



Left: Excellent coral trout caught by author Neil Dunstan at Petrel Islat. Right Centre: Neil's mate John despatches a golden trevally at their Pallion Point overnight anchorage

BarCrusher 530 Fishin' The Whitsundays

After a run of illness, bad weather and poor fishing, our two lads were getting very toey - and chomping at the bit to put a bit of blood, gore and scales on the deck of the new BarCusher 530. With the Whitsundays on their back doorstep, and (finally) a break in the sou'easters, they didn't need much encouragement to soff . . . Neil Dunstan story & pics.

When F&B's Editor asked me late last year about our plans for the next year's expeditions, one place we decided to check out was the Whitsundays. Peter thought this would be a good idea, especially since they've built the new Able Point Marina complex.

As far as we are concerned, this area is more or less in our backyard, as the southern end of the Whitsundays is only 50 nautical miles from Sarina Beach. When I was a member of the Mackay Game Fishing Club, I used to tow my Dehavilland Trojan up to Airlie Beach to fish the Whitsunday Club tournaments. I was fairly familiar with area and decided that the fishing was just as good around Sarina Beach, so for us, it was not worth the travel unless we were going to fish a tournament. However there are lots of readers who would love to travel to the Whitsundays as it is one of the premier cruising areas on the East coast.

Our original plan was to head north around the end of February as the cyclone season would be all but over, and the weather starting to cool down. It can be pretty tropical during



the wet season when the breeze drops out.

The date was decided by talking to a mate of mine who was a professional fisherman at Airlie. Trevor lives on the southern edge of Pioneer Bay across the water from Airlie, and as he is right on the water of Mandalay Bay (a small bay off Pioneer Bay) we could launch on his private ramp next to his home. This had two advantages - namely, if we got stuck on the gravel ramp, he would pull us out with his tractor, and while we were away, we could park the boat and trailer in his yard for protection. To launch at this spot we had to have a tide of at least 2.4 metres which would occur at around four thirty on Monday the 23rd of April.

We decided to meet at John's place in Sarina at 11.00 am on the morning of the 23rd and I duly arrived with everything, loaded John's gear and took off for the big adventure.

Heading Out

We fired up the new Suzuki 115 h.p. 4-stroke and slowly cruised along the shore admiring the multi-million dollar homes with their private beaches and jetties till we got