatch.

Seating systems

I initially planned to use pedestal seats, but ran into problems with positioning. To run the tiller outboard I would need to sit off-centre, unbalancing the boat. The forward seat would then need to be off centre to counter it, which would make rowing smoothly a problem. In the end, simple bench seats were the answer. You can sit anywhere on them and they create a worktop and place to mount things with storage underneath. Mac made them for me and added stiffeners of aluminium angle extrusion along each edge.

Again, I painted them to seal them, then covered them with marine carpeting. I glued this down over the whole seat surface with Ados contact adhesive, curling the edges under and pinning them with a staple gun and large staples.

This finish is comfortable enough in the short term, but not the best when sitting in shorts for some hours, as it irritates the skin. I made some squabs using play off-cuts for bases. I bought foam squares from a plastics store and a piece of heavy-duty vinyl. Out with the staple gun again,

stretch the vinyl over the foam and under the base, and staple it down. By gluing and stapling a wide strip of Velcro to the bases, these squabs stay wherever they are placed on the marine carpet.

The over-wide seats have worked out well, creating worktops, and you can even comfortably lie down across the boat if you fancy a rest. The stability of the pontoon-style Mac hulls means that raising the centre of gravity by setting the seats at gunwale level causes no problems. You can even stand up on them for better vision in calm conditions.

Anchoring

This is simple. Mac build a hatch in the top of the small platform in the bow as standard. There is also a cleat, and a moulded-in fairlead. The warp, chain and a folding stainless anchor fit down under the hatch. I added a small buoy to the end of the warp in case I had to ditch the anchor in a hurry to chase fish, or in case some clown throws the whole lot over the side. The bow rails drop down against the fairlead sides, so the warp cannot jump out. Sitting on the bow facing forward is a comfortable way to pull the anchor.

Next month the final part of this series will deal with the add-on fishing and safety items for this boat.

Edited Version



The anchor well is under a hatch in the forward platform. Bowrails contain the warp in the fairlead. Note tank under seat and forward rod storage holder.