

In the Spirit

WORDS + PHOTOS BARRY TRANTER



DIY sailing doesn't get much better than this...

In the 1960s, Arthur Piver and James Wharram showed people how to nail together plywood sheets to create trimarans and catamarans that could be built for peanuts and sailed across oceans. I think it was Wharram who said that anyone who could build a kitchen cupboard could build one of his cats.

The multi-hullers of the day were rugged individualists at heart. They were often poor, so the idea of DIY ocean voyaging fell on fertile ground.

Even in this age of composite construction, multi-hullers still like to build their own boats. But times have changed; people are richer than they used to be. Potential sailors these days may have neither the time nor the inclination to build their own boat and they may well have the money to buy ready-made.

RED HOT DEAL

Young NSW designer Craig Schionning operates both sides of the street. He has

pitched his Spirited 380 design at the home builder by offering pre-cut kits that reduce the amount of work. "We help as much as we can," he says. "And we keep our ear to the ground and may even be able to find customers a shed."

"We can help with buying the rig and the sails, the big-ticket items, and we have a red-hot deal with the Nanni diesels." But he will also recommend a builder. Stallion Marine at Yandina on the Sunshine Coast puts out what he calls 'a nice semi-production 380'. He also has a selection of good builders in different areas if locality is an issue. The multi-hull fraternity know 'who' they can trust to deliver a light, sound structure. The prices quoted here for the completed boat are from Stallion Marine.

Because each boat is essentially a one-off, there is room for a certain amount of customising.

Craig chose the size of the 380 (38ft, 11.7m) very carefully. He considers it

an ideal compromise between cost, seaworthiness, performance, ease of handling, and all the other factors, which generate ulcers for yacht designers.

He doesn't want to do a wide range of yachts. The 380 ("a big 38-footer", he says) was conceived as a light performance cruiser with comfortable accommodation, a handy size and enough sail for good performance. Craig is designing a more sedate cruising rig for, he says, "someone your age or older who is more into cruising".

My age? Sigh.

THE KIT

All the bulkheads and hull panels are router-cut from flat panels of Duflex end-grain balsa. The boat is built the right-way up because the kit includes pre-moulded hull bottoms and gunwale components. You set up your hull mouldings, the bulkheads slot in, the chamfer and bridge deck panels are offered up, the gunwale



mouldings go on then you can start applying the flat panels which form skin and deck. The designer suggests leaving off the hulls' outer skins for easy access during the fit-out.

The Duflex panels are pre-glassed with the flush 'Z-joining' system already machined on the appropriate edges ready to join. The system minimises the amount of faring needed, the dark side of building in fibreglass without moulds.

Craig estimates building time at around 4000-4500 hours, to a level of finish he describes as basic standard.

“Craig estimates the building time is under 4500 hours”

THE BOAT

The Spirited 380 is a pretty boat with sleek lines unspoiled by unnecessary fittings, including the chainplates, which are composite and incorporated into the structure. The mainsheet traveller runs across the bridge deck behind the cockpit while the dinghy davits are neat composite arms, which fold for access to the swim platform aft. When the dinghy is raised you have to duck under the davits.

The coachroof extends over the cockpit providing weather protection and, every bit as important, somewhere to walk to tidy up the mainsail stow when sailing is over.

For good windward performance the designer has specified daggerboards, foam-cored fins, which are pulled up and down by lines. The bottom 300mm of the boards is sacrificial, tearing off if you hit anything so the impact doesn't smash the boards' casing. When you get home you repair the board.

The 21hp Nanni diesels are mounted right in the stern, aft of the saildrive legs, which are reversed so the prop is in its natural position. Craig says this keeps fumes out of the interior and cuts noise.

This boat has an Allyacht Spars alloy mast but a carbon spar is available. The mast is well supported, vital because cats are so stable laterally. The inner forestay doesn't interfere with the jib, which blows through the gap between inner and outer even in light airs. And boy, did we have it light.

Around the mast base Craig has provided a secure space for a crew to operate halyards and reefing gear. He prefers this arrangement to running everything back to the cockpit, which he

finds unsightly and adds friction. He has mounted the headsail sheet winches on the angled coachroof, for the same reason. It looks odd but works fine. Stallion Marine places theirs in the cockpit.

There are two helm stations, surely the best cat arrangement, as you can get your head out in the slipstream, sniff the air, check the telltales, check the masthead — all that good sailor stuff — and you can see both bows through the windows.

