

The Chazan Family:

What ever happened to the Chazan's after their north Queensland adventure in F&B #42? Well, they went back to Victoria, resigned their jobs, sold up everything and moved to Ingham in far north Queensland.

Quite simple really. Actually, not so simple but definitely achievable. The factor that made this move possible was that both my wife and I were able to gain employment here in north Queensland. Also our children were young enough to be uprooted without major disruption ("Huh!", comments my daughter Adele who was 11 at the time) and we were thoroughly motivated to get out of the cold climate of south-eastern Victoria.

I trivialize the stress of packing forty-three years of accumulated possessions, leaving a comfortable job and saying good-bye to a lifetime of friends and family. However, in our case we felt if we did not do it then, we never would. The question "What if..." would haunt us forever.

The removalist van left just ahead of us, and thanks to some great friends who helped us move, and to other friends in Queensland who had arranged a house for us to move into straight away, the relocation went smoothly.



Sonia, Andrew, Simon and Adele Chazan

Changing Places

So many people talk about it. Chucking 'it' in. Moving north. Starting over. Rediscovering a *Life*. Well, after this Victorian family visited North Queensland's Hinchinbrook region for the first time, that is exactly what they did. They packed up and moved north. Three years later, we asked them if they had any regrets; had the move been good for them? This is their story.

The family Nissan pulled the Markham Whaler full of gear and we did the trip in two days via the inland roads. We must have looked like the 'Hillbillies moving to Beverly' – minus grandma on her rocking chair.

The trick was having jobs to go to; there was enough stress in the above without having to search out employment. The kids were enrolled in their new school, and we started off the year with renewed enthusiasm and a real sense of togetherness. It's a very unifying experience for a family to do, kids and parents all starting again on the old "level playing field".

We stuck together like glue and enjoyed each other's company immensely as we discovered new adventures on the water, land and socially. There were a few teary nights when the kids realised how much they missed their old home and their mates, but this all stopped after three or four months. Then the main concern was "when are we going to catch a legal size barra, Dad"? We were managing to catch heaps of little ones, which had to go back of course. Kids are very resilient, good new friends, new challenges at school, and away they go – in fact they thrive on the venture of re-establishing themselves.

We spent the first year

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Right: Swimming at the South Zoe Bay falls



fishing the reef and the estuaries, and exploring the hinterland, including the upper reaches of the mighty Herbert River. We were able to explore this area because the school we work at, St Theresa's Abergowrie College, (a Catholic boys' boarding school), is situated on the Herbert River about 60 kilometres from the river's mouth at Lucinda. So I'd take a change of clothes, a light spinning rod and after work I'd walk a bit of the upper Herbert.

I saw some amazing things in that first twelve months. Huge crocodiles, slipping off the sand, massive schools of black bream, sooty grunter, quite a few barra and many other species of fish, not to mention snakes, pigs, lizards, etc. Most of the river upstream of Trebonne is accessible through private property only, so it pays to get to know some locals before you wander into this area. My teaching wife Sonia and I did night study duties once a week for the first year and a half, and we'd often go up to the Gowrie Creek and have a dip in some beautiful fresh, cool crocodile free water. Mark you, some locals reckon no water up in this area is crocodile free, and they're probably right.

Eventually the kids got so involved in local sport and school activities that we had to drop this night study, and

Below: Mixed bag from their first night fishing trip.



we dearly miss that afternoon a week spent in the upper reaches of the river.

Within twelve months, we realized that our twenty year old Markham Whaler was simply not up to the tasks we set it each weekend. With a 35 km trip out to the reef and similar distances being covered exploring the Palm Island Group, Missionary Bay and the seaward side of Hinchinbrook Island, the old girl was knocking up fast.

The 70 Hp Evinrudes were drinking fuel like it was XXXX and needing more repairs than the MIR Spacestation. The hull was starting to leak and I was wondering where all this was going to end. The crunch came when the family did our second Zoe Bay trip. It started off OK, mild 3-knot south easterly, minimal wave action and a quick trip just after the bottom of the tide. We anchored up the stern and tied off the bow up Zoe's Southern creek and headed off with our picnic lunch, up the 1 km track. We swam and played, snorkeled and swung off the tree rope for three or four hours, and then realized that we had better think about heading back. We loaded up the boat, pulled anchor and gently navigated our way out of the creek mouth, around the oyster rocks, and sand bar and into Zoe Bay proper. Then we entered a weather war zone! Before I had time to even think about what was

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Snapshots from the Chazan family album reflect the vastly different (outdoor) lifestyle they’ve enjoyed in the Ingham - Carwell area (that is, the Palms and Hinchinbrook island groups) since moving up from Victoria three years ago.



