

Lightwave

38

by ANDREW CRAWFORD

Last edition I wrote of a short sail on a Lightwave 38. Sonja and I recently had the opportunity to have a longer trip, spending an entire weekend on the boat in an around the Gold Coast. I thought it might be interesting to further review the vessel from 'the crew's perspective' so it's over to Sonja...

Sonja's Comments:

It is not the first time I have sailed on a Lightwave catamaran, as mentioned in Andrew's article in the previous edition where Andrew and I joined the boat for a day's test sail. So when Andrew told me we were spending an entire weekend sailing a Lightwave 38ft catamaran around the Gold Coast waterways, I was ecstatic.

We picked up the boat late on Friday afternoon and once again I appreciated the slick lines of the boat, the low profile that reduces windage and generous bridgedeck clearance. The boat has

symmetry, an important aspect that indicates balance and good design.

Andrew took the helm and motored the boat out of the marina. The two engines provided extremely good manoeuvrability. We motored out to Brown Island, our anchorage for the night. In the evening sky a dark band of

purple clouds indicated a storm was heading towards us. Night descended and suddenly the storm hit, just as we were about to anchor. On the bow, I was hit by strong winds and pelting rain. Andrew, at the helm and sheltered from the elements by a cleverly designed helmstation kept the boat steady into the wind so I could



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successfully anchor the boat. A light located on the bow provided a good strong light for anchoring in the dark.

Once anchored and a bit in awe of the storm we watched the boat for a while to ensure we were not dragging. The frequent lighting helped with this task by lighting up the whole bay. When we were both convinced that the boat was safely

anchored we moved inside to enjoy the evening. I really like the internal design and layout of the Lightwave. The boat is very comfortable and all areas of the hulls are easily accessible with ample headroom, even for Andrew who is six foot three and who, out of habit kept ducking his head, unnecessarily, when inside the boat. The boat included quality

finishes including timber flooring, trim and cupboards plus colourful fabrics. This gave the saloon and hulls a bright and spacious feeling.

I enjoyed cooking in the galley, a stand up fridge accessible from waist level ensured easy and efficient access to food for hungry crewmembers. There was ample bench space for preparation, and I



really liked the use of stainless steel for the bench tops as it looked good and was easy to clean. The inventory included a freezer and additional fridge that was located in the cockpit. This second fridge is a great place for drinks, so crew can easily access a cold beer while sailing.

Other good features I noted about the boat on this evening is that the boat is fully screened for insects, with removable screens on all hatches and a manual magnetic rollup screen for the saloon door. This provided for a peaceful evening away from numerous moths trying to reach the internal lights. In summer this system will keep the mosquitoes out and allow for good

ventilation throughout the boat, a necessity for cruising in Queensland.

The head was located on the port aft of the boat that consisted of separate shower and toilet area. The shower was big enough for two people to comfortably shower together, which added a nice touch to the boat.

Andrew and I both agreed that the sleeping accommodation on the boat is very good. The hatch located above the bed provides for good ventilation and a place to quickly check everything is okay outside. The double bed is very firm and comfortable.

The next morning was sunny with a gentle breeze. We spent the day sailing around the Gold Coast waterways and the Lightwave demonstrated good sailing performance in the light winds, considering the boat is built to survey and weighs a tonne. We used the screecher when running and on a broad reach as this seemed to provide the best performance. Andrew, as captain, spent most of the time steering the boat therefore leaving me in charge of sheets and sails. I found it very easy and safe to walk around the boat. The boat is designed with walk through transoms for easy access to the cockpit from the aft hulls. Steps from the either side of the cockpit provide easy access to bow and steps on the side of the saloon provide safe navigation to the cockpit after working on the boom. Steps are also located beside the mast and there's even a place to sit and complete mainsheet tasks in safety.

By mid afternoon we headed towards our chosen anchorage for the evening, Tipplers. As it was school holidays the anchorage was crowded with all types of watercraft. We decided to anchor further north of the resort where it was quieter and fewer boats. We swam to the island and looked back at the anchored Lightwave and once again commented on the beautiful lines of the boat and symmetry. Returning from our swim it was refreshing to have a hot freshwater shower on the transom.

The weather forecast predicted a southerly change with strong winds early on Sunday morning. We awoke to an overcast and cold day with winds averaging 30 knots. We decided to sail down to the Spit for breakfast. In the strong winds I noted the solid construction of the boat and robust rig and at all times felt safe and comfortable on the Lightwave. One minor adjustment I would make to the boat, based purely on personal preference, is the inclusion of a mainsheet cleat in addition to the winch that is currently used to secure the mainsheet. It is much easier and quicker to dump the mainsheet off a cam cleat than take the sheet off the winch.

At times the wind shifted around, died down and strengthened. The

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self-tacking headsail worked really well and allowed the crew (me) to focus on the mainsail instead of consistently tacking the headsail. This setup would also be valuable in fluky winds.

Regrettably it was time to return the boat to the marina. We had thoroughly enjoyed sailing and living aboard the Lightwave 38 for the weekend, and yes I do want one!

So the initial impressions of the Lightwave being a great production boat were well supported by this slightly longer exposure. If you are in the market for a good production boat you could do a lot worse, in fact you couldn't do much better. ❖



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