



if you can't beat

When a good friend of ours remembers meeting Neville 15 or so years back, she remembers Neville telling her that he was going to build a catamaran one day. Then another friend added, "You've got to let him build it!" Neville has realised many dreams ... building his own house, fitting out his new Magnum 8.5 trailer-sailer and buying his first catamaran *On The Prowl* (Seawind 1000) ... not to mention meeting and marrying the girl of his dreams (who fortunately liked boating). Well, his next big dream has now come true. He is building his catamaran. There's going to be a lot of blood, sweat and tears (the tears may be mine) over this one, but the joy we will see when his *Bossa Nova* is launched, will be worth bottling.

BY AMANDA CHAPMAN

I have had quite a bit of time to get used to this grand plan so prior to 'agreeing' I thought a lot about how this could work, how it would impact on our family life, our work and our sanity, mine in particular. I pointed out to Neville several times during the 'idea'

stage that this was his dream, not mine and not our children's, yet it was going to impact on us big time. After endless discussions, many years of interstate boat show trips and countless editions of *Multihull World* stacking up on the lounge room floor, with our children

now older, I finally agreed. I then went in to overdrive planning ... how do I keep Neville interested in work, still earning the money to pay for the thing?!

This is my story on how I have coped living with my boat-builder.



him, join him!

Two things had to happen and they did. When I finally agreed, I had accepted the project totally. This was going to be a two to three year commitment so I knew I had to occupy myself during this time. I was going to be home on weekends with no boat to visit (the Seawind 1000 was sold to fund the build) so I planned on rediscovering our 10 acre home and garden, visiting friends and family for extended stays (if my sanity needed it) and rediscovering my art by taking up painting, something I had long left behind. It was simply a 'new' phase of my life and sometimes things just fall into place and they did.

The second thing that happened was that I jumped on board and became involved. *If you can't beat him, join him!* I let the blokes do all the 'hands-on' early building but when Neville moved to doing things himself, I got more involved. Tidying and vacuuming quickly

became a Sunday ritual. Boat workers are notoriously messy so this was an easy job for me being the tidy person I am. We were also designing many parts of the boat ourselves, from the saloon and galley through to wine racks and cupboard shelves, so there has been much planning and discussion, usually over a wine or two in the evenings (can't waste daylight hours). Researching, ordering, emailing, phone calls, accounting, scrap books and the internet became my domain.

I also set up a blog. I wanted to record the journey but I was concerned that the initial enthusiasm of taking photos and writing things down would wear off, but with a blog I had to keep up-to-date because people would be following it. When we've been a bit 'behind' on the blog we've had emails from our followers reminding us to update! This was a great way I could be involved and something I knew I would

top row left to right:
Kit components; Our gantry at work, a 'must' for a kit builder; Bossa Nova taking shape; Neville sanding ... it goes on and on ...; "I can't wait!"

above row left to right:
Our starboard engine going in. Friends have been fantastic with their help; Our gantry lowering the engine; Neville working in the port engine bay, one of those confined spaces that aches the body!; Windows in ... don't they look sexy?!; Fibreglass dust. Protective gear – another must.



Our beloved wine rack ... a monumental design task! Designed and re-designed over many glasses of wine, of course! (top left)

The 'shiny' bits being fitted ... our freezer for long-term cruising. (top right)

Designing our saloon has been very rewarding. (above)

enjoy. It is also a valuable record of the progress and I know we will treasure the stories and photographs in years to come.

The planning we have done together has been very rewarding, including the 'big' decision ... which cat? We had built our own house many years ago and Neville had been involved in the manufacturing of the Magnum 8.5 trailer-sailer here in Victoria for several years, so with this background we felt we not only had the desire and space (living on 10 acres) to take this on, we also had the contacts and Neville the

skill-set to build a catamaran. We bought a Seawind 1000 as a 'stepping stone' and it confirmed our love for catamaran sailing. The Seawind was a very comfortable boat and had plenty of great features and it gave us time to decide on which cat design was for us with the features that we wanted.

