



"As you can see, Ralph, she's this high, so yer gonna need a pretty tall shed . . ."



The Laksa Manifest

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a (child) how to fish, and you give (them) skills for a lifetime"

- Ancient Chinese proverb

This is the story about Ralph Laksa's determination to give his five youngsters the best chance to embrace the boating lifestyle - and his search to find the best boat to do it in. Over Two Parts, we follow the highs and lows of the process, as Ralph doggedly hangs on - and achieves - his dream for the kids.

This is a tiny variation of the very well known Chinese proverb, and it addresses a very important issue for today's internet dominated parents: **Do you want to teach your children skills for a lifetime?**

Do you want to teach them how to buy and invest in an asset wisely? Teach them building with timber and metal, painting, fibreglassing. Mechanics and electrical. Navigation. Electronic's use and map reading. Hunting and gathering skills. Rope and tying skills. How to read and interpret the weather. Patience and reflection.

Do you want a quiet place to just hang out together with your kids and have memories for them for years to come? To let them develop confidence and self assuredness.

Then you need to buy a boat. It will give them all these skills and more if you let it!

Since I was a 'tiddler' I have had a strong affinity with the water. Boating and fishing has always been a big part of my life, although I had too long a break back in 2001 when 'Relief' a 21' Seametre (styled like a Haines 21C) was sold to make way for a growing family of five youngsters.

It was always my intention

that once the small fry developed sufficiently, another boat would eventually become a family interest.

After a few years of soul searching (what kind of rig did I *really* want or need?) – a second hand Allison 25 Executive cruiser was purchased mid-2012. Of course, it needed a li'l bitmore of this and a bitmore of that didn't it?

What made this all so interesting was searching and purchasing a boat via the internet.

I live in Innisfail FNQ, and the boat I wanted to buy was located in Brisbane, 1600 km

away.

Finding the boat was the easy part. What followed were repairs to the boat's pod and floor, purchasing a new trailer and then getting it home – all done via the 'net and phone!

In the end, quite a few months later, all was good, and the project is a real success.

I attribute this to a few basic principles: know what you want, set yourself a budget, be patient - *don't rush* - and to some degree, be prepared to go with a little of your gut/instinct.

It is wise to listen to what enthuses others over certain issues. F&B and its readers' contributions were a tremendous resource during my search process, and one not to be understated.

The more experience you have, the easier some decisions are to make. The less experience you have, the more you need to listen to others – but how do you decide who and what is right?

You mightn't have

experience in boating, but you do have life experience – in the end, it's no different to buying a house, car or overseas holiday. We all (should) process and make decisions based on the similar principles and when mistakes are made it is because we didn't follow those principles.

And then there is '*it was meant to be*' principle. Some may call it universalism, to others it is faith or divine intervention, whatever your leaning.

I found boats called, "Sir Ralph"(my name) "Relaxer" (sounds like my last name) but the Allison is called "*Bitmore.*"

The Urge

After several years of no boat and no fishing, despite several hints to 'mates' with boats, things were becoming a worry. My subscription to F&B helped to keep me informed on matters such as technological advances especially around the development of 4-strokes. The