

# A Fusion Heads South

by Camille Coste

**My first visit to Australia, and I am invited to sail on a Fusion 40 catamaran "Verve" down to Melbourne . . . How good is that!**

I met John Cadwallader in Barcelona last year, when he 'teamed-up' for the delivery of an 80-ft luxury sailing yacht from Barcelona to the Caribbean, called "Zanabe".

Now back in Australia, John was to deliver 'Verve', from Mooloolaba to Melbourne for it's new owners and invited my boyfriend Jason and I along. However this vessel had no interior, no shower, no doors...only two mattresses and one camping gas-stove... not quite what we are used to.



When we arrived in Mooloolaba, an inventory check made it very clear that this delivery had to be started from scratch and that the trip down to Port Philip bay was going to involve some serious camping!

A shopping expedition to Bi-Lo and the Chandlery, and so far, we have only acquired the essentials such as EPIRB, depth sounder, GPS, wind-indicator and compass . . . We do the fresh Veg shopping and then move Verve to a marina berth at the Wharf Marina. Weather-permitting tomorrow should see us head out early after some final checks of the engines and safety gear.

'Verve' sailed out of Mooloolaba at 8.30 in the morning. It's a bumpy start as there is some residual sea left over from the strong Southerly we

had been experiencing for the last few days, but once we're well out and into the main shipping channel to Brisbane, the sea subsides and we have a perfect day, but no wind and we motor down to Manly Harbor. It would be nice to have some breeze in the right direction.

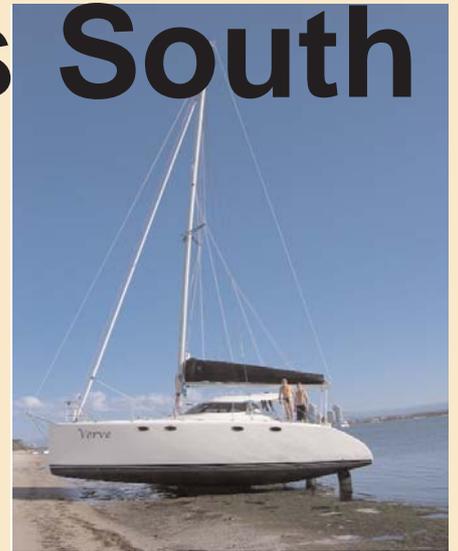
*"The seas build slowly and we really start to fly sitting on 18 kts and surfing down waves at 22 kts."*

The first dolphins of the trip have come to say hello and swim in front of the two hulls. We spot Moreton Island on the horizon with the sand-dunes standing out like big snow cov-



ered slopes. We're all happy to arrive at Manly around 1700 hrs in the afternoon. Jason's sister Jodie, came down and met us and it was nice to have a great night's sleep at her home in Brisbane and a long hot shower.

We're off again, after buying some spare rope and cleaning products, It's a beautiful day, but the wind is not favourable though and we have plenty of fuel onboard to truck down to Tippler's resort where we'll drop the



anchor for the evening.

It's up early, and we motor down from Tippler's to arrive opposite Crab Island near Runaway Bay. We aim to be there just after the high tide so we can put Verve up on the beach and check her out under the water and make sure there's nothing to slow our trip south. It's another beautiful sunny day, kangaroos are feeding on the beach & we spend the day doing

the house work, cleaning the fenders, boat, and polishing some stainless steel. We wait for the tide to rise and sail off through the bar and into the ocean at about 20.30 (8.30 pm) on the 11th. It's a rocky and bumpy night unfortunately with some left over seas from the South. As 'Verve' is a Fusion 40 that was bought as a kit and with no interior she is extremely light, great for sailing and speed but being almost empty, increases the noise level a bit. We have a beautiful full moon and it lights up the entire

ocean making it feel like we're heading down some major road not out through the ocean. After our watch we move our mattress onto the bridge deck to give us a better motion and quieter night.



