

Dazzled Not Frazzled...





■ by JO DJUBAL

“They’re gettin’ away from us!” Eden says - Bond style, chucking the revs on the 5hp outboard into full snail paced throttle as swell slaps the Aquapro’s sides and I try to shield my camera from spray. “We’d never catch ‘em in this thing ya know,” he adds as the 12m Fusion 40 draws further away into the island framed distance, skipper and crew totally enjoying the game of leaving us for dead. Just when we’re beginning to think we actually might be stuck in the Whitsunday Passage with limited fuel and no beer to speak of, they gybe downwind towards us.

Drawing closer, they relish yet another game of chicken as the bows head straight for us before veering away at the last minute. Very funny. On the next windward tack they’re really going for it. Yep, they’re going to run us down. But Eden stays cool (Eden’s always cool) and I try to do the same and jag that perfect shot.

Through the barrel of my camera, the hull looks inches away ... I can almost feel the wind rustling my eyebrows as the shiny port hull slides by at around 12kts, a thread of foam trailing from the sterns ... This photo shoot stuff is pretty exhilarating. But not as much as actually being aboard a charter cat – yes a charter cat – that is actually sailing at speed.

Steph, Eden, Steve and I are on the second and last day of our charter with Whitsunday Luxury Catamarans/Charter Yachts Australia Fusion 40 *Razzle Dazzle*. And to say we’ve been impressed is an understatement ...

The Fusion 40’s performance is well proven, boats such as *Shellac* and *Blonde Moment* carving some impressive tracks. But those boats are performance cruisers and as we motored Robyn and Wayne Horne’s charter version beyond Abel Point Marina, we weren’t expecting the same performance ... Let’s face it, charter vessels, while extremely comfy, just usually don’t provide many thrills in the sailing department. But this age old concept was demolished the minute we killed the engines and began sailing in less than 10kts of breeze ...



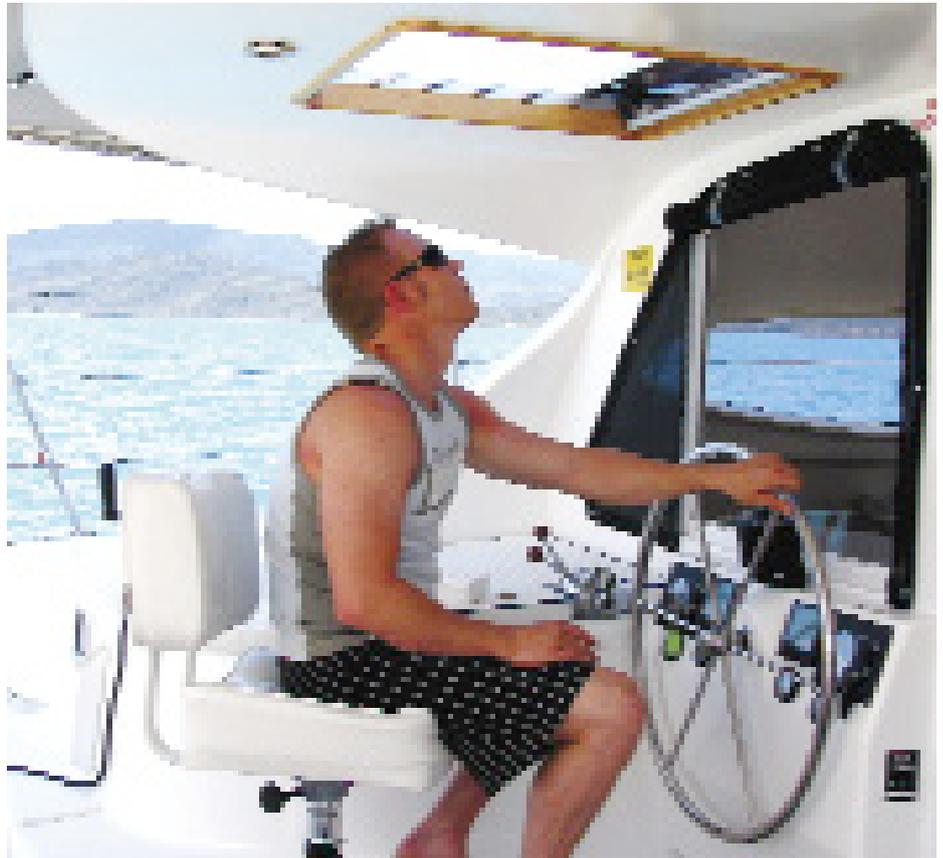
Razzle Dazzle transoms. (top)
Wayne has a captive audience during his briefing. (above)

As I watched this boat take shape in Airlie Beach, it was obvious it was going to be something. Wayne and Robyn Horne have a collective bounty of experience, a hands on approach and a meticulous eye for detail and functionality borne of years in the business. Before building their Fusion 40, they operated Perry 43, *Masquerade*, which they now manage for the new owner.

