

DURING these uncertain COVID times, it's good to hear all the planets lined up for boating enthusiast John Morgan and his family.

After owning eight boats over a 15-year period, including an 11m vessel which they found too restrictive, the Morgans sat down as a family to draw up a bucket list of their wants in a totally new vessel.

John and 14-year-old son Riley are mad about anything on the water, wife Astrid is the keen fisher of the family and daughter Lilah, aged 12, was seeking space. All wanted a soft ride and stability.

The decision was made – it had to be a catamaran.

After much research and with the fact there was a local dealership, the Morgans liked the look of the Sailfish brand from New South Wales.

Like all marine dealers around the country, lengthy delays are being experienced putting boating packages together due to a lack of components.

However, it just so happened dealer principal Greg Collett at Bunbury's Sports Marine Boat Centre was taking delivery of the latest Sailfish S8 featuring the new Hydroflow Gen 3 hull.

This year Sailfish is celebrating its 25th anniversary and the Gen 3 hull has been pushed out a further 150mm at the waterline, allowing for greater stability in the stern and faster hole shot performance, in effect, giving owners more boat for their money.

Sailfish Catamarans employs more than 20 full-time tradesmen and apprentices, producing around 30 boats a year from its factory at Alstonville in NSW. Vastly different from when owner Darren Foster began building catamarans in 1984 with just two staff members.

Back then they produced five boats a year.

In 2000 Sailfish built its own factory which now comprises seven building bays, spray painting booth

trailer production bay and two fit-up areas where the packages are completed.

"Our success can be put down to the teamwork, ethical standards and workmanship that exists in our company and Sailfish Catamarans will continue to be market leaders not followers," said Darren Foster.

In 1998 Sailfish appointed Sports Marine as its West Australian agent, strengthening the company's national alliance and service representation.

Every major boat show here in the West, Darren joins Greg on board the Sailfish vessels on display.

When I arrived at this year's Club Marine Perth Boat Show at the Convention and Entertainment Centre at 10.30am on the first day back in September, Greg was already affixing the sold sticker to the hull of the Sailfish S8.

"We'd been looking at the Sailfish for years and have seen how the brand has developed," said John Morgan.

"They make a nice boat and are willing to change features around to suit your needs.

"When this one arrived, we could not believe our luck as it had everything on our bucket list that we wanted.

"We've known people who have owned catamarans and love their stability, plus it needed to be an all-rounder able to go in the Swan River to do a bit of crabbing, go out wide to do some fishing, or a couple of days to Rotto camping for the four of us.

"Of course, we need the comforts too – toilet for the girls, and plenty of bunk space so you can spread out.

"We were extremely fortunate as this one is the 2023 spec build, and it was just about completed when we learned about it.

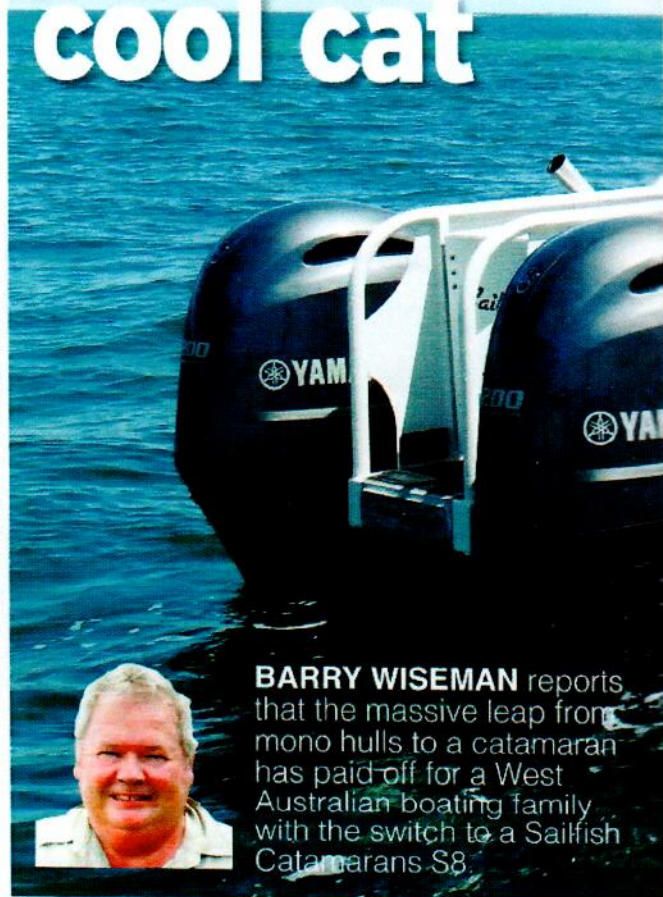
"So if you order one now these are the specifications you will get, being the S8 model.

"We thought we might have to wait and join the queue; however, it came

BOAT REVIEW

Sailfish S8 Catamaran

Sailfish is one very cool cat



BARRY WISEMAN reports that the massive leap from mono hulls to a catamaran has paid off for a West Australian boating family with the switch to a Sailfish Catamarans S8.

with everything we wanted.

"I thought about getting the twin Yamaha 150hp engines but this one has the twin 200s, so I was happier with that, knowing I have that little bit of extra power if need be."

UP FRONT

Heading forward, the infill cushions make a large double bed where all the Morgan family will be able to spread out.

If John heads out with a mate to do a bit of fishing and wishes to overnight, the two side bunks are roomy.

The electric toilet sits under the centre cushions plus there's a 45-litre

freshwater tank up front that services the shower and sink on the transom.

