



Happy Days as the 23rd Spirited 380 HITS THE WATER!



Chris christens *Tasha*.

With a passion for boats kindled at birth from a childhood spent living full time on boats, Craig Schionning owner and designer at Spirited Designs never turns down an opportunity to witness one of his designs on their launch. So when Chris Downing was ready to put his custom Spirited 380 'Tasha' in the water this March, Craig and his wife Marina were there for the big day. With the weather forecast against them and some last minute preparation, the big day was met with great anticipation.

The Spirited 380 design was the first of Spirited Designs popular range to be released. With the prototype – built by Craig, unveiled at the 2007 Sanctuary Cove Boat Show, and shortly after, featured on the cover of the *Multihull World* magazine in full flight. The popularity for the design grew and the building process known as the 'Spirited Assembly System' became recognised as one of the easiest and quickest systems available. Proud owners of *Zinc* – the seventh Spirited 380, said about the boat;

"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." To date almost 40 of this design have been sold, with Chris Downing – proud owner of the 23rd Spirited 380 launching his boat *Tasha* on Friday, March 20, 2015.

Chris started his Spirited 380 journey just over six years ago and has been extremely dedicated in his approach. His Spirited 380 interior was custom designed by Spirited Designs to suit his specific requests. Chris's project has taken him just over six years part time to complete, with a stunning result. The finish is as good as a

professional standard, with a very high attention to detail and choice of fittings. Internally the finish is mostly satin polyurethane paint surfaces with some soft linings.

The customised interior consists of a separate walk-in basin area forward of the main head and shower. This has made space in the saloon for instrumentation and a neat hide-away locker for the TV. Another change was in the starboard aft cabin, which was made into a walk-in workshop area with provision for bicycle storage and the option of a fold-down bunk. Chris has put a lot of thought into making good use of space, with large slide-out drawers in the galley and also below the saloon seats. Another choice was to fit two drop-down windows in the aft saloon bulkhead which opens up this flow-through area substantially together with the main door.

About three weeks before the launch Chris called Craig for some assistance with installing his cabin windows, which was a perfect opportunity for Craig to see the progress of the project first hand.

"We were very impressed with the standard of work, the paint finish was beautiful and it was evident how much effort had gone into the fairing and paint prep. The boat was

in the usual state for this stage of build, with fittings lain out and tools everywhere. It was clear that it was going to be a very busy three weeks to get the boat ready," said Craig after he arrived to help with some finishing touches.

Craig and Marina didn't want to miss out on witnessing the launch, so they made sure they returned for the occasion. The boat was housed in a shed in Terara near Nowra on the South Coast of NSW, with the nearest launch site at Greenwell Point about 15 minutes away – an ideal sheltered location for the launch. With the truck, escorts and crane booked there was no backing out! Craig and Marina arrived the afternoon before to find the usual chaos associated with launchings; people running around madly and Chris with a list of the final jobs to do in hand. The truck trailer was in position under the boat but nothing was loaded yet. To add further issues, the trailer wasn't central to the boat when backed in so the boat needed to be shifted sideways around 200mm! Chris was lucky to have loyal friends and family on hand to help him out. With a long night put in the boat was finally loaded and ready for the truck, which arrived at 6am.

The truck arrived in all its splendour at Greenwell Point just after 8am with the usual pilots, police escorts and plenty of curious onlookers. After negotiating the centre traffic island at the entrance to the boat ramp area where the exposed rudder and saildrive leg on the port side disappeared through vegetation with Chris nervously looking on, the boat was backed up to the edge of the boat ramp where the crane was waiting. Slings the boat required a few attempts before the slings were adjusted and balance point was reached.

A strong southerly was predicted and was starting to build with a few dark clouds hovering so time was of the essence. The gods must have been smiling on Chris because just as the crane took the weight, the wind died away and the sun came out, now that's perfect timing! The boat was expertly lifted, spun in the air and gently lowered into the water with hardly a breath of wind to be seen.

Chris was clearly relieved to have his boat safely on the water and out of harm's way; he did a quick check through the hulls to ensure there were no leaks and came back up with the all clear. Both engines kicked

into life and were running faithfully. The boat was floating very high on her lines and was bobbing around with a lively action. Able to then focus on more important things like christening his new baby *Tasha*, Chris wet her bows with a splash of champagne and said some kind words of thanks to friends and family for their support.

The rig and sails will be delivered in the coming

weeks, not soon enough according to Chris! Although there is still plenty to do to finish *Tasha*, (things like locker doors to fit, fiddle rails, soft lining and floor coverings), we are sure that with the pressure off these jobs can be done at Chris's leisure.

Tasha's maiden voyage will be to her new home in Port Stephens where Chris has a new job. Craig and Marina are of course so happy to have Chris and *Tasha* in their 'backyard' and will be able to lend a hand to see the completion of this beautiful boat!

Chris had this to say about his experience:

"I found the SAS kit system an efficient and easy method to build as compared to other traditional build techniques. I love every part of my Spirited 380 and have enjoyed the project. The support from Spirited Designs has been first-class and I always felt that help was close at hand. I am looking forward to now starting the next stage of my adventure on Tasha."



Port-side locker in saloon above the modified hand basin area in the hull.



A relieved and proud owner!



Tasha being loaded onto the trailer.



The truck arrives at Greenwell Point.



A tense moment but everything goes very smoothly.

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If you would like any further information about the Spirited 380 and the Spirited Assembly System, you can contact Spirited Designs - Catamaran Design and Kit System Specialists

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