

looking through the porthole at my new boat



YES the plans have arrived

PART ONE The Dream

by MARTY STILL

DREAMS, where would we be without them, absolutely nothing happens without they're first being a dream. My last boat, an S&S 34, *Shanty*, was inspired by a dream of palm fringed beaches, dusky maidens, trade wind passages and the good company of other itinerant cruising yachties. Unfortunately, my dreams tend to be quite expensive and, not being wealthy, achieving them is done with no small expenditure of sweat, blood, time and on

occasions a few tears of frustration. Anyway, I made that dream come true and after many thousands of ocean miles, I have decided on a change of boat.

On my return from the Pacific a couple of years ago, I had sort of decided what would be my ideal cruising boat. I reckoned that I would like a boat a bit bigger, (don't we all), a bit faster and a bit shallower. Now, as I like to spend a fair bit of my time gunk holing, and after spending the past 15 years with over 6' draft, I felt this last criteria to be very important. These thoughts led me to look seriously at the Van De Stadt *Fauna* 37' retracting keel design. I had just about made up my mind when a sequence of events turned the whole plot upside down.

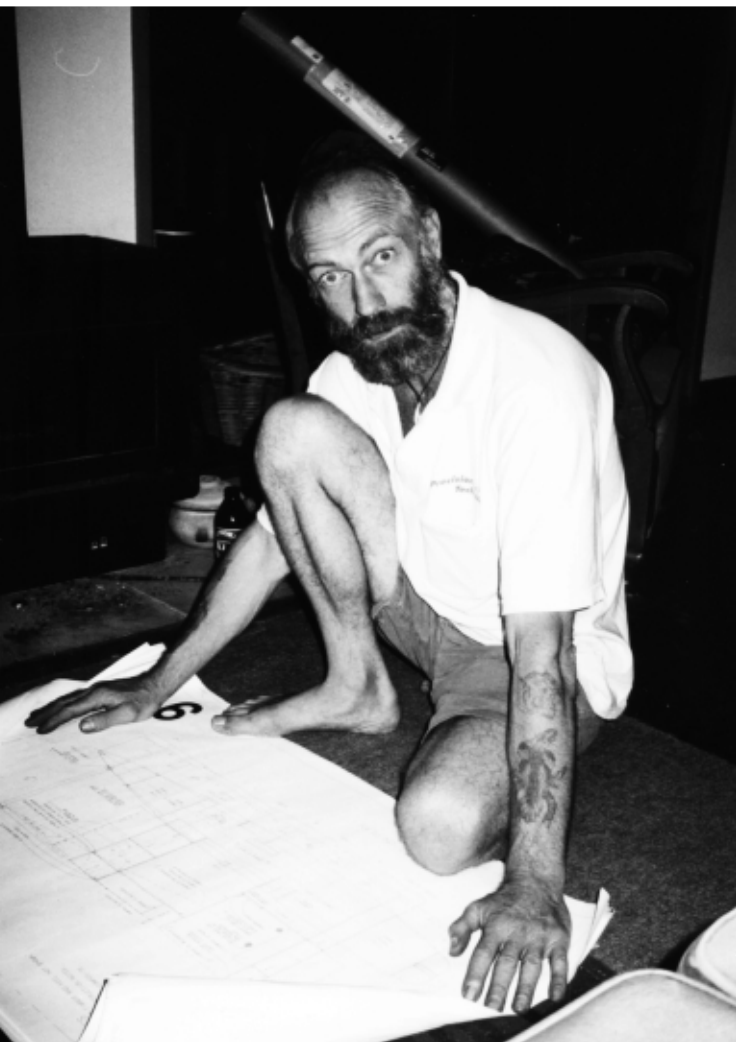
First, my other half gave me the boot, which, as it turned out, was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Second, I met Caroline which, as it turned out is one of the best things that has ever happened to me. Third, I found myself in a business that gave me extensive contact with all kinds of

yachties and the boating business world in general. So, taking these things one at a time.

- 1) My ex was a waste of time and space anyway, so that's that.
- 2) As for Caroline, she has spent three years living on, and cruising, on a 24' Seawind catamaran and then went on to build a *Tourismo* 10, while accommodation and stowage, especially on the Seawind, was a bit limited, she loved it. Definitely a pro cat' person.
- 3) My business got me talking to a lot of catamaraners, which got the old think tank into full speed operation.