A second tank also holds fresh water servicing the twin windscreen washers.

Under the bunks there is a huge amount of storage space for bedding or sleeping bags plus spare clothing and linen.

A hatch in the roof and two portholes give plenty of daylight and ventilation in the forward cabin.

The roof hatches continue in the wheelhouse and above the helm, aided by sliding windows at the sides.

The skipper's deck is

when in the standing position.

It's a roomy helm area, with solid footrests port and starboard plus drink holders.

The dash shelf on the port side is huge and lined with carpet, again in the matching dark grey colour scheme, and could double as a chart table plus servery when making that early morning cuppa after spending the night moored up in Thomson Bay at Rottneest Island.

Between the seats and the rear wall of the wheelhouse there is more storage for loose items such as lifejackets, sunscreen, and wet weather gear, etc.

Windows and double-glass doors (featuring the etched leaping Sailfish logo) lead to a large rear cockpit, with the EVA foam flooring underfoot.

Interestingly here the manufacturers have applied the same high-density foam on the side decks and on the gunwales, adding both a soft touch when leaning against the sides fishing, plus preventing slipping when stepping aboard at the jetty or heading round the cabin to the foredeck.

The aluminium plate has been curved on the inside to prevent sharp corners and the foam decking material follows that curvature.

It hurts when you get slammed against the side wall of any vessel, especially if there are corners and 90-degrees angles.

Taking the time to bend sheet aluminium to protect those on board is a sign the manufacturer has either been in that very situation or has listened to people who have ended up with injuries.

It is reassuring to know that builders are thinking about and paying this much attention to their product.

To its credit, Sailfish has continued that thinking along the port and starboard transom.

Above the many lockers fitted along the transom wall, padded upholstery at waist height makes it easy to lean against when baiting



■ The complete fish station across the transom, plus freshwater shower.



■ A large dash with anti-glare surrounds and quality fittings.

up or washing your hands using the salt-water tap servicing that area.

How many times have you had to scrub hard your baitboard after a fishing session to remove the scraps of dry leftovers or squid ink?

On the Sailfish you simply turn on the tap and rinse the board clean, dry your hands and carry on.

The port side transom houses a live bait tank and stainless sink with running freshwater, while there's also a freshwater shower on the transom marlin board when you have finished your swim or dived for a few crayfish.

LIVE ABOARD

If the better half orders fresh cray for lunch, not a problem as the cockpit seat on the starboard side has an LPG gas barbecue fitted underneath.

Fire up the Sizzler Deluxe,

add some garlic butter and within minutes the cray tails are ready.

The wine or a cold beer is stored in the Dometic portable fridge which is kept under a passenger seat on the port side.

When opened, the upholstered backrest doubles as a table and includes a couple of stainless-steel drink wells for your glass or stubbie.

Foam decking material is used on the tabletop to avoid slippage.

Add a portable butane gas stove on the baitboard and you have your mini-galley.

Boil the billy, fresh fillets in the frypan or boil up your cray tails, with fresh water in the sink to wash your salad.

The storage tanks below deck are not only good to keep the catch fresh.

Fitting the bung gives you dry storage and a good place for food or camping

gear if you intend heading north and visit the many islands off the coast.

Being a catamaran, you have two hulls so at low tide the boat sits on the bottom if necessary while you search the mangroves for mud crabs and then fish the incoming tide.

Having two hulls you have two kill tanks so one can be used as dry storage while the other holds your catch until you're ready to fire up the barbecue or make a fire on the beach.

Solar panels on the cabin roof keep the batteries charged to run the fridge and your electronics, plus charging up the satellite phone.

The Sailfish S8 can take you anywhere as it holds 380 litres of fuel, plus you can store a jerry can or two either on the starboard marlin board or up on the roof top, with the hefty grab rails doubling up as roof rack tie points.

Sailfish's designers say extending the hull design on the Gen 3 vessel has not only resulted in providing more buoyancy at the transom, but with the reverse chines also being made that extra 150mm longer the boat now has more lift for better performance and economy.

The attention to the hydrodynamic flow of the S7 and S8 hulls has resulted in less drag, with Sailfish claiming the Gen 3 hull is the most advanced it has made.

■ High freeboard and shallow draft are features of the new Hydroflow Gen 3 Sailfish Catamaran.



cious with room for largest GPS/sounder box and the instrument panel features a padded leather upholstered sill which protects the screens from the sun coming through the front of the helm.

is a classy approach I had not noticed on other Sailfish models.

ish too is the switch panel to the left of the less steering wheel.

he right you have a by-wire digital twin throttle controls plus circuit breaker for the Lone Star 1200 winch in the anchor

Heavy-duty safety rails are installed in the bow section along with EVA foam decking, the colour scheme of which continues throughout the vessel.

The dark grey theme is easy on the eyes, reducing glare and sunlight bouncing into the helm area.

The foam lining, boasting the Sailfish company logo, continues in the wheelhouse itself, both on the side walls and floor, and is put to effective use in the cockpit too.

The upmarket skipper and co-pilot pedestal seats are mounted on storage boxes and come with lower-back bolsters for greater comfort

NUTS & BOLTS

MODEL: Sailfish S8 Catamaran

LENGTH: 7.9m

BEAM: 2.45m

DRAFT: 600mm

FUEL: 2x190 litres

WATER: 45 litres

FLOTATION: Built-in foam buoyancy

PASSENGERS: Eight

MANUFACTURER: Sailfish Catamarans;

www.sailfish.com.au

AGENT: Sports Marine Boat Centre;

7 Strickland Street, Bunbury, 6230; (08) 9721.4390

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