

ON THE WATER

The West Australian | FISHING CHASING MIGHTY SWAN RIVER MULLOWAY



Fusion 40 a stable cruiser



BOATS

MIKE BROWN

WA-built sailing craft are rare beasts and since Peter Milner's retirement, the State has had only one sailing cat builder — The Cat Factory.

Interestingly, its Fusion 40 can be completed as a flybridge power vessel. It would be an economical beast; the sail version needs only 60hp to reach 9.5 knots.

But it has 157sqm of sail to take it faster than that and, satisfyingly, these were made here as well by the appropriately named Sailmakers WA. Sadly, the review day did not give them much chance, the light breezes only producing six knots.

Catamarans do not generally relish the subtle art of light-wind sailing, being happier with the stronger stuff our coast can usually be relied on for.

There are some phenomenally fast ocean-racing cats but the type is far more commonly chosen as a fast cruising boat. It has a lot going for it in that role — a lack of heel, shallow draught and a lot of deck area are some of them. When a cat gets up

around the 12m length, it has hulls with enough volume to allow considerable variety in the layout.

The owner of the review boat opted to have the galley in the starboard hull instead of the usual saloon location and this resulted in one of the best meal preparation areas I have come across.

The galley remains a throughway but one with benches and appliances on both sides with huge amounts of elbow and cooking room. A buyer has so much latitude because the interior is built rather than moulded.

Sheets are laid up, vacuum bagged and resin infused, cut to size and assembled like timber joinery. Joints have big radius curves, painstakingly bonded, filled, sanded and finished.

The final effect is as though the accommodation is made from one big mould, with all the advantages of easy maintenance.

The structure uses high-tech methods and materials, allowing a light displacement of only 4.125 tonnes.

Even loaded at 5.75 tonnes, it remains an easily driven boat.

The Fusion is an uncomplicated boat to sail, as cats generally are. It carries a lot of downwind sail area but uses a screecher rather than a

spinnaker; both it and the self-tacking headsail are set up on self-furlers.

All the lines lead aft to the vast cockpit, several of them via ingenious routes, where an electric winch plus a set of hand winches take care of them. The nature of a cat — a 7.2m beam on this one — means a very wide mainsheet base with infinite adjustments of the main possible.

The helmsman can sit, with a view forward through big windows, or stand with head through a hatch in the hardtop. An electronic display pivots into view through the window, giving comprehensive information. Six Simrad screens in the cockpit give full sailing and basic navigation data, and the main screen displays the output of the GPS and two sounders, one in each hull.

Now that's thorough. There are also the controls for the autopilot, handy for solo sailing, and a remote control that is even handier.

The cockpit is enormous and well equipped with seats and space for a lot of people. This boat could probably take two families on uncrowded cruises. Useable side and foredecks would spread them out, and there are more comfortable seats forward as well as dolphin seats at the bows.

Wide sliding glass doors link the cockpit and saloon. This is another vast space — especially in the absence of the galley — dominated by a U-shaped lounge that spans the bridge deck. The adaptable dining table allows conversion of the lounge to a sumptuous bed and, night or day, its occupants have entertainment from TV-DVD and stereo with iPod connectivity.

Cork deck sheathing is shared with the accommodation below,



WA-built: The Fusion 40 catamaran has 157sqm of sail.

Pictures: Mike Brown



Spacious: With a 7.2m beam there is ample room to move around the cockpit.

making for easy maintenance and great underfoot. The port hull contains the owner's suite; a double cabin forward with a bed housed under the bridge deck and big bathroom aft. In between are more storage areas, a washing machine and an emergency escape hatch in the event of some catastrophe capsizing the boat.

The starboard hull has doubles fore and aft and another bathroom right forward.

One of the few drawbacks to owning a cat of this size is the premium you will pay for a pen wide enough to house it. Ideally, you should not need one for much of the time — this is definitely a boat to get in and go cruising.

LOWDOWN

FUSION 40

Price: From \$700,000; as reviewed \$850,000

Length: 12.2m overall

Beam: 7.2m

Draught: 0.9m

Displacement: 5.75 tonnes

Sail area: 157sqm

Fuel capacity: 400 litres

Freshwater: 800 litres

Motors: Twin 30hp Yanmar

Saildrives

Builder: The Cat Factory

Phone: 0414 476 015

Winds set up exciting races

AROUND THE BUOYS

YACHTING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Greg Reynolds and his team from Mandurah Offshore Fishing and Sailing Club claimed the Country Clubs trophy on Monday after some very close racing.

The regatta got off to a great start on Sunday morning with an unsettled northerly wind setting up four winners in the first four races.

The Mandurah club's two entries each claimed a win, with their youth team, skippered by Jake Flintoff, also making a strong start before Michael Cameron, of Princess Royal Sailing Club, took the third race and reigning champions Dunsborough Bay Yacht Club, skippered by Doug Cooksey, claimed the fourth.

Day two saw the lead in each race won and lost several times before the finish line, making racing exciting and competition fierce.

A large contingent of youth sailors made up several of the crews, adding exuberance to the more experienced country sailors from around WA.

The overall results saw a tie for third between

the two Princess Royal Sailing Club teams, the second team skippered by past winner Murray Howson, and another tie for fifth place between Flintoff's youth team and Geographe Bay Yacht Club's team skippered by Barry Brown.

The podium places went to Reynolds with 15 points, Cooksey on 17 points and Cameron on 22 points.

RARE WELSH CREW

Tudor Owen is a young Welshman sailing with Torvar Mirsky and his world No.1-ranked Mirsky Racing Team. Teammate Kyle Langford sent us a short interview with him.

KL: You grew up as a member of the RYA Keelboat squad. How has this helped you to get to where you are now?

TO: The RYA program gave me access to coaching and mentoring, time on boats such as J80s, Farr45s and TP52s, and to sail with some of the UK's best sailors. Funding from the program ensured that we were able to compete at the Warren Jones regatta in Perth in 2006 and 2007 and during those regattas I met the guys from MRT.

KL: How do you find sailing with a team of Australians? What is the biggest difficulty?

TO: No real difficulties but sailing with Australians, you can always be sure that they will tell you how it is. So I guess they can be a little too straight at times.

KL: You have raced a large variety of boats from Lasers, Etchells to TP52s. How do you compare sailing those type of boats to the World Match Racing Tour?

TO: I have really enjoyed all of the sailing I have done. They all offer unique challenges to good performance. The same is true of the WMRT with only two events using the same class of boat. The challenge for our MRT team is being able to adapt to the boats and locations and perform as best we can. If I had to pick, I guess my favourites would be the SM40 and the KM36. These are the boats used in Portugal and in Korea and make my position particularly physical. I thrive on that.

KL: Do you and your team help any other teams who aspire to compete at the level you do?

TO: Last year I coached a young team at the RYA as part of my job there before joining MRT. It was great to see those young sailors come through and compete at their first match racing event. I'm having a great experiences with MRT in a discipline that does not typically offer many sailors opportunities, so I am very happy to help young



Discipline: Welshman Tudor Owen sailed with the Mirsky crew in the Korea Match Cup.

sailors reach their aspirations and goals as much as I can.

KL: Finally, tell us something about yourself that most people wouldn't know.

TO: Most people are aware that I am the only non-Australian in the team. As a typical Welshman I spend a lot of my downtime helping my dad on his beef farm in North Wales and I also enjoy cooking.