

the fusionfamily

■ by ANDREW
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The Fusion Cat business model is very well established in the multihull scene but sometimes the individual experience doesn't get the chance to shine through the overall concept. And that is a shame, as I have bounced around the multihull scene in Australia I have come across a number of interesting and quite memorable stories.



ANDREW and Cheryn Pounder and their family are one such story. But more on their experiences later.

The Fusion concept is based on some very sound premises. Firstly identify the boat solution. Fusion believed that there was a market niche for a 40ft cruising cat that offered performance, comfort and customisation capability whilst controlling the basic design and underlying strength issues connected with the boat. They started the process by approaching highly respected designer Gary Lidgard with a concept brief and developing the idea from there.

The next key step was to commence production of the boats in a highly controlled fashion in the initial stages. Early in the Fusion development the first few boats were built by the team in Airlie Beach. This allowed for two positive outcomes, one was that the design brief could be realised in a highly controlled fashion and the second was that minor modifications and changes could be achieved 'on the run' with continued

access to the designer and with an analysis of these changes before their implementation.

The fusion concept is based on the production of tightly designed and controlled production methodologies using modular vacuum infusion technology. The underlying boat structure is organised around a small number of modules that can be efficiently produced and shipped to customers in containers to allow a prospective owner a high degree of confidence in the underlying structure whilst still providing the important ability to customise final layouts and design options.

View from the mast.
(main pic left)
Intrigue. (below)



the butterfly emerges





Large galley up. (above left)
Luxury saloon. (above right)
Starboard hull. (left)

Fusion are now manufacturing the components in world renowned resin infusion facility of CMA in south-east Asia. These components are then shipped to the dealer network worldwide including the spiritual home of

performance multihulls in La Rochelle in France, Marseille (France), Finland, Great Britain, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and of course Australia.

What this business model does is allow for high quality production to occur in locations/facilities known for their production values and proximate to important markets. I think the key to this current phase was the establishment of the concept in Airlie Beach and the proof of the design and build brief.

Fusion have now 20 boats on the water and a further 30 under construction all over the world. One of those is *Intrigue*.

*Fusion efficiency,
it's your future . . .*



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Andrew and Cheryn Pounder's boat, currently relaxing in Brisbane (Australia).

The story behind *Intrigue* is certainly interesting and a prime example of how the Fusion concept can become your family solution.

Andrew Pounder has a strong background in multihulls and has previously owned a GBE Sportsdeck, and a Seawind 1000 amongst a range of other boats. Andrew has a bit of a history of being an early adopter, his GBE was one of the first out of the moulds and indeed his ideas and thoughts heavily influenced the development of that boat. And so it was with the Fusion. Andrew recognised the inherent sense of what Fusion were doing and its 'fit' with his ideas.

As a result Andrew picked up one of the boats that had been built to motor-away stage in Airlie and brought it home. Like most things in life there are compromises in the way Andrew proceeded to fit out his boat. The upside of his solution (parking the boat on a pontoon outside his house) was that the boat was handy to home, there was no need to drive 'to work' and small windows of opportunity could be used to do small jobs. The downside was not having an expansive shed area.

Interestingly though Andrew was able to use half his double garage as a workshop area, or more particularly as an interior design studio. Even prior to

getting the boat back to Brisbane Andrew drew out the saloon area on his garage floor and using the cheapest of materials mocked up a number of layouts for different parts of the interior of the boat in full size. Doing this enabled the family to test the ideas in real time and real size. Andrew indicates that whilst this added a little extra work at the start of the job, it more than paid off at the other end. He was able with confidence to jump straight into the internal fit out each area knowing exactly how it was going look.

1. (below left)
2. (below)





Another key component of the success in this build was that Cheryn was able to act as the logistics manager, as Andrew was working Cheryn was busily chasing down parts and fittings and researching suppliers and ensuring that equipment was on hand when needed. Andrew suggests that he simply could not have achieved what he did without someone taking those tasks away from him.

The end result of the build is quite stunning, this is a very impressive boat both from its overall presentation and its attention to detail. *Intrigue* was at all times being built as a family cruising boat designed for long periods 'off the grid' accordingly all hydraulic electrical and sailing systems were implemented in such a way that there was always water and power available no matter how long it was between shore visits, this approach not only allowed for a level of self sufficiency it also provided choice in cruising destinations and time spent in remote locations.

Interesting choices were made, such as not building in a saloon table to allow for flexibility in saloon usage and layout. The end result of these decisions was a cat that was an ideal platform for long term cruising by a family.

The end result is a beautiful finished and fitted out cat that has sparkling performance, great comfort and systems designed for sustainable cruising. I had a short and enjoyable sail on the boat in Moreton Bay and it performs as well as it looks, easy and simple very quick and supremely comfortable.

The build is a credit to Andrew, his family and the underlying Fusion product. Interestingly Andrew doesn't have a background in boat building he is a manager in the telecommunications industry but he enjoyed the exercise to the extent that he is actively pursuing the thought of not only building another boat but putting together a capability to assist others who may wish to embark on an adventure like this.



The fusion family. (above)
Sliding along beautifully. (left)



At the end of the day the Fusion was a means to an end, the boat was simply a platform for a family to pursue their dreams and one of those dreams was to allow a suburban family to seize that most valuable of assets, time with each other.

And that's what occurred. The Pounder family embarked on an eight month cruise to tropical North Queensland where they discovered not only a lot about sailing and cruising our natural environment, they reinforced the bonds

they have as a family and returned the richer in spirit for the experience.

After the trip the best comment that was made was as they got off the boat at their dock and almost simultaneously turned to the boat and said "gee that was a fantastic home". Personally I doubt whether a boat can be given a more glowing endorsement.

Cheryn particularly described to me how the feeling of confidence that the boat gave was a key component in the success of the trip, she believed that there

3. (top left)

4. (top right)

Cruising our coast. (above left)

5. (above right)

were many other boats that would have put stress on the family relationship rather than reinforcing it.

So the fusion family in the macro sense continues to grow and all the individual Fusion families continue to glow! ❖



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