



Safe Summer Boating with ET

With the sun out and the water glistening, there is every temptation to jump in your boat and head out to the blue yonder. But, have you made sure you are safely prepared? Former NRL star **Andrew Ettingshausen** has forged a career on boating, producing and hosting the longstanding **Escape with ET** fishing and adventure program, presenting at boating and fishing shows and as ambassador for **NSW Transport Marine**.

ET answers some of the most common questions boaties have on the organisation's **Boating for Life** website. His wealth of experience fishing throughout Australia and the world mean he is up to date with the latest information available.

Here are a few of the most often asked questions he addresses for NSW Transport Marine.

When do I need to wear a lifejacket?

Conditions on the water can change fast and unpredictably, so don't wait for an emergency to wear your lifejacket. It's like wearing a seatbelt -- not much use putting it on after an accident. Lifejackets save lives. They will keep you afloat until rescued if your boat should capsize or you fall overboard. It is a good idea to wear it at times of heightened risk such as:

- Boating in poor weather conditions;
- Travelling on the water at night;



Andrew Ettingshausen, host of *Escape with ET* and ambassador for NSW Transport Marine, has always had a lifelong passion for boating and fishing.

- When a squall or storm approaches; and
- Crossing coastal bars when lifejackets are not just a good idea but are compulsory to wear.

If you have children on board or people who are poor swimmers, encourage them to wear their lifejacket at all times when in open areas of a boat where it is possible to fall directly overboard.

Ensure each person has a jacket of appropriate size and type.

What type of lifejacket should I get?

There are three types of lifejackets approved for recreational boating.

Level 100+ (Type 1) Lifejackets offer the highest level of protection from drowning, due to their buoyant collar which keeps you in a safe floating position in the water. There are two types: fixed buoyancy and inflatable (either auto or manually inflatable).

Level 100+ lifejackets are:

- *Compulsory* to have on board for everyone on the open seas;
- *Recommended* for remote inland waters, where search and rescue times may be long and conditions rough; and
- *Recommended* for passengers of small boats, whenever conditions are rough.

Level 50 (Type 2) Lifejackets are suitable for aquatic sports where boating activities usually have people in support craft or nearby and rescue times are likely to be short. They are not designed to maintain a person in a safe floating position. Level 50 lifejackets are suitable for activities such as sailing, water skiing, kayaking, canoeing, wind surfing and for personal watercraft like jetskis.

Level 50 S (Type 3) Lifejackets have similar buoyancy as the Level 50 lifejacket but come in a wider range of colours. Water skiers and personal watercraft riders favour these jackets. They are not recommended for general boating use because the colours are less visible in search and rescue operations.

How many lifejackets do I need on board?

You need one lifejacket for every person on board. Make sure they are in good condition and accessible at all times.

If you have inflatable lifejackets, remember that they must be serviced at least every 12 months, or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, by the manufacturer or their authorised service agent.

Where can I learn what the colours and markings on all the navigation beacons signify?

Navigation markers and beacons are important aids to safe boating when travelling on any waterway. Throughout NSW they conform to a universal system of colours and markings to indicate where prominent →

Life is Better with a Boat

Right now there are more than 1.6 million people who love boating on rivers, lakes and oceans around Australia. They must be on to something, writes boating author *Darren Finkelstein*.

Most of us have driven to a marina or maybe the local boat ramp with fish n' chips in hand, parked the car to watch the boats and all the activity surrounding them. No matter your age, it's truly fascinating.

For landlubbers, we have a real curiosity with the water. Perhaps it's watching the kids grab the ropes to help out, seeing families working together as a team and great mates having a good laugh together that make us think 'I wouldn't mind doing that'.

As a marina manager and author for the past 11 years, I have come to realise that regardless of your age, boating draws on some tremendous life skills such as weather forecasting, navigation, voyage preparation, responsibility and, of course, it's just good fun.

The biggest challenge most boaties have is time - the lack of it - and with retirement, this is the time to reap the rewards of your hard work over many years and take to boating. →



Why go boating?

Here are my Top 10 reasons to go boating:

1. **WITHOUT DOUBT IT IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE**
 - leave your troubles behind and venture into the unknown
2. **IT'S AN AFFORDABLE RECREATION ALTERNATIVE**
 - it will cost you less than you think
3. **WATER IS ALWAYS CLOSE**
 - 85 per cent of Australians live within 30 minutes of the coast
4. **SHARE QUALITY TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS**
 - brings people together, reconnection leaving fond memories
5. **IT'S STRESS REDUCING**
 - boating & fishing are listed in the top three stress relieving activities in the US (according to NMMA USA)
6. **IT'S CONVENIENT**
 - a boat trip is akin to having a mini holiday
7. **IT'S ENGAGING AND REWARDING**
 - teaches valuable life skills
8. **IT'S HEALTHY EXERCISE**
 - both physical and mental stimulation, outdoors in the salt air
9. **IT'S EASY TO LEARN**
 - with classes and course readily available
10. **IT'S REALLY GOOD FUN**
 - so many activities to enjoy solo or with the clan



So, what's stopping you from getting in on this lifestyle?

