

Trawler Talk

“CONSIDERATIONS IN BUYING A TRAWLER”

THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE IN HOW TRAWLER BUYERS EDUCATE THEMSELVES IN PREPARATION FOR BUYING A TRAWLER.

It used to be that a prospective buyer would go to a show or come to a dealer and ask a bunch of questions. That would give the dealer an opportunity to get them started on the right path so the emphasis would be on the important considerations they need to keep in mind. But things are different now and it will likely continue this way in the future. The biggest culprit is the internet. Press a few buttons and a world of trawlers unfolds before your eyes. It sure does save time but with the good, there is usually a down side. The website does not give the customer the opportunity to have that good “heart to heart” talk with the dealer. In many cases the dealer has spent years learning the boat and its features along with spending thousands of miles cruising it on the water. As a dealer learns from you how and where you intend to use your boat, he or she can be very helpful in finding the right boat for you. Take advantage of that and have that talk before getting too set in what you think is the most perfect boat.

With all the pictures and videos to browse through on the internet it seems that too often things like bed size, placement of the TV, and hull color are given more weight in the decision than the more important things like hull design. Now don't take this wrong; those things do play a part in the decision, but please do spend considerable time on what the right hull design can do for you and your family!

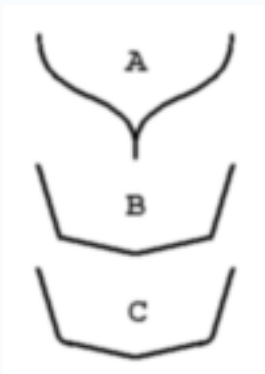
The hull of a trawler features an almost vertical bow entry, flat hard chines, and a full, deep keel with a large rudder and protected prop. This is what makes the boat efficient, seaworthy, and comfortable!

The ***vertical bow entry*** will slice through the waves rather than ride on top and then “bang down” when it runs out of water as a planing hull does. Plowing through the waves gives a much more comfortable ride in waves that are 3-4 feet and higher.



Catamaran trawler with vertical bow entry

The **flat, hard chines** stop or reduce the rolling as you would experience in boats with rounded chines. A beam sea, with waves coming toward you from the side, will cause any boat to roll, but the design of the boats chines will have a determining effect on the degree of roll.

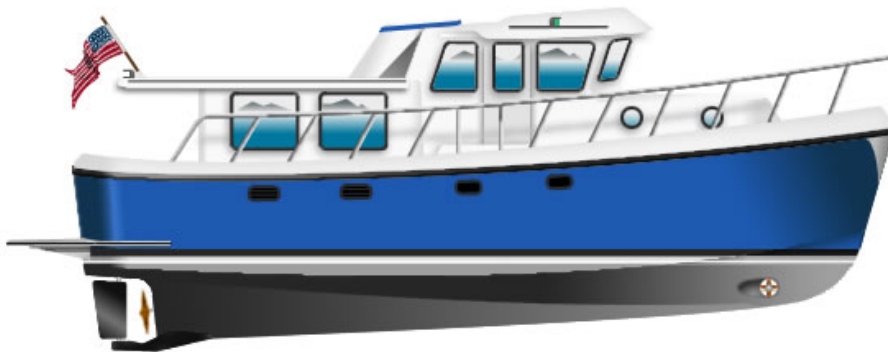


Traditional rounded hull (A), compared to a hard (B) and soft (C) chine hull

“A chine in boating refers to a relatively sharp angle in the hull, as compared to the rounded bottoms of most traditional boat hulls. The term hard chine indicates an angle with little rounding, where a soft chine would be more rounded, but still involve the meeting of distinct planes. The first hulls to start incorporating hard chines were probably shallow draft cargo carrying vessels used on rivers and in canals. The barge and later the scow used a flat bottom and near vertical sides, which provided the maximum cargo carrying capacity (in both space and displacement) available for a given depth of water.” (above sketch & definition from Wikipedia encyclopedia).

Semi-displacement hulls found on many trawlers use the hard chine concept creating more interior space and greater displacement resulting in a more stable, comfortable ride. Angled sides add more deck space and the flare of the sides at the bow directs the water away from the boat.

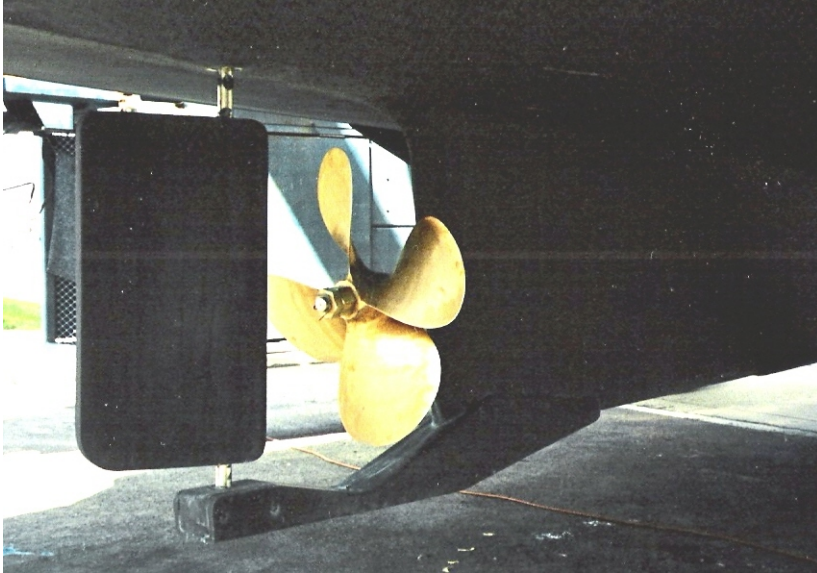
The **full keel** will also stabilize the boat as far as rolling in a beam sea. By increasing engine power and speed in a semi-displacement hull, the trawler is easily stabilized for a much more comfortable ride. The full keel also helps the trawler to track really well when you are driving slow in no-wake areas and coming to and from the dock.



Trawler with full keel, protected prop and large rudder

The **large rudder** will assist in maneuvering the trawler at slow speeds and in tight places. This is very helpful when docking and also cruising in no wake zones and on rivers with lots of current and narrow passages.

The **protected prop** is really an asset when it comes to dodging debris in the water; some visible and some unseen below the surface of the water. The prop is protected behind the keel and also from the bottom by a “shoe” that connects the keel to the bottom of the rudder. This shoe will hit bottom well before the prop. Many times when this type of trawler runs aground, it can safely be put in reverse and often backed off the shallow area without experiencing any damage to the prop. Note that the shaft is enclosed in the full keel thus protecting it as well from damage. These are very expensive parts and can cause major delays in cruising as repairs must be made.



Close-up of large rudder & protected prop

Just for comparison, check out the following picture of another type of hull design with a smaller keel, smaller rudders and unprotected props and shafts. It does feature the hard chines mentioned previously but this type of hull would need stabilizers to counteract the roll because of its smaller, less effective keel.



Hull design with twin engines, unprotected props and shafts

So, go ahead and check out the many websites featuring trawlers and find the size, layout, color, and amenities that are appealing to you. But also remember to consider the hull design and the type of cruising you plan to do. All boats perform well in calm seas and on sunny warm days but there's a big difference in safety and comfort when Mother Nature throws unexpected winds and weather your way.

Please direct any questions or comments you may have to:

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