

CUDDLES 30 Diesel Cruiser



In less than 18 months after it was first released, this traditional, double ended displacement cruiser has become one of the most popular cruisers in Australia

If awards were handed out on the basis of reader demand for boat tests, then the Cuddles 30 would win the last year's award hands down.

We have refrained from testing the Cuddles until now for several reasons.

Firstly, the builder couldn't keep up with initial demand anyway, and secondly, there has been an on-going series of running changes which suggested that if we waited a little longer, the final Cuddles 30 would emerge.

Well, as far as this latter point is concerned, it has since become apparent that like the Volkswagen, the Cuddles 30 may never be finished.

There is now a brand new motor-sailer being developed, as well as a professional fishing trawler developed from the same moulds, and after that well, who knows? Short of tying builder Bruce

Harris down to his factory floor, we decided that if we didn't test the Cuddles now, we could still be waiting in 1990!

Inspiration for the Cuddles 30 undoubtedly stemmed from the fact-finding tour of Europe, Harris made several years ago. From this trip, Harris brought

back the moulds of a little Norwegian six metre double-ender, which met with success in southern Queensland waters, and gave Harris his first taste of the displacement market.

With the same intuitive marketing skill he showed when he first created the Sharkcat power boats, Harris realised there was tremendous potential demand for a comfortable, old-style

displacement cruiser, and after a careful study of the craft available in Australia, created (with designer Neil Holland's assistance), the lines of the Cuddles 30.

Often forgotten these days is the fact that Harris was originally a professional trawler-man. To him the double-ended hull shape was synonymous with seakindness and seaworthiness. And noteworthy in these fuel conscious times, a well designed double-ended hull is one of the most easily driven hull shapes, as it has the ability to slip gently through the water with the barest minimum of wake being pulled up behind it.

Harris knew all of these things, as his years at sea trained him in the natural law of good ship design; putting thoughts on paper with designer Holland, Harris was merely echoing his fundamental training and understanding of the sea, rather than responding to some high-tech market research program.

Another example of this pragmatic approach concerned the accommodation layout.

Harris figured that if families were going to spend any time at all cruising

in his new design, then Mum and Dad deserved some privacy, and something more comfortable than a convertible dinette. It sounds simple, and it is — but Harris once again ignored convention, and struck out with an innovative and clever design that created a full size double berth in a ten metre cruiser.

When this feature is added to the four upper and lower bunks in the forward cabin, the Cuddles becomes the only six berth cruiser in Australia under approximately 40 feet with six permanent berths — and the potential to sleep eight people.

But the success of Cuddles goes a lot further than simply being a double-ender with six permanent berths. It's a little corny perhaps, but it really needs to be said — Harris has created a good, old-fashioned family cruiser — as more than 75 families already agree.

Design

The Cuddles 30 measures 8.99 metres overall with a waterline length of 8 metres exactly, a beam of 2.84 metres and a choice of two keel shapes which change the draft from either 0.68 m (2' 3") to 0.97 m (3' 2").



The Cuddles 30 in charter boat guise on the Gold Coast - observe extra high bowrail required for charter work, and part of the cost-on Survey package. Inset: Harris has used the double-ended styling to advantage as seen in this shot of the moulded rear seat and table.



Left: No — the Cuddles isn't trailerable (!) but this picture does reveal sweet, old fashioned underwater lines.

ABO RETRO BOAT TEST: Unchanged, as first published, written and photographed by Peter Webster in 1982