Eden checks the main. (right)
Razzle Dazzle. (below)

Besides working at Fastlane Marine and Runaway Bay Marina on the Gold Coast, Robyn spent five years in Quality Control for Riviera. Serious business! And Wayne's owned a number of businesses including S&H Spars, Runaway Bay Marine Fabrications, The Wheelhouse Chandlery and Davco Winch Systems. Together, their expertise equates to a rare understanding of every aspect of the charter business from building to marketing. And it shows. Their informed enthusiasm has created a charter cat luxurious by nature and performance orientated by design.

Robyn explains, "We redesigned the interior layout to a four cabin, three bathroom configuration with the galley up on the port side and saloon to starboard. The rig is simple with a single spreader and single diamond with self tacking jib. Lightweight construction methods were used to reduce the finished displacement and maintain performance – which was one of the main reasons we decided to build a Fusion. Wayne is a keen sailor and wanted a charter cat that was both comfortable and fast. A lot of our guests are experienced sailors and we knew they would enjoy a high performance catamaran."



Besides two Perry 43 catamarans, *Masquerade* and *Mango Tango*, their stable of managed boats include a Grainger 40, *No Ties* and a Lightwave 38, *Bahama*. Along with great boats, expert management and maintenance are intrinsic factors to the company's success. In a rare fusion of goodwill and good business sense, Whitsunday Luxury Catamarans operate alongside Charter Yachts Australia, working together to ensure the ultimate Whitsunday

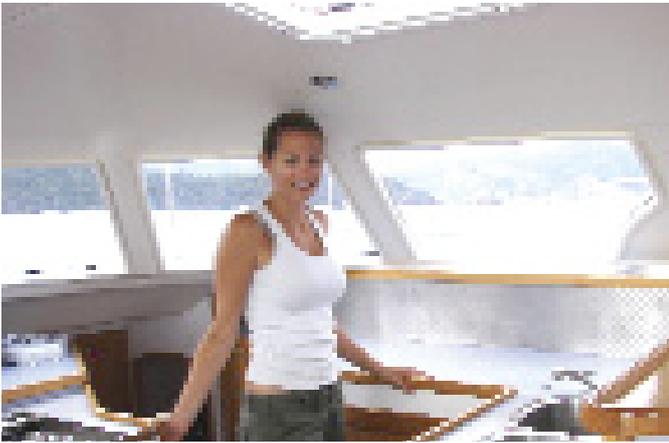
experience for their clients. After Robyn and Wayne greet, brief and farewell their guests, they're then looked after on the water by the seasoned team at CYA. Basically, the best of both worlds for everybody.

Owner/operated vessels are traditionally maintained above the norm but this boat's presentation really raises the bar. (Actually, if I didn't know how laid back, affable and sane this couple are, I'd say they were tending towards Obsessive Compulsive!) Besides the immaculate state of everything topsides, below you find cutlery stacked uniformly in the drawer, a sparkling assortment of acrylic glasses, gleaming dinnerware, pretty soaps, fluffy towels ... generally everything you'd expect to find in a resort environment. But you immediately feel at home. For a cat that's been continuously booked for 15 months, *Razzle Dazzle* is also amazingly undamaged.

Browsing through the guest book aboard you find accolades of thanks and a constant thread of compliments regarding the whole shebang from CYA, Robyn and Wayne's service to the boat's practical charms.

And when we were able to 'road test' *Razzle Dazzle* over two days, we joined 'em ...





| Galley with a view.

Two days and two nights is no way long enough for a true blue charter. We could easily have packed in more considering the boat's ability but decided to chill out and enjoy just a few anchorages rather than tear around and get 'frazzled' trying to pack in heaps of destinations. After Wayne left us to our own devices, we headed for Blue Pearl Bay on Hayman for some lunch and snorkelling. On the way, we gave the beer fridge under the helm seat a working review – came up trumps! There's definitely no way you're going to be short on coldies on this boat. Besides the mini 'helm hotel', there's a deep, top opening freezer in the galley along with a front opening, well designed fridge.

