

# SARCA Anchors Taking Hold



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When Rex Francis from Anchor Right called me and asked if I'd be interested in attending an anchor testing demonstration at Shallow Inlet, I have to admit I secretly wondered how much there could be to learn about anchors.



Rex Francis from Anchor Right explains his Tidal Anchor Test Skid at an anchor testing demonstration day at Shallow Inlet.

Weren't anchors just hunks of metal to be hooped overboard when you wanted to stop your boat from drifting? How wrong I was!

#### WHAT IS SARCA?

Rex is the inventor of the Australian-made range of Sand and Reef Combination Anchors (SARCA), which he has

produced commercially since 1997. These weird-looking anchors come in a range of sizes, suitable for the smallest recreational fishing boat to the largest commercial vessels and super yachts. Rex had several on hand at Shallow Inlet for the demonstration.

The SARCA anchors have several features that set them apart from other anchor types. The first is that, as its name implies, the SARCA is designed to be set in most types of ocean floor, be it sand, rock, reef or hard mud.

chain slides back and pulls the anchor out backwards.

Finally, SARCA anchors are designed to reduce the damage caused to the sea floor when the anchor drags. Rex demonstrated this nicely in the shallows of Shallow Inlet. When the SARCA drags across the seabed (as it would in the process of setting), the soil passes neatly over the blade and is deposited back behind the anchor. This 'backfilling' means that the SARCA leaves no discernible trench in the sea floor. In addition, when

drops off very easily so there is less chance your boat will be spreading marine pests", says Karen.

SARCA anchors come supplied with several makes of boats, including Barcruiser, Haynes Signature, Streaker and Australian Master Marine.

#### TIDAL ANCHOR TEST SKID

SARCA anchors have gained the certification of 'high holding power' by the Victorian Marine Board and passed survey in all Australian states. For some



Rex Francis and one of the anchors in his revolutionary SARCA range.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

**Rex and Joy Francis**  
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the SARCA is retrieved there is almost no sediment sticking to the anchor.

Rex is quick to emphasise the environmental advantages of his SARCA anchors. Karen Bennet, an environmental scientist working with the Boating Industry Association of Victoria, was also at the demonstration and agrees there are benefits.

"If an anchor is pulled up covered in weeds and sediment, it could have any number of introduced species on it. If that anchor is dropped in a different area, those pests will come off and could start a new population. Rex has designed the SARCA so that the weed and sediment

time, however, Rex has been keen to gain the relatively new 'super-high holding power' rating for his anchors. Until now, such accreditation has only been possible by subjecting the anchor to testing behind a tugboat in the United Kingdom. At a cost of \$16,000 per day, such testing was clearly out of the question for a small, local manufacturer like Anchor Right.

Not to be put off, Rex turned his hand to developing a machine for testing anchors off the beach. The result is the Tidal Anchor Test Skid (TATS), which has been officially approved for anchor testing by the National Marine Safety Committee. It

is the only one of its kind in the world.

Essentially the TATS enables the holding power of various anchors to be quantified and compared under standard conditions by winching them through the seabed behind a torque monitor. Not only is this cheaper and more convenient than testing behind a tugboat, it also has other advantages.

Because the TATS tests anchors in shallow water, both the anchor's performance and the seabed can be clearly observed throughout the test. This allows many of the variables that could affect the test outcome to be eliminated. For example, with the TATS there are no effects of wind

and tide, while the type of sea bed substrate can also be easily verified.

#### HOLD ON TIGHT

The TATS is able to test any make of anchor but, of course, the first cab off the rank was the SARCA (in fact the TATS was a useful tool for developing the SARCA). Rex is happy to say that his anchors easily passed the criteria for super high holding power, and were more than the equal of other new generation anchor designs. The test sheets from Robinsons Rigging and Lifting Authority (the independent body that tested the SARCA) will soon be available on the Anchor Right website.