

BRISBANE TO GLADSTONE 2010

memorable

but in a good way



by STEPHEN BARTON

IT SEEMS LIKE THE EVENTS IN LIFE THAT ARE REALLY UNFORGETTABLE ARE WHEN THINGS HAVE GONE REALLY PEAR SHAPED. THE SAILING TRIPS THAT LEAVE SEARING IMPRESSIONS BURNT INTO THE SUB-CONSCIOUSNESS OF IMPENDING DOOM, FEAR, LOATHING, PERSONALITY CLASHES, AWFUL TIREDNESS, BROKEN BOATS, NAVIGATIONAL DISASTERS, TORN SAILS, BROKEN MASTS, DEBILITATING SEA SICKNESS OR EVEN INJURIES ARE THE ONES THAT WE MOST READILY REMEMBER.

SAILING TRIPS THAT WENT quite well, you know, the winds were fair, everyone got on quite well, performance was good, gear failure was minimal are, well, quite forgettable. Mind you, in a life where avoiding Murphy's Law is a priority, a forgettable sail is one to aspire to.

However, the conditions in this year's B2G gave many participants a chance to cash in on some hard earned good weather credits and to rack up some sailing memories that will bring a smile to their faces in future years. For one lucky sailor this is how the Multihull Solutions Brisbane to Gladstone 2010 unfolded.

With what appeared to be a fairly casual invitation back in November 2009 at the Hervey Bay trailerable Nationals, Phil Day asked me to join him and his three crew on his Pescott Whitehaven 11.1 *Rhythmic* for the B2G. I gave an equally casual acceptance.

I didn't think much about it until he called a month later. Lot's of people say they are going to do things but life gets in the way of their dreams. But I should've known better with Phil. Properly planning for the B2G, even after having done several, is no small deal. Being highly motivated, well organised, experienced and cluey in all things multihull belies his pleasant and relaxed attitude and his calmness under pressure. Useful attributes, I suppose, if you're going to be

a multihull yacht broker. Most multihull yachts that get bought and sold in Australia do so through his brokerage, Multihull Yacht Sales, and I can now see why.

"Yes, Phil, sweet, I'm still in!" Yeeha. It's on. I saw my role in this scheme to try and keep my tireless sailing companion, Murphy, from putting on his usual shenanigans. I enrolled in the Survival at Sea course that is required for 50% of Category 2 crews and booked a flight to get up to Brisvegas a couple of days early. I knew Phil would have a thousand and one little jobs to finish before the start and it's preferable to have the boat properly prepared and be rested before the start.

In fact, we were so organised that we even got the big stuff up out of the way two days before the race start. We went for a practice sail tagging behind the 'WAGS' twilight fleet so that we could get our crew work down pat. Unfortunately, this resulted in a broken centreboard as I was shown one of Moreton Bay's underwater rock features. "Good one Murphy. That will really help!" Was this Murphy showing who's boss, even in light conditions and in Phil's 'backyard'? Maybe. But Phil had it covered.

“Properly planning for the B2G, even after having done several, is no small deal”

Surfing in the setting sun in the company of *Renaissance*. (main pic far left)

With a lot less comfort but a lot more speed the Line Honours winner *B.O.S.S Racing* looks menacingly fast even tied up. (below)





Tough job, this supervising the laundry drying. (above left)

With the steering wheel off, Phil sorts out the seized bearing. (above right)



“Only a day and a bit to the race, Phil, what are you going to do?” “Ah, fix it, no worries.”

Yep, he had it covered. With only the cleverly engineered and built 500mm tip breaking off and all the necessary tools and materials in his garage to fix it, the four metre board was put on the roof racks and taken home for a rebuild. Of

course, he still had plenty of time to be a good family dad to his lovely wife and children and to prepare a fish curry for the race. Heather’s delicious cannelloni that night was all part of a very generous welcome to their home.

The following day I met crew member Corey and we got stuck into some odd jobs on the boat and by mid afternoon




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the cat was pretty much ready for racing. Although, I did have a sneaking suspicion we were just doing a delivery as Phil was back at his house loading up the family car and trailer with fishing gear, dinghies, surfskis, barbecues, sand toboggans and piles of other stuff for the weeks of cruising with the family that he had planned for after our arrival in Gladstone.

Of course, we had been keeping a close watch on the weather forecast in the lead up to the start and the predictions varied slightly from quite perfect conditions to even more perfect conditions as the race day approached and all in the wake of a cyclone that had wreaked havoc only two weeks earlier. Looking good.

So, we filled the boat's fridge full of food and drinks while the boxes and bags of food we had for our epic voyage of maximum two days disappeared into the 'kitchen' cupboards. We had enough food for weeks. My new role, get the crew to eat as much food as possible.

The race started in gorgeous 10kt sparkling conditions and we earned some rum credits within seconds as we let a rather impatient *Raider* barge in on the start line. A laugh to start with – excellent. As the predicted sou'easter built to 15-20kts in the afternoon the white plumes of the rooster tail's wake stretched out further and further behind us.

But it wasn't long until the first excitement. As the course makes it's way



out of the north end of Moreton Bay, there is a short 'dogleg' that we thought might make the sailing angle a bit hot and we casually decided to err on the side of caution and douse the kite. The big Schionning in front of us tried to hang onto theirs but there was too much pressure and it exploded.