Often people will tell you the best two days of owning a boat are the day you bought it and the day you sold it. My guess is they never experienced a truly enjoyable day on the water. Others will tell you loudly and with much pride; the best two days are a Saturday and a Sunday when you can use your boat! Now that's nice to hear. As a retiree, you can capitalize further and go boating every day you choose, not just be a weekend warrior.

Australia is truly the lucky country when it comes to waterways. We have some of the best navigable and cleanest waters in the world.

All that said, the choice of on-water activity you wish to pursue is wide open to your preference and area of interest. Is a quite cruise, taking time to enjoy the journey of exploration of interest to you? Would you prefer to teach the grandkids to waterski or tube? Perhaps, it is to go fishing and try to catch the one that got away, so many years before. It's even a great way to just talk with your mates, much of which is good for the soul and great exercise for your mind, too.

Choosing a boat

Deciding which boat is right for you and your family may be the hardest part of your new boating experience. There are many different types, styles and engines to choose from.

Have a good think about what you wish to do on a boat and where your interest lies. This will largely steer you in the right direction of what type of boat you may want to own.

Consider a budget as boats can start off at about \$2,000 for a used 6 foot (1.8m) 'tinnie' (Aussie boating lingo for a small aluminium boat). A tinnie is an ideal and inexpensive way to start off your boating hobby, enabling fishing and exploring on calm waterways. As your budget increases, so do your options - including, width and fittings. If you have as much as \$1million, you could buy a lovely 50 foot (15.2m) 'big boat' that will look much like a small inner city apartment on water; ideal for blue water offshore cruising such as along →

→ the east coast of Australia. It will have a permanent swimming pool out the back and could have a different view every day

There are some really great deals on quality and safe, secondhand boats available for sale in the Australian marketplace right now. So, don't just think purely about buying a new boat; finding a good used boat can be a great alternative and save you a few bucks. In my book *Honey, Let's Buy a Boat*, I have narrowed the Australian market place down to around 20 different types of boat including tinnies, runabouts, half-cabins, sports cruisers and flybridge cruisers, to name but a few.

Storing a boat

Storage needs to be seriously considered as well. Where do you think you may want to keep the boat? Depending on size, it may not fit into your garage and some are simply too big to tow. Consider whether your interest is towing a boat. Portability of a trailered boat opens up a whole new world of boating adventure and destinations. Perhaps it's keeping her conveniently located in a marina.

For the truly lucky ones; keeping her on a jetty behind your apartment or house is simply brilliant. Remember, the more

convenient the storage location, the more you will use the boat. The easier you make it to enjoy a day on the water, the more you will.

Handy tips

Another suggestion is to head to the next boat show, ask questions and find a boat dealer/broker you feel comfortable with and build a lasting relationship with them. Most will welcome the opportunity to share boating information with you and have programs that cater for newbie boat owners, in which you can learn, experience and practice new skills. A good boat dealer/broker will be your point of contact and help you with important things such as boat-handling lessons, which are a must for you, your partner and your family unit. They will also happily spend time explaining to you and your partner your local waterways and local knowledge and they should service, repair and maintain your boat. Remember, you don't need to do it all yourself - the more hands on deck the better. The easier the experience, the more pleasure you will have in doing it.

Once you have located your local boat dealer/broker, make sure they are a current member and an accredited dealer/broker of the Boating Industry Association in your state.



Darren Finkelstein

AUTHOR

Darren is a long-time boatie, keen fisherman and wanna-be pro surfer. His father introduced him to fishing and his first boating experiences were learning to water ski in Melbourne. He bought his first boat in partnership with a friend at age 18 and eventually followed his father-in-law's advice and bought a small half-cabin cruiser.

Today, Darren or 'the Boat-Guy' as he's referred, owns and operates industry-accredited St Kilda Boat Sales and Service Centre with business partner Andrew Rose. Darren is also a member of the Board of the Boating Industry Association of Victoria and a regular keynote speaker at boat shows, conferences and on radio.

On a daily basis, he fields a constant stream of enquiries about getting on the water. In order to answer these questions and empower more people to discover the joys of boating he recently authored *Honey, let's buy a BOAT!*, available in both paperback and eBook.

For information, visit
www.letsbuyaboat.com.au or email
darren@stkildaboatsales.com.au.

