

DELIVERY VOYAGE OF ROLLING ON

Story and photos by Keith Roll, "Rolling On"

Finally after years of planning the day eventually arrived to take delivery of our new Fusion 40 Catamaran (motor away version). Most new boat launchings entail launching the boat, and motoring it a few miles to its' new home for fitting out.

We did the same, only our fitting out berth was nearly 2000 nauti-

cal miles away in Darwin, Northern Territory. This is a long way when the boat has no creature comforts. Imagine a tent with nothing inside, only this one bucks around when the seas decide.



"Rolling On" at Airlie Beach, prior to her trip to Darwin

A month before launch date my wife Lianne and I packed up our camping gear and boat safety equipment and had it transported to Airlie Beach, Queensland.

A few days before launching we flew into Mackay, Queensland and were met by my parents who had driven up from Caloundra, Queensland to witness the launch.

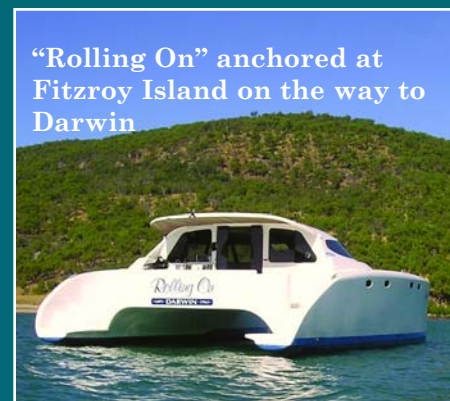
The launching took place at 05.30 Thursday 27th May to catch the tide, so with the popping of champagne corks at a very early hour Rolling On was craned into the water watched by a lot of tenses Fusion employees, prospective Fusion buyers, friends and curious onlookers. It was not long before all of the above were on

board for its' maiden sea trial which proved a resounding success. Four days later after storing and waiting for the winds to abate we were motoring our way to Darwin and a prospective buyer placed an order the same morning after the sea trial.

We cast off after lunch on Monday 31st May 2004 with Lianne having all these yachting magazine visions of idyllic locations and calm seas. We anchored off Gloucester Eco Resort 20 odd nautical miles from Airlie Beach, the food there was fantastic and staff very friendly. On day 2 the vision of calm seas was given way to 2 - 3 metre swell on the

stern, the boat handled them well with the log peaking at 19 knots surfing down a wave we continued day hopping up the Queensland coast, inside of Hinchinbrook Island, crossed the bar at Hull Heads to visit friends and take refuge from a strong wind warning which lasted 3 days.

Monday the 8th of June saw us on our way again with the tail of the wind warning starting to subside, working our way up to Yorkeys Knob berthing at Half Moon Bay Marina for the night, taking on fuel and water. The next morning we



"Rolling On" anchored at Fitzroy Island on the way to Darwin

were on our way heading for Cooktown arriving on the second day. Its' an interesting place full of history of Captain Cook, we visited two museums and could easily have spent more time there and have vowed to return and do just that (But not in the near future).

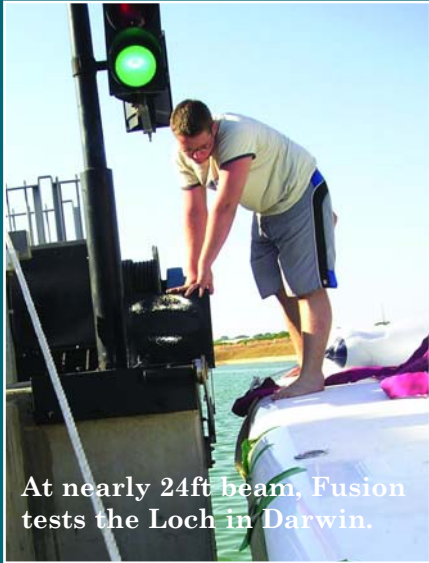
Next morning saw us on our way again and after 6 days of motoring we anchored off Siesa on the western side of Cape York (top of Australia) once again held up because of strong wind warnings, after 2 days at Siesa and topping up with fuel and water the winds had abated enough and we departed heading out into the Gulf of Carpentaria to Gove, this being our first overnight steam Lianne was a bit apprehensive to say the least!!! 45 hours later saw us anchored in Gove harbor off the yacht club; we had seen the reassuring glow of the bauxite plant for nearly half the night.

Once again strong wind warnings held us up so we took the opportunity to move into a Hotel for a couple of days (Which was like heaven, hot showers and a warm cosy still bed) we also hired a vehicle to get around as the yacht club is a long way from town.

Another 2 days later saw us on our way again, on the final leg of our epic journey leaving Gove on the back end of the strong wind warning knowing that after we passed though "the hole in the wall" things would improve. As we approached the entrance of Culgari Passage (hole in the wall) the seas were extremely confused with 3-4 metre swells and just to make things interesting a rain squall closed in. It was such a welcome relief when we entered the passage.

Five days later saw us anchored in Port Essington off the beach where the British settled in 1838 until 1849 we were going ashore in our rubber dinghy to see the ruins when I pointed out a crocodile sunning himself on the beach just at that moment he decided to move (at a very fast pace) into the water, Lianne wanted "out of this dinghy and hurry up" our little 2 metre rubber dinghy had never gone so fast, the croc was twice as long as

OWNERS



At nearly 24ft beam, Fusion tests the Loch in Darwin.

it. So it was a welcome relief when we were back onboard Rolling On. So much for our nature walk!!! We will have to return another time with a "real dinghy" to inspect the ruins (Lianne hopes they are worth it!!).

Once again the winds were up so we took shelter and slowly made our way around to Popham Bay near Cape Don waiting for the winds to die off once again.

On the morning of Tuesday 29th of June we up anchored for the last time and set course for Darwin arriving shortly after 10pm dropping anchor in Fannie Bay off the Darwin Sailing Club. Having travelled a distance of 1924.7 nautical miles in 233.1 hours of motor-

ing, and being held up for total of 9 days due to bad weather. We had complete confidence in the boat in all weather conditions. We reached speeds of 20 knots surfing down waves and it became our favorite pastime watching the log.

On the way we saw many sea creatures' sea snakes, turtles, dolphins, crocodiles, dugongs and flying fish with a couple landing on the deck one of which gave Lianne a hell of a fright in the middle of the night during the Gulf crossing.

Some Engine Facts:

One day we travelled 80 nm in 7.5 hours @ 2600 rpm!! (An average speed of 10.666 knots per hour).

I topped up with Fuel in Seisa (Bamaga) (Yorkeys Knob-Seisa 380 lts) which got me all the way to Darwin with approx 1/3 tank to spare. Keith had long range tanks fitted because he will be spending a lot of time in the North West of Aus.

With no following sea:
2600 rpm gives better than 8 knots
2400 rpm about 7.5 kts.
2000 rpm better than 6 knots

The 8.2 knt average for the entire journey was provided by 2 of the new 29hp Yanmar Diesel Saildrives and a Navman Autopilot.



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