We looked at many catamaran building options, but the Fusion 40 quickly became Neville's dream. The Fusion 40 ticked all the boxes. We had plenty of room and running our own business meant time was flexible but the task of building from scratch was crossed off the list of options very early, as we didn't want to be building forever. Several catamarans didn't offer a 'kit' option, only fully-fitted, they also were crossed off. So with the Fusion 40 'kit' option, along with the support offered by Fusion Mackay and a nearby owner of a Fusion 40 kit which had just been completed, we ordered our Fusion 40. During our research we remembered being in Airlie Beach with our fellow Magnum 8.5 sailors and looking in a yacht broker's window. On the window was a plan of a catamaran that was being developed. We later learnt it was the Fusion 40. We bought our Seawind 1000 from a fellow who moved to a Fusion 40 also ... it was meant to be!

Getting ready to build your own boat is nearly as big as building it. We had lists of all sorts of things we needed – a shed, a gantry, work benches, white rags, scales, steps, work horses, plastic tubs, gloves, paint brushes, stirring sticks, workbenches, scissors, lights, fans ... This is where I came in. I became an eBay addict! Searching for all sorts of things and generally finding them. With Neville often on the road with our business, I was in an office so I had the time and opportunity. All set up and ready for the arrival of our Fusion 40 kit, we started building in January 2011.

While Neville had done all the initial research on his dream project (in order to convince me), once that decision was made, much of our subsequent research we have done together. We have visited many interstate boat shows over the years and once we were *really* building a boat the boat shows became

fusion mackay

Port cabin getting close. Some of our interior furniture was purchased from Fusion Mackay, with our saloon and galley designed and built by us. (right)

If you can't beat him, join him!
(below right)



restrict our looking at catamarans either, all boats were targeted, even the stink-boats.

The internet has been fantastic. While Neville has researched the more technical and big-ticket items, I have helped with other items. During a planning conversation we could quickly check stove measurements and tap heights. We could also visit the Fusion website and look at the gallery photos of other Fusion 40's. I have kept a scrap book of everything we have had to make a decision on – galley, bedrooms, bathrooms, decor - from toilets through to taps and drawers through to floors. It's all about getting as much information and knowledge as you can, then making a decision ... and then it has to fit!

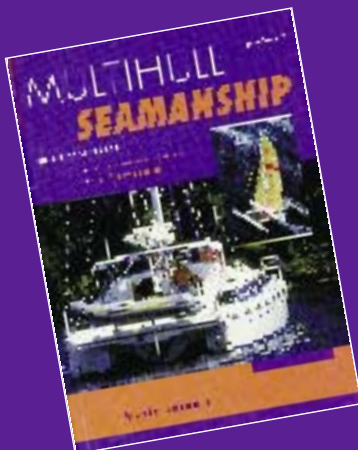
A few memories from our blog ...

FEBRUARY 24, 2012 –
ARE WE NEARLY THERE YET?!

I have just re-read some of the earlier entries on our blog and noticed I wrote an entry way back in October last year and never posted it. 'Easter completion date' ... I don't think so! Been and gone! No way will we be ready before winter and it will be too wet during winter to move our boat out of the paddock.

I mention 'being nearly there' with the end of fibreglass dust. Well, we are still 'nearly there'. The outside fairing should be finished in the next month or so including the windows, then we have some inside fairing for the colder days. We have our upholstery quotes all

invaluable because all types of products are displayed in the one location. This is ideal. During our last few shows, we took lists of all the things we wanted to look at. There were the obvious things like toilets, ovens and motors but it was the odd things like shelf heights, number of lights, cupboard door hinges and upholstery stitching in which we were interested. We didn't have to



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sorted, and our cabinet maker is on track, but everyone is waiting for the fibreglass to be completed ... including my vacuum cleaner!

The blog entry I never posted ...

OCTOBER 25, 2011

Well, it's been nearly nine months hands-on. Are we nearly there yet? No. Are we where we thought we'd be? Answer ... we don't really know, but we are happy with the progress. And, as the optimist Neville always is, he's thinking of an Easter completion date. We will see!