At this point I should add that there was no stauncher "Mono man" than me to be found anywhere. Multihulls, weird things, not seaworthy, capsize, blah blah. I'm sure you've heard it all before. However, I have always had an underlying belief that a good seaman can take an eggshell around the world, with a little luck tossed in, and a bad seaman will run the Titanic onto a frozen brick first trip out. With this in mind I started to think about just what it is that makes





COMPLETELY baffled

a good, seaworthy, ocean going catamaran, just in case my thoughts should start drifting that way. My conclusions were this, proven designer, 38' long, (for no logical reason, it just sounds good to me) high bridge deck clearance, bridge deck starting well back from the bow, low windage, good load carrying ability, wide stance, moderate rig and most important of all, I have to be able to afford it. Now I reckon this is really important for any boat. When you are sitting on the beach, under a palm tree, in paradise, sucking on a rum, lime and coconut, from a coconut shell surrounded by dusky maidens, you must be able to look out on the anchorage and say; "That's my boat". The hunt was on. (Tentatively).

Maybe it's just me but I found multihull designers extremely difficult to communicate with. I guess maybe they get a lot of keel kickers or they just

make too much money on big projects. I don't know but it seems they don't want to bother themselves with low budget people like myself. Here's how it went.

Firstly, I went to a well known Australian designer of good repute in New South Wales, who I feel sure was just too busy, and should have said so. He made me feel that all or any information was given grudgingly. Bit of a shame really because I was serious and, as I had known this guy from when I lived in Melbourne, I had no intention of looking further. Anyway, on to the next one, based in Queensland. This guy was very helpful and enthusiastic on the phone, sent me some information and seemed to have a design that with a couple of small modifications would suit me down to the ground. I then tried to make contact again to sort out a couple of small points and could never get through. Messages were left unanswered so after a couple of weeks it was on the road again. Designer number three had a boat that, once again with a couple of small changes, would suit but he was unable to supply a set of plans. I had a tentative look at a couple of others but none really came up to the mark, one outfit didn't even bother getting back to me at all. That Van De Stadt is starting to look good again but finding this whole thing a bit mentally wearing, I put the whole shebang on the back burner for a bit. Then one day it happened.

I was sitting in my office pondering the universe when my mate, Cowboy, a mad trimariner who I shared the place with, wandered in and said, "here Marty, take a look at this", it was almost love at first sight. On this A4 sized piece of paper was a Kurt Hughes design cat', 36 feet long. Ooh, ah. Checking the dimensions, 24 feet wide, almost a metre bridge clearance,

everything seemed to be pretty much what I had been dreaming of this past few months. Getting on to Kurt in Seattle, USA, was not difficult, (unlike his counterparts just up the road) a bit eccentric I reckoned but that suits me cos' I've never exactly been one to walk the line either. "I want to do this in strip plank cedar not cylinder moulding", "no problem says Kurt". "I would like it stretched to 38 feet long", "no problem I recommend it, just tell me what you want says Kurt". I like this guy.

It didn't take long to make the decision but it took a while for the plans to come through. I waited, very impatiently and very



PAWING over the plans

excited, eager to see the drawings of my new baby. Finally, in the mail, they arrived, "YES". I felt the project was now under way, one problem though, I hadn't yet sold my old boat yet. Oh, another problem, I had no place to build the new one. Minor details but I now started to realise the enormity of the task I have undertaken. I now remember exactly why I was never going to build another boat. I start to wonder why I don't just get *Shanty* ready and take off cruising again. But, you know, this new boat looks real good and very capable and I can just see myself steaming along in the trade winds in this huge cockpit and lounging around, partying, in port with yachties and more dusky maidens than I can count on both hands. Yeah, to hell with it, I'm gonna do it no matter what.

Shanty, after several years of cruising, was in need of a refit if I was going to be able to get a half-reasonable price for her in this subdued market place, work was under way but progress was slow with only a little time to spend each weekend. I was determined not to start the new project until *Shanty* was gone as I've seen too many people get stuck with two boats and if I started the new boat I would definitely lose interest in the refit job on *Shanty*.. I also needed the money she would bring to get the new project rolling. However, I could not think of one good reason not to buy some of the materials for the hulls.

Even though, after building *Shanty* from a hull and deck, I had said, quite emphatically; "I will never again build another boat", here I am, into it again, enthusiastic as ever and just raring to go. Just what is it about boats that do this to normally sane people? Anyway, my latest dream is going to become a reality, God knows when but it's happening. What comes next? I guess we'll just have to wait and see. ❖

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