happening, we were committed to tracking bow on into a 2 to 2.5 metre breaking surf. I say “surf” realizing full well that some southern readers will find this hard to believe. However, coming from a Southerner who has sailed and fished Apollo Bay, Port Campbell, Warnambool and Portland in Victoria, all his life, this was SURF! Nastier than you’d imagine – short, sharp, irregular and relentless. I knew we had no chance of turning back, to do so would have meant a capsize and/or a swamping. With two little kids and a near petrified wife I didn’t see that as much of an option. We just had to head into it at maximum revs, doing about 5 to 8 knots with both motors churning on the ascent and screaming on the decent. We plunged from one smashing, jarring wave to the next, often with a huge side slop doing its best to knock us off our precarious course. I had to head out to sea for an hour or more before the surf became a lumpy wave and the distance between waves increased enough to allow a safe turn towards the sugar loading jetty.

By this time everybody was in life jackets, Sonia was gripping the EPIRB, kids looked absolutely drained and I was one hell of a grateful skipper/Dad/husband. If those old Evenrudes had stalled (as they often did), or if one simply gave up the ghost I just don’t like to imagine what would have happened!

Our trips after that were confined to the Hinchinbrook Channel and we all knew that our adventurous days of boating were over, until we could buy a new, reliable boat.

I actually still believe the 4.7 Markham Whaler was a very seaworthy boat. Unlike some multi-hull boats I’ve been on, it handled a horror sea really well, the sideways slide was minimal and it simply punched its stubby little nose into everything that came its way. Age got the better of it in the end though!

We didn’t need much persuading when in May 2000 we learnt of the 5.2 JBS, Honda powered Project Boat that F & B was developing and testing. Buying that boat was for us absolutely the right thing to do. We were lucky though, that we had some

cash left from the sale of our southern home (after buying our new home at Forrest Beach, North Queensland). We had to weigh up some priorities and since we all loved our fishing and boating, island hopping and camping so much, it was unanimous and clear cut. We read all the information we could get our hands on about the boat and the internet was running hot during this time. We were getting almost daily progress reports and e-mailed pictures of the fit out. It was an exciting time.

The boat has really allowed us to access the magnificent Barrier Reef adjoining our part of the world. We can now stay dry, sleep on the boat in comfort, safely navigate our way around some very tricky reefs and entrances thanks to the Hummingbird NS 25 GPS Sounder. The Honda 90 HP 4 stroke has been magnificent. It just keeps getting better and better every trip.

All I can say is a lot of the negative stuff you hear about 4 strokes is rubbish. For example, whoever says they aren’t much different to a 2



stroke at high revs – not true; they are still much cheaper to run. It is true that they are even cheaper to run at mid revs though. The thing we love the best is no stinking fumes! We tend to pull lures around a fair bit – it’s relaxing after a big session of kids getting stuck on the bottom and consequently tying up rigs. Also, it’s a good way to catch Spanish mackerel around the reefs and islands, and the kids love it. They listen to their tapes, read books, take pictures of whales, birds, and islands, talk to us, and generally have a blast of a time. Both kids love taking the wheel and they can navigate from the NS 25 quite competently.

Before I turn this into a rave review for JBS, Honda, Hummingbird, etc, I’d best get back to the theme of this article – the move North.

We are now into our third year in the Ingham district. We love our unique school where we work, our home, our community, and especially we love our boating and fishing. Our life style has become sea and outdoors oriented and we believe that the weather up here allows us to

“live more and exist less”. We are hardly ever home and when we are we are swimming in our pool or at the beach (200 metres from our back door) or reading a novel on the verandah whilst sipping a long icy drink. I spend half an hour a fortnight mowing lawns and no time working on the house (now we’ve built a lock up boat shed). The kids have mates from one end of the Herbert River to the other and our new found friendships up here are wonderful. We are always out at friends’ places stuffing ourselves on horrible things like mud crabs, prawns, coral trout, barramundi and beautiful little local squid. If we aren’t doing that our mates are over here doing it. So despite the supposedly isolated location (which we don’t believe it is); the cyclones; the two inches of rain in an hour; the death adders, taipans, crocodiles, and deadly marine stingers; sand bars and mud traps lurking below at low tide; the mossies, sandflies, incredible heat, humidity and associated rashes - we simply love it up here and wouldn’t go back for quids. So don’t ask,



“What are the Chazans up to?”. Ask, “What aren’t they up to?”. Not much!

F&B

Footnote - We’d like to say a special ‘thanks’ to the Chazans for sharing the experience of actually making the Big Move north. We suspect it will allay the concerns of many other like-minded families, and provide the inspiration for others to follow - PW & RC