



south to Sydney

by Lightwave 45

■ by ANDREW CRAWFORD

I am a strong supporter of the Australian Multihull Industry, be it small project builders, designers or large scale commercial production enterprises. I support the industry because it deserves it. By and large, Australia produces some of the finest multihulls in their class.

ONE company I have watched with interest for many years now is Lightwave Yachts, in Coomera between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. They have built a successful company based on offering high quality cruising cats. I first reviewed the most recent addition to the sailing line-up, the Lightwave 45 some time ago. That review was a short day sail and I was favourably impressed with the vessel.

A little while ago I had the opportunity to assist with a delivery of a Lightwave 45 from Southport to Sydney. On that trip I accompanied Roger Overell, Lightwave boss and Ben, an apprentice from the Lightwave factory.

It was, as expected, an easy, comfortable and relaxing trip. The Lightwave 45 is a natural evolution of the earlier 38. It was designed by Tony Grainger and bears a striking similarity to the rest of the Lightwave range. As is usual with cats, the longer they get the better they look. Certainly the 45 is a very attractive boat with lines, shapes and sizes that look balanced and aesthetically pleasing.

As I stepped aboard at Runaway Bay Marina dock, and during the four days aboard, I couldn't help but be impressed with the ease of access and movement around the decks and cockpit area. In a multi this size, there is ample space to carefully and thoughtfully design systems

and structures. That design process has occurred with the 45. There are no obvious corners to walk into, fittings to stub toes on and more importantly the sail control systems are sensible, intuitive and thoughtful in terms of friction reduction,

Flying a kite off the coast. (main pic left)

Powering up off Southport. (below)



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ease of use and safety in relation to movement about the vessel. Access to the motors is quite remarkable. It is gained from the deck adjacent to the cockpit and is designed that you can easily stand by the engines and work on them if necessary.

This theme of ease and thoughtfulness was carried through to the interior of the vessel where I kept thinking that everything I did was very intuitive. This sort of design detail is impressive. The layout internally is quite straightforward, a saloon with entertainment and navigation facilities on the bridgedeck, to port is an owner's cabin area, head aft, study area amidships and double cabin forward. Starboard is double cabins for and aft, with an ensuite forward and a galley amidships. Layouts can be varied if you have a particular desire for a change.

The sail plan on this vessel was a fully battened main on cars and a two to one halyard system, a jib and a screecher, both headsails of course being on furling systems. Halyards were handled at the

mast, though this can be changed at the owner's discretion. A benefit of having the halyards at the mast is that the anchor winch can be used as a halyard electric winch. On a boat this size that is certainly a benefit.

And so – onto the trip. It was a pleasant Saturday morning, with a reasonable, though not stellar weather forecast as we got underway. The problem with the weather was too little wind rather than too much. Leaving around 0900 we motored and sailed through the day and night with an intention of arriving at Port Macquarie on the Sunday to pick up an extra crew, who was an owner of another Lightwave. All fairly uneventful, the boat handled everything well, and we used the motors whenever speed dropped below six knots to keep the averages up. There was no hint of seasickness aboard, as there can be when doing coastal runs.

Navigation was easy and simple with the Raymarine chart-plotter and radar etc. We also utilised a backup handheld GPS and of course made plots on paper charts.

Probably the most interesting part of this portion of the voyage was the night watch. With conditions mild, the boat going along nicely and the autopilot steering to the wind, radar alarms set etc, there wasn't a lot to do apart from enjoy the best part of sailing taking in the spectacular beauty of the night.

Sunday afternoon saw us taking the quick stop at Port Macquarie to pick up the extra crew and then south we went. Sunday night we hit the only unpleasant part of the trip. In the early hours of the morning as we approached the roads off Newcastle a strong southerly change came through, not particularly violent, but winds up to 40kts and seas of proportionate size. Of course this had to be whilst we were trying to negotiate our way through at least a billion anchored ships off Newcastle (well maybe 20 or so). It was during this period that one of the signature design features of the Lightwave range proved its worth. Over the past few years the Lightwaves have all been fitted with a helming position



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that is raised and covered by a bimini with the ability to zip in clears. Whilst some people find this a little unsocial, the reality is that it's only in difficult conditions that you need to sit there for any length of time, and when conditions are difficult it is an exceptional place to do the business. Talking with Roger on the trip he indicated that a redesign of this area was on the cards to improve the visual integration of the clearly valuable design feature.

Monday we arrived at Pittwater/Cowan Creek and moored up in Jerusalem Bay. This part of the New South Wales coast is just spectacular. I have cruised here a few times, and I was able to share the area with the rest of the crew, who had been

into Pittwater before but never up the Cowan Creek end.

It was a very pleasant afternoon and evening spent hanging around doing not very much. We were joined by the crew of *Flash Dancer*, a Lightwave powercat 46 who were also heading to Sydney.

So Monday dawned with a short hop down to Sydney Harbour. I have sailed in and out of Sydney many times, but I always still have a quiet moment of awe at the beauty of Sydney Harbour. It is a magnificent sight, particularly approaching from the sea. (And that's a big compliment coming from a Queenslander).

Calm seas and great boat – how good is this.

We arrived at our destination in Rose Bay – did a clean up and took in the ambience of the area. In all it was a trip that was wonderfully relaxing, enjoyable and mind and body refreshing. It was made easy by the smooth power and comfort of the big Lightwave. There are a few of the 45s sailing now, *Captain Jack* competed in the recent Brisbane to Gladstone and *Inn For A Penny II* is presently a third of the way through a circumnavigation. ❖

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