

Is This The Best-Ever Trailerboat Cruiser Built in Australia?

Twelve months ago, when the F&B team was asked to become project managers of a very personal cruising boat for an extremely busy Brisbane couple, we were initially reluctant to undertake the job.

It's hard enough to do this sort of work for yourself, let alone trying to interpret what others may want as well, or instead. But reassured of their commitment and confidence in our ability to produce a good outcome, we accepted the task, knowing full well it would take every bit of 12 months to complete.

Behind our decision to become involved was the nagging question in our own minds we wanted to resolve. We've always believed that there was a genuinely trailerable, long-range sportsfishing cruiser nestling between the original, smaller JBS 7.2 *Genesis* project and F&B's much larger, 8.0m long-range cruiser, *Dusty Rover*.

Project Management

At 7.2m LOA, "*Agnes Ellen*" was designed by Cairns Custom Craft's Marcel Maujean around a maximum beam of 2.5m. (In other words, this boat is legally trailerable anywhere, anytime in Australia.)

The 'hot metalwork' was completed in Cairns by CCC's Brian "Grumpy" Shellback and Vinny Cassaniti, with the superb paintwork by CCC's Pat Davey, using Pro-Tec finishes.

The Yanmar diesel, tabs, HWS (etc) were installed by CCC's Steve Allard. The boat was water-tested in Cairns, before Trewin Transport trucked it down to ADM Marine at Coomera in southern Queensland, to be completed.

ADM's Mick Stewart, working closely with F&B's Ruth Cunningham, did most of the fitting out work, assisted by his partner, Drew Mackenzie. The electrical loom and installation was created and installed by Stu Iverach. The covers were created by Bill Riddell from Ashtia Boat Covers, also from Coomera.

Over the last 12 months the F&B team have been acting as consultants on a fascinating boat building project inspired by the original F&B *Genesis* project. As this extraordinary craft demonstrates, it is possible to build all the comforts of home into a tropical cruising boat just 7.2m long.

Design Notes

Although it can be built with single or twin outboards, we advised the owners to opt for the Yanmar 240hp diesel sterndrive solution, as this delivered the ultimate combination of power, economy, performance, and of course, the reliability of diesel and its inherent safety.

The mission statement was to create a comfortable, live-aboard cruising environment for a couple approaching retirement, in a craft easily handled by two, and capable of safe coastal cruising. They had the dream; they wanted to cruise in their home waters around beautiful Moreton Bay and down to the Gold Coast, enjoying the south Queensland waterways with their extended families.

But they also wanted to retain the ability to move the craft to the Whitsundays, and they've earmarked Port Stephens NSW, for a visit in another year, to explore the quiet charm of the Myall Lakes.

As part of the design project, we wanted to demonstrate that it was possible to build a fully equipped, stand-up galley out in the "open" of the wheelhouse for maximum convenience; a

fully enclosed, "house size" toilet room and shower stall (combined) and retain the seaworthiness and comfort of a fully enclosed wheelhouse.

Central to the design was the development of a "sunroom" or "lanai" which would normally be known as the cockpit! Aided by a series of specially zippered drop-down curtains, a genuine 'sunroom' can be created that is totally weatherproof in the worst conditions – and completely dry.

Alternatively, different layers of screens and curtains can be raised and lowered to create extraordinary versatility depending on the needs of the crew.

For example, on a late summer's evening, in a quiet backwater, insects can be a problem – but not in the *Agnes Ellen*. All the no-see'em mesh curtains are dropped down in place and insects are kept on the outside.

Similarly, if there's just annoying rain or drizzle coming in from one quarter, the weatherproof curtains are dropped on that quarter, and the mesh screens left in place on the leeward side.

We've used this technique now on three different boats with outstanding success. Mind you, we're not claiming this is something new. The Halvorsons on the Hawkesbury River NSW, for example, were using this cockpit cover system as far back as the 1950's, and there's been many a 'bay boat' built before and since using the same 'covers' technique.

Special Features

Agnes Ellen has a wonderful array of features and fittings, including:

- 12 volt/240 volt refrigerator
- 12 volt condenser plate freezer
- LP gas stove and grill (with flame failure for maximum safety)
- Hot water system – 240 volt or engine heat exchanger
- Completely private shower room
- Completely private toilet room with full standing headroom
- Electric toilet and effluent dispersal



Above: "*Agnes Ellen*" is quite an elegant looking hull with nice proportions, accentuated by the nicely curved sheerline. **Below:** There's a wealth of detail to absorb here. The swimming board is critical to the design - not only does it carry the tender (raised and lowered in seconds with one hand on a simple block and tackle), it is the barbecue area, the fishing nook, swimming platform, and the walkway in and out of the boat through the excellent transom door.