On the 12th of August, we're lucky to have a visit by some beautiful whales playing off the Solitary Islands. As we pass Coffs Harbor we get a favourable weather forecast and decide to make tracks while we can heading on down to Port Stephens, Nelson Bay. So far we have had little or no wind. We've been getting early 5-10kt SW winds that die out to nothing early. Fortunately the Fusion is easily driven with her 30hp diesels, and even on 1 motor achieves good speed and even better economy.

Grubby, tired and hungry on the 13th of August, we're very pleased to arrive at Nelson Bay Marina. We're grateful to the kindness of the marina management to give us a free berth for a couple of hours to eat, shower and provision. We're also amazed with the spaciousness and opulence of their showers! A great lunch at Hog's breath and we're off again as the sun sets over Stockton Bight.

The night of the 13th is amazing and with some Pink Floyd playing we feel as though we are the only people on the sea. We have a perfect clear night and the lights of Sydney off about 30nm, illuminate the sky. With the weather forecast in our favour, we

decide to head straight through to Eden, but make for a way point off Jervis Bay, where we'll check the weather again before heading on to Eden. Even though the forecast for the trip so far has had us having SW

to SE winds of about 10-15 kts we have seen nothing like it. Each day brings us flat seas, some swell and no

*We put in two reefs and furl the screecher and are still doing 14-18 kts.*

winds apart from local winds that tease us with 30 mins of "should we put up the sails or not" then dropping off as we decide to put them up. No complaints though as I am told, this time of year the weather can be pretty ordinary down this part of the coast. As we approach Jervis Bay we

get some SW winds and for the first time with jib and mainsail we're doing 12 to 14 knots, we decide it best to put two reefs in and reduce our speed into the oncoming waves. Of course as we do this the wind drops out and becomes nothing. We drop the sails and motor close past Jervis Bay. The current weather forecast is for a strong SE change before heading to the NE the following day. We decide to put into picturesque Huskisson where we are allowed to dock on the public wharf, next to the dolphin and whale watching boats. With the cold slowly creeping in, we're delighted to have a well deserved hot meal from a delicious Indian take-away at the Taj-Mahal restaurant.

On the morning of the 15th, Jason had a visit from his uncle, Richard, after inspecting the Fusion 40, Jason and I were taken to visit his home in Nowra, where we really appreciated his hospitality.

The Fusion 40 certainly attracts a lot of curiosity with the passers-by. So far, we have had interested people on board at every marina stop even when stopping just to fuel up in Port Stephens we had people come onboard, but Huskisson seems to be pulling the maximum of attention. (or is it perhaps the sight of three grubby sailors warming themselves around a gas stove?) The shape of the Fusion 40 is very sleek with the saloon roof lines giving them a really nice look. We have to say we're happy to be on



Huskisson: Richard, Camile and John



Eden: 18 knots

such a good looking boat that just demands a closer look.

When the weather sched is heard, we leave Huskisson, for the shelter of Hole in the wall on the South Eastern side of Jarvis Bay where we picked up a mooring for the night. It's amazing as we have a steady 25 kts as we head across the bay, and on approaching the moorings, the wind dies out completely and we have a beautiful sunset and calm night to treat us to just how amazing this little and much untalked about place can be. We really recommend Jarvis Bay to any serious cruisers as it has sheltered anchorages for all weather and a great entrance which is easy to enter in all conditions.

We take advantage of the afternoon to wash out our wet-weather gear (which, the cold of last night made clear to us, we won't be able to do without). It seems the 'warm' part of our trip is over . . . we're approaching the cold rapidly as we see fairy-penguins and seals. We also take out the Screecher and install it, hopefully we'll be using it soon.

