

LIFE AFTER SAILING CATS

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(Published in Multihull World Power Catamarans May 2006)

The next boat? The eternal question? Towards the end of our ten year plan of cruising on our sailing catamaran “Catchcry” with our young children, we started conversations and discussions about the next boat for the next five or ten year plan. Various changing requirements would have to be taken into consideration, such as, we would be not so young, we would be cruising by ourselves, to be able to cruise economically, taking greater advantage of calm weather windows by being able to cruise at a higher speed, and the capacity to still cruise overseas. One of the new fields of advance in multihull design in recent years has been the concept of a full displacement, low powered, very economical, power catamarans. We have always stayed in contact with the designer of “Catchcry”, Robin Chamberlin, who had drawn a 14 metre power catamaran, and we had followed with interest the construction and sea trials of that boat, “Foreign Affair” (see Multihull World Power Catamarans Issue 4 “Let the Numbers do the Talking”). On a fuel consumption test between Brisbane and Hobart without refuelling en-route and cruising between 13 and 14 knots, it achieved a staggering 1.3 litres per nautical mile economy.

After cruising to Tasmania, the Kimberleys, New Caledonia and Vanuatu the reality is that the average cruising boat, being either mono or multi, use their engines a lot more than most people would imagine for a sailing boat. People will argue that when you are sailing north up the east coast of Australia with a south easterly you don't need to motor, but if you want to make an anchorage in daylight (and I'm not talking about marinas here), there is a requirement that you cover the distance in a set number of hours. A lot of days a suitable strength breeze for sailing only eventuates from 10 or 11 in the morning, and there is quite often a need to motor prior to this to achieve the anchorage (we have done our share of night watches and rise to



the occasion when necessary, but don't enjoy them as much as we used to). Also, there were a lot of places that we had been to at various times of the year that had little or no breeze and we were forced to motor regardless, if we wanted to travel at all. Being able to appreciate all forms of water craft (except jet skis), we added up the pros and cons and decided that for our next boat we would talk to

Robin about designing us a 10 metre power cat. We have various reasons for going this way. Firstly, my wife, even though she has spent many years on a sailing boat, would have no problems on a motor cat if there was a medical emergency and I was incapacitated, to be able to travel to any required destination, even up wind, by herself, in total control of the vessel. Secondly, we have used the argument between



ourselves that the cost of putting rigging, deck gear and sails on a sailing cat would pay the fuel bill on an economical power cat for as long as we were able to stay on the water. Thirdly, to be able to have reasonably calm and fast passages, so as to be able to spend more time at destinations. Fourthly, to retain the catamaran platform and all the benefits that go with it. So began the love affair with our new boat.

As with "Catchcry" we had only a few requests of the designer, one being that the boat be only 10 metres in length but would be still capable of taking us offshore. Another being that the head and shower floors be self draining, and thirdly that the boat have a good payload capacity, good cruising speed and to be very economical. Robin, with his usual flair has again designed us a very modern, exceptional boat.

The Chamberlin 10 uses composite construction and a variety of materials, some being western red cedar and foam sandwich. It has two queen size forward cabins, port side shower and starboard side head compartments, with external ventilation and a large galley and salon area. On this boat we have fitted a sofa bed lounge, which extends the sleeping accommodation to six, and use a fold up table, instead of having a fixed arrangement. Of course, we had to have the gas barbecue and the 12 volt Iceer fridge/freezer, which were a couple of the proven essentials from living on "Catchcry". The boat is fitted with 2 x Nanni 4.220 HE - 50hp Diesels which are mounted well forward and have intermediate universal shafts connecting to the prop shafts. It carries 650 litres of diesel and 350 litres of water per side. We have gone for a wide companion way, which enhances the cockpit area and gives a modern feel to the boat.

On a test run from Raby Bay to Lady Musgrave Island and return, a total distance covered of 506 nautical miles, at an average of 12.5 knots on the way up and 13 knots on the way back, we only used 560 litres of fuel (1.1 litres per nautical mile). The fuel we ascertained accurately by hard dipping the tanks prior to leaving and then filling to the same level upon our return. The amazing results reinforcing our decision to go to a power cat from sailing cats.



With this boat, Robin certainly fulfilled all of our wish list. The boat is extremely easy to handle and my wife is confident of her ability to be able to take charge, being only 10 metres, berthing is more easily obtainable and with a three day weather window we're in New Caledonia with still a quarter of our fuel remaining.