

“Out to Lunch”



the culmination of a dream.

by Jenni Hart

It began around 2000 when Darren started investigating catamarans.

He'd had a skiing accident, was flat on his back and bored.

He believed that skippering a large cat was the perfect job. Doing everyday what you love.

Darren's first job as a young kid was hiring out small cats at his local beach and he hopes his last job will be hiring out a big cat.

We spent 3 years of intense investigation looking at size, costs, layouts and materials. The boat needed to be built under survey and capable of carrying around 30 passengers comfortably. It needed to have good head height, cabins with ensuite, a large saloon area, workable galley down and easily accessible deck areas.

We looked at newly completed boats, second hand boats, and plans of other "dream" boats. Everything from Schionnings to Leopards' and Lightwaves.

We traveled to north Queensland and NSW, attending boat shows and manufacturing plants. We looked at local designs as well as overseas designs. One designer, Gary Lidgard always stood out. All his designs were sleek, fast, practical, roomy



and were designed to be constructed in light weight, strong materials.

In 2005, Darren saw a Fusion 40 and that was it. He believed this boat would fulfill every requirement and complete his dream. It had been designed by Gary Lidgard which made it even better. We flew to the factory in Airlie Beach and after talking to the surveyor, engineer and builder, the decision was made.

It was then just a matter of signing on the bottom line and paying the money. Simple!!

After all it couldn't be that hard for a house builder to become a boat builder. You just had to put the 27 pieces together and fitout the inside.

Nothing seems to phase Darren.

He had already "rebuilt" a wrecked Halverson and built most of a wooden Couta Boat.

He was always confident that it wouldn't matter on which side of our factory property the big catamaran was constructed, it would be easy to get out.

I was the sceptic.

Darren prepared our factory site by building a high mobile gantry and erecting a hangar between three containers. Darren and I then formed the frames and poured the concrete stands that the boat would be erected on. Working with concrete was



schedule. If he had ordering to do and people to see during the day then he worked on the boat until late at night. It was also difficult to get people to work on a casual basis.

We had difficulty getting marine electricians and plumbers but, not a problem, Darren would do it. That meant we only needed the 240 volt wiring and the gas plumbing done by qualified people.

Darren ran kilometers of wires all over the boat for lighting and 12 volt power. A long and arduous job. He fitted dozens of switches, light fit-

a motor mechanic so he fitted the engines and all associated components as well as the genset, fridges and all computers.

When Jason returned, he worked in the factory making the beds, seats, pigeon holes, galley cupboards and wardrobes in light weight materials covered in fiberglass.

Because it is a Charter vessel, we wanted easy to clean surfaces so Darren and Jason, together with some casuals did countless hours of fairing.

One other person involved was Chris, the Wizard, upholsterer. We had someone else booked to do the trimming, but he decided to make a sea change to Queensland. Chris to the rescue!! Didn't matter that he had never done linings before, he would give it a go. A great job too.

In October 2007 this beautiful catamaran was ready to be launched. The boat was almost finished, with just minor bits and pieces to complete. The sign writing was done, the engines were tested and we were ready to go.

The problem now, was how to get this huge boat out of the factory.

Darren planned that the boat would be lifted into the bus premises next door, straight onto a truck and simply driven out their gates.

Not feasible and too many problems to even give details.

Next idea was to lift the cat into the centre of the yard, then lift again over the fence into the dairy yard and straight onto

definitely not my idea of having a good time.

A few weeks later, the jigsaw puzzle arrived in 2 x 40' containers.

When unloaded the whole thing was overwhelming. Huge pieces that seemed to bear no relationship to each other.

Darren, Jason and myself just stared. Darren was joyous, I felt sick and Jason just wanted to go back to building houses.

Over the next few months good progress was made. It was quite slow at first but steady. Darren decided to leave off the side panels to make it easier to fitout the cabins, heads and galley. A very good decision. It meant that furniture carcasses and finished pieces could be made in the factory and fitted in one piece through the open sides.

During this time, there was a steady stream of friends and others offering opinions and advice. Peter Watson said we should name the boat "Endless Advice", because it was constant.

Just like a house, the bulky construction goes up fairly quickly but the details seem to take forever and of course the money keeps flowing out.

Towards the middle of 2006 Jason had a road accident and was unavailable for over 3 months, so Darren continued, mainly on his own and worked unbelievably long hours to keep the work on



tings and plugs. He ran hoses and fitted pumps for sullage, water, showers, basins, sinks and hot water services.

I am still amazed at the great job he did, as were the electrician and plumber.

In a previous life, Darren was





Our route dictated that we would have to cross over and drive down the “wrong” side of the road for a kilometre or more.

All was then finalized or so we thought. Just the small problem of only being able to move the boat on a Sunday and cranes cost triple on a Sunday.

into the dairy and onto the truck on Thursday October 4. I was so nervous I couldn't even go and watch.

Everyone was fantastic. Friends arrived to lend a hand, steadying the boat with ropes, when it was 10metres in the air and generally helping so that all went smoothly. For the next 2 nights the cat stayed in the dairy yard on the truck.

The next day, Saturday, we had to get it out of the dairy yard and leave it on the street. Moving it was a hair-raising exercise. Billy drove the truck through the gate opening with virtually no room on either side. Michael gave directions and we all held our breath. Success with not a scratch.