We leave Jarvis Bay early on the 16th. The forecast is for the SE winds of the last few days to drop out in the early morning and for a strong 23-28 kt NE to build during the day. And for once this is what we get. The three of us have been itching to get Verve out in some favourable breeze so we can see how she handles and to see what they are capable of speed wise. Until about 1300 hrs we have 5-10 kts from the NW. This makes slow going to begin with, as the day wears on the wind shifts to the NE and picks up to around 20-25 kts. We have a full mainsail up and the Screecher, which is on the prodder and has a wire luff and endless furler making her an easy sail to manage in most conditions. To begin with we are running fairly square and run with the main and screecher out wing and wing. We're doing a steady 12-14 kts and as the seas build we start to take off down the face of them. The autopilot is doing a great job keeping us on track but to keep things safe we decide to gybe and run higher on the wind to bring our apparent

around to reduce the chances of gybing. We definitely catch up with the two days of sitting still! As the afternoon moves on the wind increases to be gusting to around 30 kts. The seas build slowly and we really start to fly sitting on 18 kts and surfing down waves at 22 kts. The Fusion never feels like she wants to do anything funny and is in total control wanting to move quicker as the wind increase. We end up surfing into a wave in front and



decide to back off as the night creeps in. We put in two reefs and furl the screecher and are still doing 14-18 kts. With any kind of sea these Cats want to surf and do it easily. We



track as though on rails and never see any spray over the leeward bow even when pressing harder on the wind she keeps her bow high and dry. "Verve" is fitted with very well designed mini keels, which we found ideal running and also allowed us to point exceptionally well when hard on the breeze. We end up dropping the sails and head straight for the little anchorage behind the main harbor in Eden. Johnny's baked beans on toast and a cool VB is the perfect combination to send us right to sleep...never slept so good!

On the 17th, we pick up the anchor and dock next to a fishing boat. It's a perfect day to do the laundry and enjoy a long hot shower at the very friendly Fishermen's Club in beautiful Eden. We pay a quick visit to the renowned whaling museum with the extra-ordinary story of Old Tom the killer whale. The South-Westerly front appears to be downgraded so we spend a quiet afternoon relaxing on the boat, getting some energy for the remaining 260 miles to Wilsons Promontory.

After some quick provisioning, we're off again on the 18th. We make a stop-over in a little inlet just South of Eden for some lunch in calm water. The rest of the ride proves not to be as smooth...and we decide to anchor in the lee of Gabo island for a very cold night!

On the morning of the 19th, we depart from Gabo island early. The sun is shining and we enjoy a beautiful sail from Gabo island to Malacoota inlet until the big swell



starts to get uncomfortable. We're envious of the albatross, which are flying smoothly over the waves, whilst 'Verve' is riding on them. Luckily, the sun is still shining and a star-filled night leads the way to Lakes Entrance, where we wait until the sunrise to enter, so we can see the bar clearly.

After a phone call with owner Michael Arcaro and a review of the weather forecast, Michael decides that the 'Verve' delivery will end at Paynesville. We motor the boat up the river to Paynesville and dock it on the wharf at a friend's house.

We are able to give Verve a good clean and polish and Michael is happy to find his boat in showroom condition when handed over. Michael takes us all out for dinner,

together with his two friends Faye and Frank (whom we want to thank again for their great hospitality!)

Thank you, Michael, for a delicious meal and for driving us to our respective destinations in Melbourne.

The three of us enjoyed the Fusion so much we then headed back to the Whitsundays and jumped on board "Blonde Moment" another Fusion 40, for the Annual Multihull Rendevous, but that's another story.

Video clips are available on the web site [www.fusioncats.com.au](http://www.fusioncats.com.au) of the Fusion 40 'Verve', sailing off Eden



NOTE:  
John Cadwallader (owner of 65ft Tri, Avatar, and Ocean Emu etc etc) is a professional delivery skipper, with a lifetime of experience on the water. Jason Gard is a full time International Skipper with 20 years experience on the water, this delivery is part of his time home on leave. Camille Coste, a friend of Jason's is also capable with her many miles of Atlantic crossings.