

Tried & Tested

CHILLY CHEST ICE BOXES

I'm an accumulator of ice boxes and the latest addition to the collection is a 100 litre model from Chilly Chest. This is a new brand model in a competitive marketplace and initial tests indicate it's a beauty. At present there are three sizes in the Chilly Chest series – 50, 100 and 150 litres – with more to come in the near future to an imposing 1100 litres.

All are made from UV stabilised polyethylene with extra thick walls for optimum insulation. We've been using the Chilly Chest 100 as our principal box for overnight snapper fishing trips and there can be no doubt that it keeps ice well, even in the super-hot conditions we've had so far in the New Year. Several boat limit catches of mixed-size reds have been looked after very nicely, with very little loss of ice, despite some scorching summer weather.

An ice retention test at home under the carport revealed that, provided the box was drained each morning, you can expect ice loss of less than 10 per cent per day. I loaded 40 kilos of flake ice (bought from a fish processor) on a Monday morning and there was about half of that ice left on the following Saturday. This was during a week of 30 degree-plus temperatures, with a 42 degree day at the conclusion. This is the sort of retention rate needed for those extended West Coast mullocky trips, when the ability to



keep ice in difficult temperatures is essential.

The Chilly Chests are made not to break, with super-strong moulded hinges and recessed stainless steel latches. They are as tough as nails, which suits our needs perfectly. The lids are extra thick, providing maximum insulation in the area through which most cold escapes and heat enters. The rubber seals are refrigeration grade, further increasing insulation qualities, and all Chilly Chests are moulded in one piece.

A large bung drain with O-ring seal is located at the lowest point of the bottom moulding. This drain is threaded to fit a garden hose connection to facilitate drainage away from the ice box if so desired. Also innovative is the inclusion of white skids along the bottom of the box to eliminate marking of a boat floor when the box is dragged under plenty of weight.

Chilly Chests are manufactured overseas and imported into Australia by Big Terrain, based at Cavan. There's also a factory outlet on Findon Roadw at Kidman Park open to the public. Anton Reynolds is the contact person and he can be reached on (08) 8162 3800.

DAM 4000FD

DAM has long been one of the world's most respected names in fishing reel manufacture, with a history dating back several decades. I owned my first DAM threadline over 30 years ago – a reel I ultimately lost overboard to a big trevally off Port Lincoln during a crazy bite. I can still recall that outfit spiralling into the depths after it was wrenched from slippery hands and feeling sick about it for the rest of the day! I've lost a few rods and reels over the years, but that one really hurt.

DAM recently decided to resurrect its 1000 series threadlines and embarked on a three year project to bring the reels into the 21st Century. The design is still based on the proven and almost indestructible direct drive system, which revolves around a massive brass drive gear and specially cut stainless steel pinion. Also incorporated into the new DAMS is a four-point line lay adjustment system for extremely thick or thin lines.

There are four models in the new DAM range, all of which feature Duraluminium housing, rotor, spool and handle. This is an extremely corrosion resistant alloy that will have no issues



copied with our marine environment.

The 1000FD and 2000FD should prove to be excellent reels for bream, yellowfin whiting and fresh water, while the 3000FD is the ideal size for 15 pound braid and soft plastic work on reds and school jewies.

The model we were most interested in testing is the 4000FD, which is a very handy size for targets like big snapper and mullocky. It holds 300 metres of 20 pound braid and has a gear ratio of 4:1. For the snapper fishing we had in mind, the reel was mounted on an ATC 5-9kg spin rod – an outfit that seemed nicely balanced. This rod is designed more for lure casting, but, as we discovered during the first week of December, it handles bait fishing equally well.

First trip out was off Port Neill on lower Eyre Peninsula. There's some good inshore snapper action in this location, but we were headed for a ground some 20 miles out into Spencer Gulf. The bottom is a mixture of low reef and gravel beds, with plenty of mussels, prawns and similar small crustaceans to attract and hold snapper of all sizes.

Our plan was to drift through the general area if conditions were calm enough and that's exactly how we encountered our first reds of the day. Most were good-size ruggers of 2-4kg, but there were a few larger models mixed in to keep you on your toes. The best red of the day (which also features on the front cover of this issue) was a 20 pounder that pulled as hard