

WORDS & IMAGES BY: ALEX CICCOTZI

→ *Review: Boat Latch*

I've completed my fair share of boat modifications over the years, and it's safe to say that the addition of an L&R Boat Latch easily falls within the top two. This device has changed the way we navigate the process of launching and retrieving our boat at the ramp, reducing both time and stress levels along the way.

The system itself is simple, yet extremely robust and well braced, and there is next to nothing required as far as long-term maintenance and consumables go. As an aftermarket addition there are versions to suit both aluminium and fibreglass boat owners, with plenty of information available on their website for interested punters to inspect before committing to the purchase. Installation instructions are clearcut, and the whole process easily falls within the skill set of your average DIY'er.

For my fibreglass hull all this involved was removing the previous bow eye U-bolt, rounding out the existing holes and then securing and sealing the new snare in place. The snare is adjustable to fit existing U-bolt holes so no additional drilling was required in my case, which is always a welcomed trait for any boat mods.

To fit the latch component the position of the winch post and the height of the winch needed to be shifted. This was simply performed by loosening all the bolts, sliding everything into position, and tightening it all back up again. No additional drilling was required as the latch design allowed for it to be slid back and forth beneath the winch until the desired location was reached.



Many associate the greater benefit of these devices with the retrieval aspect. However, the biggest difference it made for us, more than anything, was the process of launching the boat, particularly when solo. Despite plenty of roller height adjustments the boat would always want to fly off the trailer as soon as the winch was released, and it was a massive pain in the backside to deal with. Instead we can now simply engage the spring loaded L&R Latch, remove the safety chain and winch strap, start the motor, and drive forward an inch or two to release the latch and slide off the trailer without even stepping foot out of the boat. It

really is hard to go wrong.

Retrieval is just as simple, although you do need to be in tune with your own trailer and setup for this to go smoothly, as not all are designed for driving on. The trailer also needs to be well aligned to allow your boat to come on straight in order to engage the latch correctly.

With little in the way of setup, and with a very affordable price tag, it really is a no-brainer to consider an L&R Boat Latch for your pride and joy. The only gripe I have is having not installed one earlier!

VISIT: www.boatlatch.com.au

