

BOAT HANDLING SYSTEMS

Dock side boat lift storage systems



Sunstream Float Lift

Out of water boat storage is an attractive option for many commercial operators of smaller vessels whose craft spend frequent periods of time not in use.

Storing a boat out of water can significantly reduce maintenance costs associated with keeping a hull free of marine growth, reduce the effects of corrosion or osmosis, and make cleaning and coating maintenance much simpler. However, for many operators lack of adequate lift-out facilities and a shortage of on-shore storage areas in their home port can make out of water storage a time consuming and uneconomical proposition for all but long periods of storage.

A number of companies in recent times have come up with easy and efficient storage systems, known as boat lifts, that provide operators with a convenient solution to out of water storage of their vessels, even if the boat will only be out of use for a number of hours.

A boat lift is a floating cradle that can be attached to a vessel's current marina berth, jetty or pontoon. The cradle is submerged and the vessel is steered into position above it, whereupon, using hydraulics or by emptying ballast tanks, the cradle lifts up out

of the water supporting the vessel in a position a few feet clear of the water's surface.

When the vessel needs to take to sea again, the process is reversed and the cradle drops back under the water and the boat floats free.

Such systems are easy to operate and, more importantly, are quick – some take only a few seconds to raise or lower – meaning they are perfect for use with vessels that demand a fast response time, for example rescue boats, pilot boats, customs and coast guard.

Australian company AirBerth market a range of boat lifts with lifting capacities of up to 10,000kgs and maximum boat lengths of 13.8 metres. They have models for both monohulls (including RIBs) and multihulls. They use a system based on floats which is lowered by filling the floats with water and raised again by displacing the water out of the floats using air hoses attached to a portable Blowerbox air control.

The AirBerth boat lifts come with a number of features including mooring guides, adjustable fenders, flexible cradle and fitted spray jets to give the hull a freshwater rinse.

Another company producing boat lifts is American manufacturer Sunstream.



Air Berth produce a number of boat lift models



Sunstream Sun Lift

Their FloatLift systems use hydraulics to lift a cradle up between two floats with the system operated using a simple keyring size remote control. The system can be powered by AC or solar power meaning that it can even be used in locations which do not have access to shoreside power supplies. For example, the FloatLift can be attached to a mooring buoy with the docking vessel stored safely out of the water without the expense of obtaining a dockside or marina berth. The FloatLift can handle vessels of up to 4,760kgs and maximum beams of 3.23 metres.

As well as floating boat lifts, Sunstream also produce bottom based hydraulic lifts suitable for vessels up to 10.9 tonnes. These SunLift systems are secured to the sea floor (maximum depth 4.57 metres) and use hydraulic raising arms to lift the vessel out of the water.

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