That night Darren, Jason and the “boys “ had one of their bbq nights to watch over the “baby”, but this bbq went nearly all night. A few beers, Neils burgers and the fire, kept them going.

At 5.00am on Sunday the VicRoads boys arrived to begin the journey to the ramp. Yet another major problem, we didn't have licensed pilots. Mandatory for the permit.

A small (huge) detail overlooked.

To cut a long and very stressful story short, we needed to get 2 pilots immediately or wait another week to move the cat.

The Yellow Pages, two great guys and 45 minutes later, we were ready to roll.



a truck, using a 60 ton crane. A much better idea, except that there was only 25mm clearance, on each side of the boat, when passing through the gates. A small detail that we would face later.

Over the previous weeks, we had been investigating where to launch the catamaran and the route needed to get there. Every possible ramp from Sorrento to Mornington was looked at and considered. Finally it came down to Rye or Martha Cove. Problems at both but in the end we chose Rye and hoped that the weather was kind.

We filled out so many forms and took dozens of pictures of the intended route, in order to get permission to move the boat.

We needed permission from the MPSC, from VicRoads and the police.

Problems at every turn. .

We measured the width of every intersection and the space between each centre island and the curb, from the factory, along the beach road to Rye Boat Ramp, in order to make sure that the boat could pass. At one point we had clearance of only 100mm underneath a traffic light.



Had unbelievable quotes for this exercise but a friend to the rescue.

Thanks to the Wittingslow's and Billy their right hand man, the problem was solved.

The boat was lifted with a 60 ton crane,

Linton and Jason went ahead and removed signs, Darren followed them with lights flashing, I was in the truck with Billy, warning him of the hazards, Neil and Jeffery were putting the signs back and Peter and Paula were slowing traffic behind, to keep all safe.





Now Working

by Darren Hart

So far we have done 6 corporate Xmas parties and also New Years Eve all out of Docklands in Melbourne. Currently we are down at Sorrento doing spectator boat work for the Laser worlds and 49er skiff world titles at Sorrento Sailing Club. It is a great viewing platform and also having the inside saloon to shelter from the wind, is a big plus.

The pilots oversaw the route and the VicRoads guys were everywhere, driving up and down, warning cars and bike riders, closing streets, stopping traffic and flashing their lights.

Billy was amazing, listening to 3 walkie talkies and taking instructions. I was a wreck.

All went off without a hitch. Sounds so simple now.

Next time we need to build the boat on the water.

Slept on the boat that night on the Rye Reserve and the next morning the 100 ton crane, in front of a hundred plus people lifted "Out To Lunch" into a calm sea.

In actual fact our journey with our new cat is just beginning.

"Out To Lunch" was built under survey and is available for private charters, public tours, weddings, parties and in fact anything.

We're hoping that we can call it a job.

What an amazing and talented man Darren Hart is.



We had a big day yesterday when we took out guests from the KPMG day at the Couta boat club. This is the biggest corporate event in Victoria with the captains of industry.

We have always contributed our Couta boat but this year was too windy to race. Our cat was called in as the main feature. We had 36 persons on board and 2 ton of drinks and lobster, as we sailed towards Portsea at 5 knots, with the headsail only.

The boats getting easier to handle as I am mostly controlling it single handed. All the lines and halyards, reefing lines, sheets come back to the one electric winch next to the helm. This is quick to





grab another line from the bank of clutches and press the button. Also I don't have to move passengers out of the way to get to the other side. The main halyard also comes through this system and is up in about a minute as the auto pilot holds it head to wind. Most of the corporate parties I have the self tacking jib only as we sail down the Yarra at the 5 knot speed limit.

The boat doesn't seem too disadvantaged being over loaded it always has a lot of food and grog all the time any way. The 40hp Volvos can still keep the speed up only losing about 1 knot with all these passengers aboard.

The steering system from Lewmar is fantastic, at first it was a bit stiff but now that I have oil instead of grease into the

cables. The quadrants are very smooth with no binding up at any stage. The turn is $1\frac{3}{4}$ from lock to lock. The angle is a full 35deg from centre, this has as I imagined very important for me. I am mostly berthing at the jetty 3 to 4 times per day, there are usually other boats in the way at either end. Also always a current and wind pushing us back onto the jetty. I can helm hard over and make it go sideways without going forward. It would still be better with thrusters but this is still impressive, especially to the cat owners with out board motors.

The flat wide side decks are working well with the solid hand rails to grab hold of. Most of the passengers have never been on a boat and are not afraid to walk around. The anchor chain being concealed is not a problem for me to operate

with passengers sitting above it. The saloon and the cockpit roof were able to shelter 26 passengers when it was raining. The walk through transom steps have been fantastic when we have people swimming with the seals off Sorrento as they did today.

At the end of the day this is still a big boat, which is easy to handle by yourself. A bigger faster boat looks impressive and has more room but requires more crew than just one. Fusion have come up with a great product not fully realized until you start fully using it.

Darren Hart,
Adventure Sails

For more information:
www.adventuresails.com.au



Congratulations

Jenni and Darren, on the successful build, and launch of "Out to Lunch", we know you will have many years of enjoyment from your endeavours.

The Team at Fusion