So, given that we may be 'half way', I thought it would be timely to put my progress story on record.

It has been a big year ... not to mention that a boat is being built in our backyard! I did think way back in the planning stages that I might be a bit 'frazzled' by now. Not so. In fact, the boat building has been a timely distraction. Our lives are always busy

and the boat building has added more activity, but it's such an exciting journey and I'm finding myself caught up in the whirlwind of planning and designing and enjoying it all.

There are so many different parts to building a boat which makes my visit to the 'paddock' worthwhile as there's always something new either being done or decisions to make. Neville spends every spare hour on the boat so he's really enjoying the longer days with daylight saving now. I also think having got through winter in our paddock it now feels like the best is yet to come – both weather and productivity.

Currently we are working on the saloon and galley area. My part in all of this is the many, many hours of discussion and designing that goes behind the building. We have looked at so many photos (many time and time again) of Fusions on the Fusion website, as well as all types of boats on the net. They all have a galley and a saloon, so restricting our research to only cats,

was pointless. We followed this line at the Sydney Boat Show too, getting on mega \$ powerboats as well as the monohull yachts. Taking our long list of 'things to look at', we took many photos, added them to our several scrapbooks, and then made design decisions. Boat shows are great for this. You can look at detail, brands, design, sizes, and colours, collect brochures, compare and of course, buy things at supposedly discounted boat show prices! With our timing, and planning on an Easter completion (?), the Sydney Boat Show was our last boat show opportunity. Mind you, I think I've been dragged (not really) along to several Sanctuary Cove and Sydney shows over the last five or so years looking at Lightwaves, Seawinds and Fusions, all leading to this dream.

I can't wait for the galley to be built, the saloon upholstered, and the bathrooms with basins and the toilets fitted ... and before that, the END of fibreglass dust! We are nearly there and after dust in Neville's eye this afternoon;

this only convinces me that fibreglass dust is horrible stuff. Forgot to mention, my other job is vacuuming and tidying (most weekends) ... with eye glasses, gloves and breathing apparatus ... not a pretty sight!

Here's a few pieces of advice. Everything takes three times as long as you think and it usually costs more than you think too. Budget accordingly! Get used to living and dreaming everything boat. Fortunately our children have left home so we can talk endlessly without interruption and complaints. The fibreglass dust does go on and on so be prepared for smelly clothes (and body ... you may need a second bed set up when you kick him out). Designate boat clothes and wash them in a different washing machine (along with the rags). Not only do they smell and consequently inflict this on your other clothes, but you'll also wear out your washing machine. We set up an old machine just for boat clothes. We also kept a scourer in the shower to rub out those prickly fibreglass bits. The odd visit to you masseur, chiropractor or physio might be in order (depending on your age) as there are times you have to be a contortionist working in those confined spaces. Backs and knees do suffer. I surprised Neville with a portable blow-up spa at Christmas which not only worked wonders with those aching joints but was also my solo leisure time. Quantities of certain things will amaze you. You will use mega numbers of rags, gloves, and tape for instance. Wish I'd kept a tally. Be prepared for stocking up the pantry too. I've lost count on the number of coffees I've made!

It is now 18 months on, and Neville and I are still talking! I've become more involved in the boat-building and I am really enjoying it. There have been so many decisions over this journey and I'm sure more to be made, but we love it. Everything does takes three times longer than you think and the fibreglass dust ... does go away! The designing, the research, the planning and the building are all very rewarding and while we have our grumpy days because things just don't seem to move on, they eventually do. Even with winter setting in and Melbourne temperatures as they are, with a heater on and working inside, boat building goes on. All quite cosy really.

Our children grew up on Magnums and our Seawind and with trips up the coast to Sydney and the Whitsundays, and with the Gippsland Lakes being our 'home' cruising ground, we have many happy sailing memories. We have met so many fantastic people during our Magnum and Seawind days and can only look forward to the next step, long term cruising with friends and family on our new cat, our Fusion 40 *Bossa Nova*. We are hoping *Bossa Nova* will be on the water early next year!

If you would like follow our progress, our blog is www.bossanovafusion.com.au