A small swell greeted us as we got clear of the bay and we began surfing. And so it was for the next 25 hours or so. Surfing, surfing, surfing. Night and day the wind blew 15-20kts from behind. Watching the wake was mesmerising. As the sun disappeared I cooked up some rice and heated up the delicious fresh fish curry and we all ate silently and comfortably on this wonderfully stable magic carpet speeding through the night at 12-18kts with the full moon rising.

Compared with some of his horrendous multihull experiences (not to mention the 1979 *Fastnet*) steering by foot while the steering was being repaired was an easy task for Richard. (far top left)

Toilet and bathroom with hot shower is big enough to swing a cat. (top left)

Ample galley and rear cabin dedicated to the fridge freezer. (top right)

Rhythmic's lounge room. (above)



Schionning Wilderness Ketos owner Darryl enjoying the ride. (above left)
 Champion Nacra sailor, Corey, mesmerised by the wake. (above right)



Cups of tea and coffee, Heather's home made brownies, melted cheese, tomato and avocado toasted sandwiches and tuna or ham and salad sangas were all part of our race strategy. So much food on board – so little time to eat it all. It was tough. At times there were sleeping bodies strewn over the couches and beds as the boat really only needed two on deck. One steering and one 'supervising' and hanging on to the kite sheet – just in case.

But it wasn't completely zombie time.

We had to slow down for many hours as the steering had gone 'funny' and was getting progressively worse. Eventually, at about three in the morning (when else?) the steering seized altogether. Was this Murphy's moment? We slowed right down and Richard steered by the rudder stock by foot and Phil and Corey ripped into the steering mechanism and found the port wheel had seized its bearing. It just needed lubing and reassembly and, as the dawn broke, we were off again like a scared gazelle.





There were plenty of hands on deck so I slipped down below to have a snooze on one of the queen-sized beds. A few hours later I was woken by a sudden movement and drowsily went up stairs to see what was happening. The sun was well up, the wind was fresh, and Phil had declared the steering was perfect and his body language showed he was in a 'take no prisoners' mood. He was steering his catamaran like a go-cart, the swell was up and we were flying. "Everyone move to the back of the bus, wind the windows up and hang on."

Repairing the broken centreboard. (above)

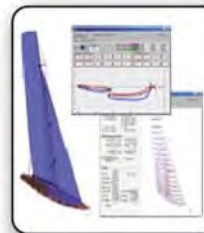
Nice weather for the start. "Oh okay, through you go, but it will cost you rum!" (below)



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It was exciting and hypnotic. We craved for the waves to build up so you could then feel the sensation of the boat accelerate down the now quite big wave faces. We all took turns steering the go-cart and it certainly took some concentration to snake our way up and down the two metre waves and trying to keep the kite set optimally as the apparent wind fluctuated wildly in strength and direction as we climbed up out of the troughs and sped off down the wave faces. For hours we could see a couple of sails ahead and that kept us urging the boat onwards. As it turned out the sails belonged to the very fast cat *Cut Snake* which had had to slow because of some rudder issues and the modified Volvo 60 *Nikon*. The only other mono to beat us was *Wild Oats X's* motor sailor (ie canting keel and powered winches) sister ship *Jack Black*.

We blasted down Gladstone Harbour, past the the soon to be ill fated *Shen Neng I*, to the finish. Getting the kite down quickly and stopping before the seawall just beyond the finish line became a concern. "Apply the brakes – quick!". No worries. All that was left to do was tie up, tidy up, and party on.

I must say that I was so impressed with our crew Corey, Darryl and Richard. They had vast, fascinating multihull and sailing experience and were so very pleasant to sail with. As for the boat, I had always liked the look of the Pescotts but I'm very fussy about the ergonomics of bridgedeck cat layouts (some are just

plain stupid), not to mention their sailing qualities. Well *Rhythmic* satisfied my wishlist in spades – very, very impressive.

To start with she is very pretty and has a six metre comfy couch with proper corners (not curved corners), fridge/freezer with easy access, two easy-to-get-into queen sized beds and a couple of big singles, large private toilet and hot shower in the bathroom with plenty of head and elbow room, large navigation area, twin wheels with all round vision not through the windows, a large galley, masses of storage, rear steps down to the water; is really nice to sail, is logically and simply laid out and the fruit bowl never shifted! All on a 36 footer.

Yep, B2G 2010 on *Rhythmic* was memorable and good.

So, the next major event on the sailing calendar apart from the regular RMYC Saturday races and the series of offshore

races with the Shorthanded Association is the APC Logistics Lock Crowther Memorial Regatta. Looks like it will be well attended by all manner of multihulls from serious racers to cruising boats and everything in between and sponsors are already showing keenness to contribute with APC, Seawind mast supplier Tempo Spars, Tactical Directions advertising, Summit Coatings, Arco Hutton of The Australian Yacht Winch Co. and Seawind Catamarans already on board.

Hopefully, we'll see you there. It's gonna be a party!

The good ship *Rhythmic* resting in Gladstone waiting for its next assignment – family cruising. (below)

Justifiably pleased with himself and trimaran *Akimbo* Rob relaxes at Gladstone. (inset)