So after jaggng a mooring at Blue Pearl and indulging in a bit of fish feeding, we headed ashore. But wot about the noodles? Steph and I were adamant we wanted to partake in the lazy kind of snorkelling ie – being supported by a long piece of colourful rubber tube. (Naturally colour accessorised to match your cossie!) So after Eden completed his mercy dash back to the boat we were set. Well – apart from getting into our stinger suits ...

Our gymnastics provided heaps of entertainment for everyone on the beach but we finally slid into 'em and joined the rest of the Blue Pearl corp of Batman impersonators. While snorkelling and exploring the bay, it was great glancing back to the boat – a place where everything worked magnificently and the stress factor was nil. Where we knew we could kick back later with all the comforts of home - and then some.

Steph really enjoyed her first snorkelling experience and we almost couldn't get her out of the water. But the lure of a cold beer and barbecue prawn lunch back on the boat did the trick. Eden swam, we fed the batfish, we lunched and we lazed ... Just before sundown however, motivation kicked in and we jumped in the dinghy with some 'provisions' to explore the seaward side of the island. No matter how often you check out the Whitsundays, every foray presents a new dimension and the top end of Hayman with its craggy cliffs and secret beaches was a whole new world as sunset descended. Back at the boat we hoed into a barbecue dinner and collapsed early, happily exhausted. (We didn't utilise the four burner stove and oven much at all, the barbie being the obvious choice, especially when Eden signed on as Barbecue King, cleaning included!)

Apart from a bit of an Everest Expedition to climb into them, (well do you want bridgedeck clearance or what?) the berths



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given – lightly touch a pad and everything just happens! Bliss.

Well ... what do you do with just one day left of your two day charter and you want to chill out? Head to Naraville of course. No matter what the jaded cruisers may say, Nara Inlet, although often busy, is a beautiful, all weather anchorage with heaps to see and do and an ancient charm that can't be thwarted regardless how many boats might be there.

On the way, we had brekky and carried out the adventurous photo shoot, soaking up the views and enjoying the ride overall. It's not far from Blue Pearl to Nara and we were soon dropping the pick in the inlet. Eden and Steph made an admirable attempt to do the Nara walk but retreated pretty quickly when a battalion of March flies descended. Mmmm, March Flies. They're a



Bliss enroute to Nara. (left)
... mmm tasty. (above left)

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Heading ashore at Blue Pearl.
(right)
Playing chicken. (below right)
Heaven at Hayman. (below)

formidable force of flying fings that sting. And there's not much you can do about 'em but escape back to the boat where, usually, the numbers are lessened. Fortunately, they're not around all the time, summer northerlies seeming to be their favourite attack period. Still surprisingly motivated, we opted for a dinghy ride around the bottom of the inlet. The waterfall wasn't running but it's always beautiful down there ... until you hit shallow water and the prop stops! But no damage was incurred and we headed back for lunch a little wiser about checking our depth while sightseeing.

There's no doubt the Fusion 40 is a nice boat to return to. Wide, easy access transoms and an interior that shows a sensible regard for ergonomics but also featuring splashes of decadence to please any full on hedonist. Quality in everything from fittings and fabrics probably cost a bucket initially but means less dollars in tiresome maintenance and breakdowns later. Instruments include B&G depth/speed/wind instruments and Coursemaster autopilot while touches such as the stainless steel galley splashback, Plagai light fittings and macrosuede lounge are functional but also nice on the eye. Royal purple is the



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vessel's signature colour, (Yeah – purple!) and it works a treat - utilised in the name, headsail sunstrip, boom cover, boot topper and saloon lounge. Purple? It works!

After we indulged in some Deep and Meaningful Conversations (well I think they were?) and the proverbial cockie feed, it was time to road test the saloon lounge and flat bed DVD. (This was another nice touch, a library of decent DVDs and even board games if you get really desperate in less than perfect weather ...)

So after a movie and one of Eden's ripper barbecues featuring fillet steak it was time to wind down and face the fact that this was our last night. We tried to stretch the next morning out as long as we could but eventually Abel Point Marina loomed and we had to let Wayne aboard

to drive us home. Wayne is always there to take the boat into the marina, a wise move and another reason why *Razzle Dazzle* presents so well with no dings!

Our cuppla days on *Razzle Dazzle* were no way long enough, but then just a few moments is enough to realise this is no ordinary charter cat. Wayne and Robyn Horne, of Whitsunday Luxury Catamarans, CYA and Fusion Catamarans have done a bloody good job in creating a 'bobby dazzler' that's not only a supremely comfortable resort afloat but can also provide the odd thrill of some decent sailing. ❖

Check out more on Wayne and Robyn's unique company at www.luxurycats.com.au

Check out more on Fusion Catamarans at www.fusioncats.com

