

Dr Greg Laughlin's testimonial on the Boatcatch

I am the owner of a 2008 model Haines Signature 580C (a 19 foot Cuddy cabin), purchased from Ken's Marine in Canberra. It came equipped with the standard winch and safety chain setup which worked well but required two people to launch on our most popular ramp (in Jervis Bay). The Dunbier V-loader trailer is quite slippery, and requires the driver to use forward power to take the load off the winch just prior to launching, and thus a second person is needed to release the winch and safety chain. Retrieving also required a second person to catch the boat before it slips back off the trailer into the water. None of this is really a problem but it does mean two people at all times. The cabin and hatch design of the 580C precludes the driver from reaching out to disconnect or connect the winch; to do so would be quite dangerous.

I fitted the small Boatcatch according to the instructions but had to mount it on top of the trailer post, not the usual way which is in-between the post and the boat (see pictures on www.boatcatch.com). I was very careful in ensuring that the Boatcatch caught (engaged) just before the boat is fast against the winch roller, in other words, when the winch is tight the Boatcatch should be free. Having done this I tested it and it worked perfectly. It emits a reassuring 'clank' sound when it locks and will not release unless the cable is pulled some 100mm by the driver. I have no qualms backing down steep ramps with only the Boatcatch holding me and that separates it from the competition. I also note that it offers an independent backup should the winch or safety chain brake (or be left off!).

The Boatcatch is well made and extremely well engineered. I endorse the statement that it will not release accidentally; none of the normal forward-backward force of the boat is translated into the side-to-side release mechanism. You do not have to run at the trailer as some like to do, nor are you obliged to creep the boat on. Basically, you approach the trailer, let the boat centre, push it on with a little bit of throttle. The Boatcatch goes clank and that's it. You do need to apply the winch and safety chain in the car-park in the normal way but again, there is an advantage to doing this when the boat is horizontal and not pulling on the winch (as it is when its on the on the ramp).

I think the Boatcatch is a first rate design and a first rate execution of that design.

After using the Boatcatch for a month or so we discovered an unexpected feature which turned out to be an advantage. On New Years Day we experienced a very high tide (actually, very close to the Highest Astronomical Tide, according to the tide tables). The boat ramp is shallow at first and then dips quite sharply. On this day we needed to back the car literally into the water in order to launch our 580C. Had I not had the Boatcatch fitted, one of us would have been knee deep in the water futzing around with the winch and safety chain. Now that's not a problem unless your marriage is already 'on the rocks' (unlike the claims of a competitive product), but saltwater and car floors aren't meant to go together. My wife 'piloted' the boat off the trailer and my feet (and the car floor) stayed dry.

For those interested

Dr Greg Laughlin's phone number can be requested through our email info@boatcatch.com and is available to answer any questions concerning his experience with the product. We look forward to hearing from you.

For more information please visit our website at www.boatcatch.com