

# Building Bob's 8.4m DORY P-5

Words by Bob Davis, Photography by Han Jie Davis



Introducing the FIFTH leg of perhaps the most unusual DIY series we've ever published in F&B. Written (and built!) by husband & wife team of Bob and Han Jie Davis, it describes how they set about building a comfortable, practical cruising fishing rig they can use in the Whitsundays, around their home state's Far South Coast - powered by a 60hp outboard - and towed by a normal 4WD. Bob is

determined to prove it can be done - all up - for less than \$50K - and he wants to share his methodology and thinking to inspire other readers to similar

projects. His theme? 'There has to be another way' - and we all agree that's a concept worth pursuing! F&B

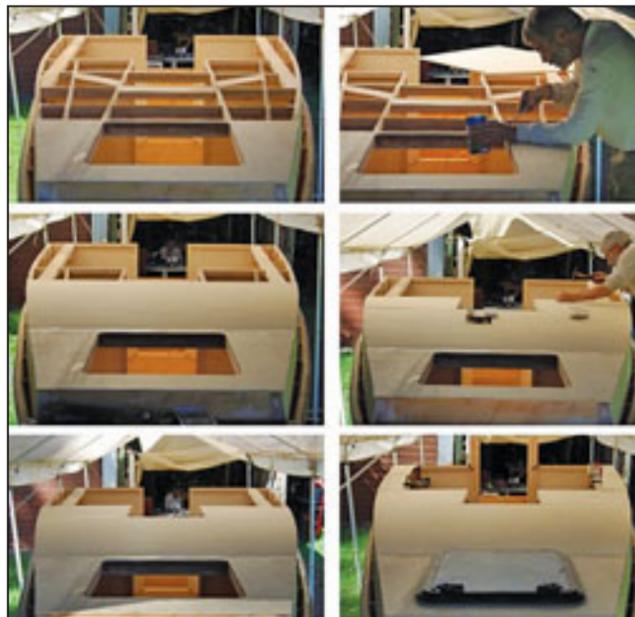


In Part 4 we had completed cladding the top of the cabin, including the side extension shelves that run aft to the pilothouse bulkhead. In this Part (5), we work through construction of the pilothouse, getting the boat onto its trailer, and we start contemplating the interesting process of fitting out.

## The Pilothouse

The pilothouse structure itself isn't particularly large, with the lower side rails being only 2 metres long. The ridge beam is set some 650mm higher than the fore-cabin top, and the sides are only 550mm high.

The upper pilothouse structure is effectively the framing for the acrylic front screen and fixed side windows, with a hardtop. Its lower side rails will sit on the narrow side-deck shelves that have been built into the sides of the lower pilothouse structure, as extensions of the cabin top. The rails



Cladding the top of the cabin.

will be connected through the 4x2" support beams that are already in place. It has a top cladding of 6mm 5-ply to minimise weight up high. That's important in a dory.

Getting some strength into the structure, while minimising weight, was the design challenge. I chose imported 100x40mm Surian Cedar for the side framing and for the ridge beam, because of its very low weight. I used Tassie Oak for the front screen frames, and for three pairs of rafter slats (for some hardwood strength), with Celery Top used for an elbow to reinforce the connection between the ridge beam and central screen pillar. The pilothouse framing timber clear epoxy coated then varnished for UV-protection. The enhanced natural colours and grains of these different timbers contrast nicely.

Amidst the myriad of mind distracting stuff around building a boat, there does need to be some thought given to visual aesthetics. Leaving the natural colours and grain patterns of some of the material visible reminds everybody that this, after all, is a *Wooden* boat.

The aft bulkhead provides a significant part of the bracing for the pilothouse structure. The doorway uprights are 100x40 Celery Top planks. These rise vertically from the bottoms, where they are bolted to the station frame, up past the forward cross beam for the cockpit deck, to which they are also bolted, before being glued, screwed and nailed to the bulkhead ply all the way up to the aft pilothouse roof beams. This bulkhead and doorway structure is very rigid. Sort of like the rollbar for the boat.



Pilothouse door uprights installed.

Above the two bulkhead elements, a full width ply panel is added, to provide the top shaping of the door frame, and to provide for installation of two small windows. In the photo, you'll note that I left some ply in place across the door cut-out, simply to brace the panel during installation, to be removed later. In shaping the panel, I left a couple of protruding lugs at either end of the base. To be reinforced, these are designed to deflect water (running back along the pilothouse side decks) outboard, rather than having it pouring down onto the cockpit side decks - or worse, with boat motion, pouring inside the coamings and into the cockpit. They're not very high, a mere 100mm, so they won't deflect a lot of green water - but their job is to deflect nuisance water on a sloppy day. On rougher and wetter days - that's what the self-draining cockpit is for.

The benefit of creating the panel at this stage is that it becomes a template for taking off the frame fairing angles, for fitting the top ply sheeting. These angles can then be worked onto the ridge beam, and onto the top rails of the side frames of the pilothouse.



Upper aft panel for the pilothouse.



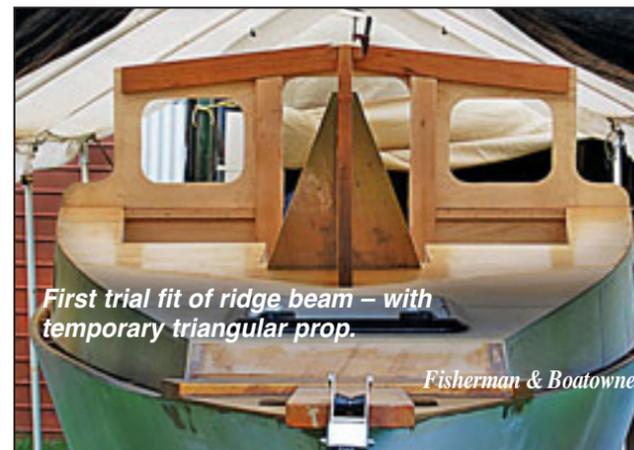
Pilothouse upper rear panel fitted - still braced.



Pilothouse upper rear panel - doorway brace removed.

## The Pilothouse Ridge

The ridge beam is a 100x40mm plank. Its upper face is shaped to the fairing angles of the top ply sheets. From ridge to side frames, the drop is 100mm, which is sufficient slope for water shedding. The aft end of the ridge beam is bolted to the aft frame beams. At the front of the ridge beam, the central pillar for the front screen (which slopes at 45 degrees) is set into the beam, and reinforced with a 40mm thick elbow. The foot of the central upright is bolted through the fore-cabin roof, supported in that area by strong-point timber. Coach bolts are used for the connections.



First trial fit of ridge beam - with temporary triangular prop.