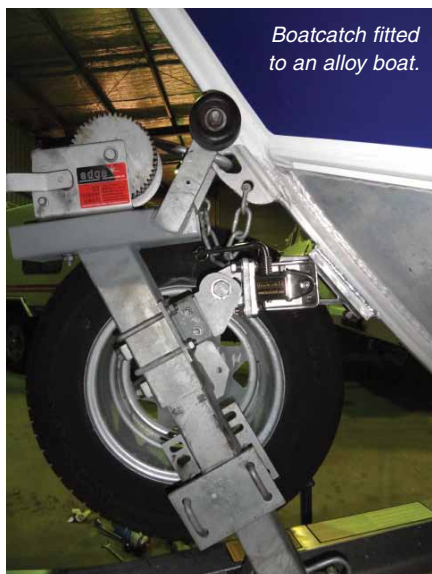




BOATCATCH opens in Miami

A brilliant Australian invention that makes trailer boaties lives' easier is making its name in America. TBF staff report.



Boatcatch fitted to an alloy boat.

About two years back we debuted the Boatcatch, the Aussie-designed automatic catch/release system that makes light work of launching and retrieving boats.

What's outstanding about Boatcatch is the engineering excellence of the design, which is no surprise given its inventor is both an engineer and a professional abalone diver. Greg Staples produced his first Boatcatch about five years ago as a solution to his own problem of launching a large trailer boat daily without outside assistance. He drew on his past experience as a mechanical engineer to create a brilliantly simple, yet super strong catch/release system.

Now the product has gone global, or more precisely, gone to America, the home of the biggest trailer boat fleet in the world.

Like many people, Greg thought the USA would already have some pretty sophisticated catch/release systems, however, was surprised to find it doesn't. There is only one other product of significance and it's not as strong and relies on electric power.

This year Boatcatch made its first public debut at the Miami Boat Show in America. Together with Boatcatch

CEO, Grant Burgess, they unveiled the clever Aussie product to the US boating public. Greg said the response was amazingly positive and they lost count of the number of people coming up and shaking their hands for producing such a brilliant product.

The upshot of this positive feedback was US Fox Sport gave Boatcatch a free spot on its channel. The two-minute clip was probably viewed by over 80 million people, of which quite a few would be trailer boat owners.

Despite this terrific debut Greg and his team are under no illusions they have a big job ahead of them. The US market is difficult to crack simply because it is so big. Its size and diversity means it takes lot of time and money to get the message out.

Meanwhile back in Australia, the company is changing direction by appointing a lot more retail outlets. "We've moved past the direct sales stage and the next step is local agents where customers can buy the product from," says Greg.

Another important tool is an image gallery that shows about 50 different boat fit-ups. The idea is to show customers just how adaptable Boatcatch is to different styles of hulls.

There are now two sizes of the unit so all types of boats are covered from small trailer boats up to very large.

Just to recap Boatcatch is one of the strongest, best engineered products we've seen made in Australia. It quite literally takes the chore and hassle out of the coupling/de-coupling of the boat to the trailer during the launch/retrieving procedure. You actually de-hook the trailer winch cable before you launch because Boatcatch is strong enough to hold the boat on the ramp, even on a steep incline.

There is also a control line you pass up to driving position before launching. So once the trailer is backed into the water sufficiently far enough for the boat to launch you hop aboard ready to go. And once the motor is lowered and running – you simply pull the cord and away you go!

This process is very simple and makes life very, very easy, especially if you are boating on your own.

From the outset Greg said he wanted to achieve a "positive lock" that could never accidentally detach in any circumstances. It also had to be an enclosed unit with very few moving parts. He has achieved all those aims in a product that is made from the very best 316 marine-grade stainless steel.



Boatcatch inventor Garry Staples with his own boat fitted with the unit.

The Boatcatch (patent pending) is now a sophisticated coupling device that greatly enhances the launch/retrieval process. Best of all, it stops you getting your feet wet. Nor will your passengers if you pick them up from the nearby loading dock.

Go boating in your best jeans if you like because this really is champagne boating all the way.

LAUNCHING

The Boatcatch coupling comes in two sizes, both supplied complete with a universal mounting bracket and all components necessary for fitting and operating the unit.



Boatcatch open



Boatcatch shut

A special eye is bolted to the bow of the boat, and the coupling is attached to the trailer's bow post. The latching device has a heavy duty pin that locates inside the eye and secures the boat upon the trailer until launch is required.

This is a positive locking system. The pin can never come out of the eye until you intentionally pull the release cord.

The trailer still requires its rubber bow stopper or Vee block to limit its forward movement. You still require a winch for recovery if engine failure occurs, however, most of the time you simply drive the boat on and off the trailer. The need for a bow safety chain, or brace strap is reduced because the Boatcatch is so strong.

RETRIEVING

In the retrieval process the trailer is positioned on the ramp in enough water depth for the boat to be driven on. Most importantly, the Boatcatch pin has to be left in the open position.

You then drive the boat forward onto the trailer in a controlled manner. It's best if the boat enters the trailer and stops floating about two-thirds of the way on. This allows the boat to stop and settle in the middle of the Vee of the trailer.

Once the boat has stopped and settled centrally about two-thirds

onto its trailer, you throttle the motor forward gently until the bow rests against the rubber bow stop. This forward movement will eventually engage the Boatcatch so it automatically triggers the pin to the locked position. Once you're satisfied the coupling has activated, you can tow the boat off the ramp.

Most boats up to six metres will suit the smaller Boatcatch, while more heavily constructed boats from fibreglass and those above six metres will require the larger Boatcatch.

The deciding factor may come down to your trailer's bow post width. The small coupling comes with a mounting arm that bolts around bow posts that are up to 65mm wide. If your bow post is over this size then you'll require the large size coupling.

The RRP price of the smaller unit is \$549, the larger \$749 including GST. For this you get an excellent product with complete factory instructions and a lifetime product warranty. It's hard to think of any marine product that matches that deal!

Further information: Boatcatch phone 0400 222 824.

