

looking through the porthole at my new boat

Part two -

Getting started



GETTING the plastic down prior to concreting

by MARTY STILL

OKAY, I've gotten over that dreaming bit now the reality is hitting home. I don't find it all that easy to start the building of a new boat because, whichever way you look at it, it's a big project and, to be perfectly honest, I did and still do, find the prospect a bit daunting. At the same time my heart leaps with anticipation at the

thought of that point way over the horizon when launching day comes. I feel that the only way to get going, even though my old boat was still not sold, was to buy a load of stuff and make the commitment. You know, jump in at the deep, then find out if there's any croc's in the water.

Estimating materials from the plans was fairly easy but time consuming. This was a really good thing to do because I had to paw over every construction detail sheet, which familiarised me with every aspect of the construction process, (I thought). It also raised a few questions

for Kurt who was really good with his replies. A designer who still has time for us little blokes, amazing. Several sheets of A4 were needed, one for the deck, one for the hulls, one for plywood etc, then off to do some shopping. I estimated what I reckon, (read, hope) is a pretty accurate costing for the whole project. Using the Whitworths catalogue extensively, it came out at \$120,000, ocean ready, if I do all the work myself. The sale of *Shanty* should supply well over half of that amount.

Strip cedar was the first on the list, beautiful stuff, Western Red cedar. Jeremy at Cedar Sales was very helpful and supplied all the strip cedar for the hulls. When it arrived on the truck I thought "this is it, no turning back now", it was a good feeling.

I then started thinking about glass and, having some special needs, eventually got on to ATL. I've built a couple of boats before but never in strip cedar and epoxy so am feeling very aware that I have many questions to ask and much to learn. Michelle and Lorraine, at ATL on the Gold Coast, were very patient with me and gave me loads of much appreciated help and advice, (even before I'd bought anything). They then supplied all my glass and performed a



custom laminating job on the panels that are, eventually, to be my deck.

Plywood was a big one. I looked around and tossed up between imported ply like Gaboon and Pacific Maple and locally made Hoop Pine ply. I opted for the latter even though it is heavier and more expensive because, not only is it a very good quality product, but it's also plantation grown and therefore does not assist in the depletion of a rain forest somewhere. This was supplied by Australian Wood Panels in Brisbane. They also have seconds in marine ply, which is a lot cheaper but is really useful for any non-critical applications.

There is an outfit in Ernest, on the Coast, who's name escapes me at the moment, they sell chipboard cover boards, 'cheap', some of these have minor damage but are great for making frames. I bought a stack of them for that very purpose. They also sell a load of other goodies that come in handy for framing etc.

This is where I really went crazy. For some reason I love masts, the heartbeat of a sailing vessel I decided that I wanted one, right now. A mast "needs" a boat under it, which I intend to supply. I believe there is a valuable bit of learning to be had here. Beware of mast sales people. The first quote I got, for a kit mast, was like \$22,000, "shit, I'd only allowed \$11,000". Alarm bells ringing, major budget blowout! Anyway, after I picked myself up off the floor I pursued the quest and finished up with Allyacht Spars in Brisbane, who were able to supply a kit spar and fore beam for a little over \$12,000, phew, that's better. Now I understand that there are different qualities of materials and that workmanship from one place to another can vary and that the mast is a very important part of the vessel and all that shit. But, basically, this is a 48' spar with two sets of spreaders that I am going to put together. The difference in the other factors cannot possibly justify an extra \$10,000, no way. One other thing in this department, the boom Allyacht Spars first quoted was \$1,910.83, just for the boom. I queried this amount and it turns out that this is an imported section, from France of all places, designed specifically as a boom. While I have little doubt that this is a quality product I do doubt that I need it when a mast

