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Selecting the Right Power for Your Boat

Helpful buyer's tips hints from the staff of the Aluminum Boat Guide.

Once you've chosen the aluminum fishing boat that's right for you and your family, you'll need to choose the right outboard. For many first-time new boat buyers, particularly women, this decision-making process can be a bit intimidating â€" but it doesn't need to be. Don't be afraid to work with your fishing boat dealer to pick your engine. With just a little advance homework, you'll feel comfortable discussing your small boat choice with your salesperson, and you'll be ready to make an informed and confident decision.

First of all you will be purchasing an outboard engine. You'll be looking at either direct-injection two-stroke outboards or four-stroke outboards for your new fishing boat. Your dealer will be happy to explain the difference in these two types of engines. If you'd like to do a little research beforehand, Discover Boating provides an excellent overview of the engine types for best fishing boats.

These days, there's not a big difference between engines and aluminum boat brands. They're all very reliable, burn cleanly and offer great performance for family watersports. Your kids don't need to worry about the engine not pulling hard enough to pop them out of the hole on tubes, boards or skis if you are buying a fish & ski boat â€" and you can rest assured that starting your engine will be as effortless as starting your car. In addition, all of today's outboard motors have become very fuel efficient compared to outboards from just a few years ago on used fishing boats.

The biggest question is going to be horsepower. To determine the engine size that's right for you, go through the following checklist at home:

Budget: Determine how much you can afford to spend on an engine for your new fishing boat. (Your dealer will be happy to provide pricing for various horsepower selections.)

Usage: Discuss how you plan to use your aluminum boat. Are you going to use it for cruising and maybe occasional tubing and waterskiing? Are you planning to ski a lot? Or primarily fish? Will you be towing older kids and adults? Will you frequently carry large groups of passengers? So what is the best aluminum boat for needs?

Possible restrictions: You'll want to consider any lake restrictions for your new boat. In other words, is it a small lake with limited opportunities for watersports? Or is it a big lake that will allow you to run wide open with a new fishing boat? Are there any engine type or horsepower restrictions on your local lakes?

Test ride: If you can, go for a ride with those friends or neighbors â€" and also ask your dealer to take you out for a few test rides with varying-horsepower outboards on their best fishing boats. Aluminum boats tend to perform about the same, regardless of brand, so in test rides you'll really be getting a feel for the engines. And how you feel about the ride is more important than other people's opinions when it comes to new aluminum boats.

To provide a little perspective on horsepower, a family who is purchasing a fishing boat to fish a small lake will likely stay in the 9.9 to 30 horsepower range although smaller horsepower engines are available. For tubing and occasional waterskiing, that range jumps to 75 to 100 or more

horsepower depending on the new boat size. And if you're planning on doing a lot of kneeboarding, wakeboarding and waterskiing with older kids and adults on a big lake, you should consider the largest engine that will fit your aluminum boat's rating and your budget.

Now you're ready to go see your dealer, who will help you make the appropriate decision on the engine for your aluminum boat; on performance options such as hydraulic steering; and on the correct propeller, based on how you'll use your best aluminum boat. To learn more about finding experienced aluminum boat dealers in your area, check out Selecting A Dealer.

For more information on fishing boats and aluminum boats, visit www.aluminumboatguide.com.

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