The trampolines are not trampolines. Craig has instead opted to lace rope through eyes in the foredeck structure. It looks good, is easy to walk on, and retains no water. Presumably it doesn't deflect spray, either.

ACCOMMODATION

Put simply, there are three double cabins and two heads. Two of the cabins have transverse berths; the one in the starboard hull is the owner's cabin, with an en-suite head. This has a retractable showerhead but, as this boat has no sump, it is a backup to the main bathroom. However, as the designer points out, this is a kit boat and the spec is not fixed. The boat head, bigger and with a separate shower recess, is aft in the port hull.

The double berths are queens, 1.5m x 2.1m and you sleep with your head inboard, feet pointing to the hull sides. There is plenty of headroom and in later boats the designer will put in a shelf where you can put your cup of tea.

The second guest cabin, with a standard double, is aft in the starboard hull.

The galley is in the saloon, an arrangement everyone likes because the cook is involved in the action and there is plenty of light and air. In fact, there's plenty of light and air throughout the

ALL THE MOD CONS



Build it yourself and save plenty of cash, or have Stallion Marine on the Sunshine Coast build it for you. Either way you'll end up with a top cruising yacht that will suit the whole family.



boat; there are a lot of hatches, too many to list here.

This boat has a three-burner stove. There is an inverter for a microwave and you can run a laptop.

You can communicate with the cockpit through a window, which drops down into the main bulkhead.

At sea at night, says Craig, you can make a cup of tea while keeping an eye on everything and pass it straight to the crew in the cockpit.

Fridge and freezer are located across from the galley — facing forward. Both are top-loading to minimise cold loss when you open. Total capacity is 160lt split evenly between fridge and freezer.

SAILING

The main has a 2:1 halyard; our crew takes it most of the way manually, then uses the winch for the last bit. This work is done wedged into the snug recess around the mast base. The headsail is unrolled and sheets home.

The 380 is easy to work. You can sheet the headsail from the cockpit (if you are tall enough), but the angle and height of the winch make it easy to use when standing on the side deck. The radial mainsheet runs across the bulkhead aft of the cockpit and the sheet is led to winches either side.

Mainsheet and traveller lines are clutched each end before the winch and in gusty conditions it's recommended to leave the clutch off and keep the line in the self-

tailer jaws for easy release/dumping.

But for our sail we have very little wind. The 380 accelerates well and she doesn't hesitate to tack in almost no wind.

David Biggar recorded 15-knot cruising, with one spurt of 22, in 18 knots of breeze. One of Craig's clients with an analytical brain took a number of readings during a day with a dying breeze. The figures show the boat is happy to exceed wind speed throughout the wind range.

After our sail, we dropped the gear and as we motored home Craig reckoned that at the recommended cruise of 3200rpm you get 8 knots, but running only one engine gives you 7.5 knots using half the fuel. On passages offshore you alternate the engines to balance the wear.

Any criticisms? There was a little slack in the steering; Craig specified Edson mechanical cable steering for high feedback and he reckoned this was due for tensioning.

The Spirited 380 looks good, it's light and therefore quick and easy to handle. This boat, built by Craig and a team, was finished to a very high standard; the interior is high-style, bright, finished to production levels.

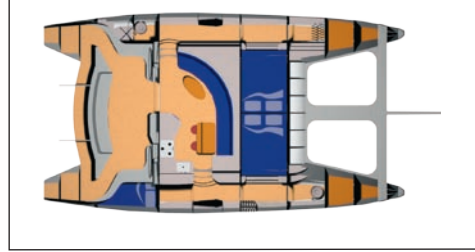
If you see something you don't like, if you want an extra hatch or locker, just talk to the designer.

If Arthur Piver is looking down from the multi-hullers' hereafter, he must wonder at modern boats like this one, which deliver everything he promised all those years ago. ⚓



SPECS SPIRITED 380

LOA:..... 11.7m
Beam:..... 6.53m
Draft:..... 500mm
Displacement: 5200kg
Sail Area: 96sq m
Mast Height: 16.45m
Fuel:..... 200lt
Freshwater:..... 400lt
Berths:..... Three doubles
Power:Twin 21hp Nanni diesels
Kit Price:.....\$106,480
Material Cost:\$185,000
Ready Built:\$489,000
Contact: (02) 4982 2788
www.spiriteddesigns.com.au



+	Well priced cruiser Easy to sail
-	Steering slack