



by CRAIG SCHIONNING

THE SPIRITED 380 HAS proven itself in the market place but I still get some people asking me “Can the Spirited 380 handle offshore or long-term cruising?” my answer to this question hasn’t changed, “Of course it can, this is what it is designed for!”

The perception that the Spirited 380 is purely an ‘inshore’ sports boat seems to come from this design’s high performance characteristics. Just because a boat performs well doesn’t mean it isn’t suited to live aboard long term cruising. The design brief for the Spirited 380 always included a generous allowance for a ‘realistic’ cruising payload. Most cruising catamarans will perform very well if stripped down of all their cruising paraphernalia to the bare basics (essentially a boat without its payload). Due to the light-weight structural shell of the 380, the boat weighs much less in ‘lightship’ trim than if compared with a typical production boat, offering excellent performance in ‘stripped out’ race mode.

This aspect in a design is very desirable because as with most cruising boats they accumulate more and more gear over time. It’s always recommended to have a good ‘spring’ clean every so often to remove any unnecessary clutter and lighten the boat. This is an option that you have when the boat has a light structure.

We now also have a cruising rig option available to suit the 380 for anyone wanting a more conservative sail plan. This also brings the centre of effort of the sail area down a little and makes sail-handling easier. What people need to understand is that the rig and sail plan can be customised to suit personal requirements in the same way the boat’s design can be changed.

The Spirited 380s launched to date have now proved in reality that this design is a fast cruising boat. An interesting example of this was displayed between two Spirited 380s sailing side by side. Both boats were identical except one was fully loaded in cruising trim and

the other was completely bare (just launched). The interesting observation was that both boats averaged almost identical boat speeds when sailing side by side. This evidence proved that the Spirited 380 could achieve excellent passage speeds when loaded up in cruising trim. Also observed was the difference in motion at sea, while the heavier 380 had a more comfortable motion with slower reaction speeds, the empty 380 was much more lively and reacted almost instantly to wind gusts but the average boat speed was the same.

To explore this more I thought I would ask some of our professional builders for their comments and feedback from clients, this included some interesting information.

Stallion Marine’s last two Spirited 380s launched were heavily set up for cruising. *Gaia*, launched just prior to the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show this year had a very full list of cruising inventory. In an effort to offset the weight impact associated with



ode



the extra equipment a few weight-saving ideas were chosen. The first was a carbon-fibre mast which saved precious weight aloft. Another option was the Ullman Sails hi-tech 'Fibrepath' sail design option which uses 'Technora' laminated fibre saving around 20% in weight if compared to cruise laminate, and 30% if carbon fibres are used in place of the 'Technora' fibres. Possibly the most effective installation for saving weight was a water maker which reduced the size of the tanks, water being a very heavy commodity on a boat. Combining all of the above options saved a significant amount of weight.

Minx, Stallion's first Spirit 380 to be launched, is currently cruising Indonesia after working their way up the east coast of Australia to Darwin. The owners are going to gradually make their way to the Mediterranean. This boat is operating well in the cruising environment.

David Biggar from Stallion Marine shared his comments on the priorities of setting up a Spirit 380 for cruising. In

regards to why clients choose the Spirit 380, he said "Our customers wanted a boat that was going to perform well in safety and this is what the Spirit 380 does. They were also attracted by the good looks of the boat which is also very important". In terms of power issues on board for extended cruising, David recommends the following, "Good quality batteries, power-efficient equipment, adequate solar panels, upgraded alternators on the motors and if required, the installation of a wind generator".

Fraser Coast Custom Marine (FCCM) gave us their views, "The Spirit 380 combines looks, safety and relative luxury and packages it into a high performance functional cruising boat, this is why we chose the 380 as our semi-production model". In terms of cruising gear and associated fit-out ideas, FCCM had this to say, "On our company demonstrator 380 we wanted to include all the usual comforts of home but were mindful of the weight impact which can have a detrimental effect on a boat's

Gaia just launched, note the carbon mast.
(main pic left)

Minx under screecher, a popular cruising sail.
(above)

performance. Priorities for us are: good sized top-loading fridge, 25lt hotwater system, full electronics including radar for navigation, TV, DVD and the option of a wind generator. In terms of finish internally, we chose a few 'luxury' options such as leather upholstery, wood trim and high quality fabrics for lining. The 380 accommodates the above options but still offers excellent performance". FCCM also enjoy the efficient SAS build system, "It all starts with the comprehensive kit, this makes the build so much quicker and easier".

Peter Milner from Peter Milner Yachts also had some interesting feedback about the 'cruisability' of the Spirit 380. Peter has done almost 2000 sea miles aboard the 380 he built in Fremantle, WA. When



asked about the long extended trips he touched on some of the main features, "A great feature of the 380 is the excellent passage speeds. The boat runs along very easily, safely and comfortably at much higher than average speeds. The indoor/outdoor design between the saloon and cockpit is fantastic underway, apart from being great socially it allows for good visibility when night sailing". When asked about the sailing aspect of this design he had this to say, "The decks are really safe and easy to get around on. Reefing is a breeze at the mast, the recess in the cabin around the base of the mast is a safe area to position yourself securely while working these lines". For anyone considering cruising the Kimberley or any other areas inhabited by crocodiles, Peter recommends washboards to block off the walkthrough access-ways into the cockpit, "These would be easily accessible for crocs so is a must for this area". While I had him I asked how the 380 travelled in a WA following sea, "The boat is light and therefore lifts immediately, I haven't seen any waves come even close to washing into the cockpit. The boat's speed helps here too and accelerates away before the wave has any momentum. Firstly I was concerned about water accessing the engine bays below the steps in a following sea but the engine hatch design keeps these areas completely dry".

From the client's point of view we got some feedback from Dale Rowney who had just taken delivery of his brand new Spirited 380. The latest Spirited 380 launched by Stallion, Zinc was customised to suit this client's particular cruising requirements. These included storage areas for dive gear and surfboards as well as the usual long-term cruising gear. To help to refill their water tanks they have added a custom made cover over the foredeck to collect water. Their plans are to cruise the Pacific for two years.

Dale had this to say when deciding on which boat would suit him and his wife, "At the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show in 2006 we were mesmerised as we wandered through Stallion Marine's first Spirited 380, *Minx*. We were looking for a vessel to undertake a two year surfing and diving adventure around the coast of Australia and onto South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. In the midst of the beautiful

Huge shade / water catchment cover over the foredeck area of *Zinc*. (above left)

Comparison between two Spirited 380s, top one is fully loaded, bottom boat empty. (left)



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boats Australian boat builders had to offer, *Minx* clearly stood out. We were attracted to her sleek and elegant design, her modern, comfortable living space and her sailing ability as a light, fast cruising boat which can sail anything from light breezes to open ocean gales."

Important cruising features for Dale were, "A combined navigation station, galley and saloon. This gives us the ability to combine living and sailing upstairs where everything is happening. We use

our mobile internet connection for entertainment and sailing and the separate navigation station with space for our lap-top and charts enables us to keep these set up, leaving the saloon free for other activities". Dale and his wife Jeunesse couldn't be happier with their decision, "We are elated with *Zinc* and we are certain we made the right choice".

In conclusion, the Spirited 380 has the ability to cater to a wide range of



double up in the wo

Zinc's modern interior colours shown in the saloon. (above left)
Inside of port hull hull on *Zinc*. (above)

applications. From around the buoys to offshore adventuring the Spirited 380 can do it. If parts of the design don't suit your requirements talk to Spirited Designs about the possibility of custom-designing the 380 to suit your particular needs:

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