Rowdy and Rocky check out the slab



THE big pour



type section, more readily available in this country in case of damage or destruction, is available at a fraction of the cost. That's my thoughts on it anyway, I'm not into whiz bangs, I like things to be kept really simple and don't see the need for having the facility for an internal single line reefing systems that

is an 'optional extra' with the imported section. Your choice I guess. Another thing is to make sure you are talking to the right person, what I mean by that is, someone who understands what 'you' want the spar for. I have the designers specifications on the table but some spar makers say "no, that's no good, it'll

break, Kurt doesn't know what he's talking about, it needs to be heavier". On the other hand some say "why is this so heavy, it doesn't need to be that big", they lost me with all this mumbo jumbo I can tell ya. These people will bamboozle you with bullshit if you're not careful. Beware if the sales person you are talking to is a flat out racing bod. He will have a very different point of view to the cruising type. If the person you talk to is not flexible and conversant in 'all' aspects of sailing it would not be difficult to finish up with a load of stuff you don't need, or, on the other hand, not having stuff you do need. The tapered mast is one of these points. One person I spoke to said "it is essential", (maybe it is for the racing bod, and he is) another said "I wouldn't worry about it". I phoned Kurt Hughes about this point and he said that, while it is useful, it was more about aesthetics than anything else, it looks better. I suppose it all boils down to trusting your designer, after all, that's why you've paid him.

In the meantime work progressed on *Shanty* and she was eventually advertised for sale. There were only three answers to the ad and she was sold to a guy from Brisbane, I hope this new owner will do this beautiful sea going vessel justice. This was a sad time for me, as I have owned this beautiful boat from new way back in 1982, I fitted her out and we have cruised far and wide together in fair weather and foul, we are old mates. So now I don't have a boat but I do have a pile of stuff in the carport measuring 8' x 4' x 6' high.

So there's this great big pile of 'stuff' in the carport, a caravan full of glass and balsa and a stack of WRC under the house, what now? Well, I guess I need some place to build the wee beastie. I thought about renting a shed at Coomera or some place but, as I am still working and would only be able to spend some weekends on the project I decided against that avenue at this point in time. I reckon it would be a considerable amount of money wasted, not only on rent but also on travel and my time. Where I live is very steep and the access not good, we are also solar powered so, at first thought, building here was not a good idea. If I were to build the whole thing on the block I would need to helicopter it out, not impossible but I

knew it wouldn't be cheap either. I have worked on jobs which need a chopper to lift things into inaccessible places, so I decided to check it out. Okay, it can be done, but, get this, about \$30K for the job. Budget blowout! As well as being out of the way our driveway is a bit bendy. What to do? Caroline and I got this piece of rope 40' long and walked down the drive pretending it is a hull with an axle in the middle. Down we go, okay turn here. Down we go some more, yeah, we can get a hull out of here, bit tricky but we can do it. So here's the plot.

There's an old carport and hay shed at this place that ain't gonna last a whole lot longer as the termites have been feasting on them for years. So what about moving them aside for a couple of years? We can then build a new steel shed big enough to accommodate one hull. Build the hulls individually, prefabricate as much other stuff as possible then trundle the whole lot down to the water and glue it all together. (Sounds easy when you say it fast). When that's done, turn the shed into a new carport and hay shed. Good idea, what? Okay, that's settled. We have a friend staying at the moment, and we needed an extra hand or two, so I unbolted the carport legs, bribed one of our neighbours with the promise of a couple of beers and dinner, to come up and physically lift the carport, in two sections, to the other side of the pad. This little manoeuvre went well. Jason and myself taking one column each and lashing a surplus spinnaker pole across

the other two columns to make it easier for Caroline and Sandra to lift, we just walked it to where we wanted it, easy. Next came the hay shed, not so easy. Termites had been having a bit of a snack on this one. We finished up putting a block on a tree, putting a rope strop around the shed, set up some skids and pulling the thing, creaking and threatening collapse, into its new position. This actually took about two hours to move it 20', I had some doubts that we'd make it but there you go, it's there.

Next move is to find a suitable shed. Eventually I decided on two 6 x 6 metre kit carports, made by Absco, joined to make one 12 x 6 metre shed. Mark out for the concrete slab, get the shed delivered, being an ex rigger, putting the thing up was no problem, saving about \$600. A bit more bribery and corruption in the direction of a mate who is still rigging, made the job really easy. Power is the next thing.

Easy says you, not so easy says I. We are not, I repeat "not", connected to the national power grid, our energy comes from the sun and wind. We are about to revamp the solar system on the house so the old house system will be moved to power 'the boat' shed, 240 volt power being supplied via a Selectronics inverter. Any big draw tools will run off a generator. That's the plot anyway.

The project is now officially under way. Next comes the actual starting of the boat. ❖

