

25 Great Reasons, To Go Boating

Independently, Trade-A-Boat editor DAVID LOCKWOOD and Dealer Principal St Kilda Boat Sales, DARREN FINKELSTEIN reflect on the joys of recreational boating and has created 25 compelling reasons (non specific order) to cast the lines for some much-needed float therapy.

To those peering from their picnic blankets on the foreshore parks, boating might seem a frivolous pose. Big gin palaces parading about the waterways, speedboats running hell for leather, yachts flying billboards, and anglers waiting like dills on the end of a line.

But while boating is about keeping up appearances for some, many more of us value the experience and float therapy.

Join the throngs on the water and you will discover a fresh perspective on life.

It's true: there's nothing on earth like owning a boat.

And while it may not always be the most affordable recreation, boating is a great investment in your wellbeing. Here are 25 good reasons for getting afloat all year long.

1. Pick a perfect autumn day, mosey in among the heaving flotilla at your favorite local anchorage, and join in the celebrations afloat.
2. Splash about off the transom, swim to shore for some naval gazing, comb the beach without seeing a high rise or office block, and return for a barbie or cold lunch on deck. Boating bliss.
3. You haven't lived until you've spent a night aboard a boat in the quiet backwaters of your local waterway.
4. Grab a public mooring or drop anchor, let your boat swing to the breeze and gently rock to nature's rhythms, before enjoying sundowners, dinner on deck and some good old-fashion board games.
5. Beat the crowds and do breakfast by boat. If you can't find a waterfront digs then cook your own on the Barbie (BBQ) and put that onboard cappuccino machine to good use.
6. If you really want to live it up, then catch and cook some fish on the same day. Fresh fish for breakfast is a seafarer's treat. Feel the thrill of living when a fish jumps on your line. First light is the hot bite, when you need to do little more than troll a few lures around the headlands for some predators. Be the hunter/gatherer and feed the family with tailor, salmon, kingfish or drift for the ever-reliable flathead.

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7. The wind is free and nowhere is as accommodating of sailors as our deep bays, harbours and channels. Join your local sailing club and race virtually every day of the week, but twilight racing and mid-week Wednesday regattas are the ultimate soiree.

8. What fuel crisis? With a quintessential 12ft tinnie, you can explore the waterways for less than \$20 a trip. Wet a line, deploy crab or cray traps, pull into a quiet beach or island and stretch the legs. Tow the tykes on tubes and play Huck Finn in the upstream reaches or on highland lakes.

9. At the end of the day, chuck a bucket of water over the boat, flush the outboard and your maintenance is done. A quick fix.

10. There's no more impressive way to wow guests than with a champagne cruise of your local waterway before doing lunch or dinner at a foreshore eatery, you local boating club or marina restaurant. Failing that, DIY dinner party with canapés and catering or cook up a storm aboard.

11. Nowhere offers the views and electric atmosphere of your local waterway when the big events are on. New Year's Eve, Australia Day, the start and finish of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, Geelong Week, Sail Melbourne, The Variety Bash, and more and more emerging brand-loyal regattas and rendezvous are a real thrill from your own boat.

12. Conversely, avoid the throngs launch the tender or paddle a kayak at first light. Trace the shores, taking it as fast or slow as you like, breezing past the waterfront abodes, wharves and jetties, weaving around the rocky gibbers, while observing the fish and wildlife. End with an Eskimo roll - or a sausage roll - and well-deserved swim at a beach.

13. When you've seen it all, it's time to set sail for another port of call. Hit the ocean road and head for a nearby bay, harbour or accommodating estuary, with moorings, a marina or plenty of room to drop anchor before a beach that you claim all to yourself.

14. Toast the sunsets before heading upstream for weather and wake protection at night.

15. Nowhere in the Southern Hemisphere can hold a candle to our inshore waterways. From d'Entrecasteaux channel around to Port Davey, from Port Phillip to Westernport, from Sydney Harbour to Southport, and the tropical archipelagos and WA, Australians are spoilt for boating locations. In fact, one could lose themselves for a lifetime attempting to see them all.

16. Offshore is where the whoppers reside. In fact, the fishing in the deep blue remains truly remarkable, with everything from high-flying marlin in summer to giant yellowfin tuna in autumn and spring. But if you want to catch fish for the frying then simply drift over the gravel for snapper, morwong and flathead. And when you drift, you don't use a drop of petrol.

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- 17.** Use your boat for a cost-effective camping and boating holiday. Research you local national parks with boat-accessible camping amenities and create a terrestrial base station for the big and little kids.
- 18.** While we are surrounded by saltwater, there's a surprising amount of freshwater for a country with the unenviable tag of being the driest continent on earth. Head inland and explore the rivers, dams and creeks. Catch trout and/or native fish like perch for the frying pan.
- 19.** Dinghies, day sailors and Hobie cats and suchlike are making a comeback after their days in the sun in the Seventies. The beauty about an off-the-beach boat is that you can set sail from the sand. Sail about on the breeze and head back for a picnic with the family.
- 20.** A boat is a means to reach some of the very best dive spots. You don't need to have a scuba ticket, as even a mask and snorkel and a pair of swim fins will do. Keep your eyes peeled for crays, abalone and fish-rich locales for future fishing trips.
- 21.** Owning a boat develops prudent seamanship and new skills such as safety, responsibility, good judgment, navigational, sailing ability, and independence. A boat is great grounding for many things in life.
- 22.** Though you must play by the book, boating is one of the last bastions of freedom, without all the rules and regulations that you see on the road. You can follow your whims and/or the wind, discover new places without having to battle airport or traffic queues, and enjoy budget holidays afloat.
- 23.** You need a boat for no other reason that the fact that the heady combination of fresh air, sunshine and saltwater soothes the soul. This contrasts with terrestrial life. And after a long day's boating, at a tranquil anchorage, you are guaranteed the best sleep of your life.
- 24.** Nothing better that after a hard day at the office, ripping off the business attire and putting on the old favorite boardies. Perhaps with a hose in one hand, washing off the covers and VB in the other.....Ain't life grand.
- 25.** Boating is a lifestyle. It's a clean and healthy family activity.....

Life's Better With A Boat.