

# The Stallion Story

■ by JO DJUBAL

The gleaming 380 is teeming with excited, inquisitive boat show punters. “How’re you going?” comes a happy call from the dock. “We thought this looked like one of Julian’s boats!” Frank and Val Pate step aboard and greet Julian Griffiths like an old mate, which he is, after building their last immaculate Pescott, *Playtime*. The fact that Julian Griffiths quality of work has become a recognisable trademark has a lot to do with how the Stallion Story began. This, and the entrepreneurial talents of young Dave Biggar has seen the creation of a fresh new build company who are definitely on the right track to success in a tight field.

Dave, National Sabot Champion and avid multihull enthusiast had a brain wave early in 2006. Recognising a market need for a Sports Cruiser at an affordable price, he did his research and decided the Spirited 380 was the way to go. Here was an innovative and eye catching design with an ingenious kit system which would minimise build time (and hence overall cost) and almost be a pleasure to work on. And he had no doubt the resulting boat would be a hit in the market place.

But his plan called for an uncompromising builder - one with a track record of excellence, staying power and, of course, a ‘nice bloke’ demeanour! It wasn’t long before his search through the network led him to Julian and the Stallion Marine concept truly began to take shape.

“We’d actually both sailed at the Noosa Yacht and Rowing Club but had never crossed paths.” says Julian. “I was ready to try something on a larger scale and was already impressed by Craig Schionning’s design. Daves bigger picture also made good sense. We got on well, shared similar ideas and I could see straight away that we’d work well together.”





**Scurfing behind the boat outside the Seaway! (above)**

So with the initial plan in place, the intrepid pair set off south to meet Craig, trusting the idea would make as much good sense to him too. The meeting was a successful collaboration between like minded enthusiasts, Craig was delighted to have Stallions considerable expertise available for those clients without the time to build a Spirited 380 themselves while Dave and Julian were thrilled to have Craig's valuable support.

"Craig was happy to approve our suggested modifications such as the positioning of head sail winches, changes to bathroom layout, hydraulic as opposed to cable steering, more cockpit seating and storage etc." says Dave. "We're also happy to customise further to suit clients specific needs and will continue to have such changes approved by the designer himself."

Stallions snappy marketing and soft sell approach is also in line with Craig's philosophy, namely. "If the boat is well priced, aesthetically pleasing and measures up to all its design criteria, there shouldn't be a need to push clients at all."

The essence of the Spirited Design and Stallion Marine collaboration was displayed perfectly at the Sanctuary Cove Show. The two boats side by side, each with their individual differences but exuding the same friendly vibe aboard and level of excellence from start to

finish. Potential clients had their field of choices expanded to enable the dream to become that much more accessible. Response was, needless to say, tremendous. "We also had a huge amount of interest on the upcoming 480." says Julian. "So it's lucky we've got a nice new big shed!"

With a veritable stampede of orders about to happen, Stallion are positioned well. "With our new 'headquarters' at Yandina on the Sunshine Coast, we envisage producing five to six boats per year with a five month build time per boat, three boats at once." he says. "We now have several hand picked builders and also have apprenticeships happening so we're very happy with what we've achieved since launching the company in August 2006. We use the cost effective and very safe service of a hydraulic lift house removal truck to get the boats to the water - Mooloolabah is just 40 minutes away and Brisbane only an hour. It's a great setup."

Stallion Marine is really offering something exciting for potential buyers - the chance to have a thoroughbred kit boat built by a team of enthusiastic professional builders at an affordable price. It may be early days for Stallion Marine but with such solid foundations, it's bound to be a long and satisfying ride ahead. ❖

# Launching Stallion Marine Spirited 380



## Spirited 380

Just two weeks before the boat show, Stallion Marines first Spirited 380 was carefully placed on the truck and carried to touchdown at Mooloolabah. It had been six and a half months since Julian, Dave and two other builders took possession of the kit - and went for it! The result? An impeccably built and finished cat for delighted new owners, John and Sue Hope. And the start of something big for Stallion Marine.

As usual, no launch is really complete without the odd hiccup, in this case, a slight misjudgement of the tides! But in typical 'she'll be right' attitude, the 4 tonne boat was set free of the sand with just a meagre push/lift manoeuvre by a small group of the Stallion 'herd'.

The next day the rig went on, followed on Thursday by the sails. The boys could hardly wait to get out there on their creation and Friday saw an exuberant crew head out for a hoot. David, Julian, Yancy and Godfrey (from Ullman Sails Sunshine Coast), Ian McMahon (Stallion builder) and young Jay Sherwell (Stallion apprentice) were more than rapped when the Spirited 380 glided along at 23kts in 3.0m seas and about 20-25kts of breeze with minimum sail. Young Jay had never sailed a multi before and his huge grin confirmed he'd picked the right apprenticeship!

Saturday rolled on and saw some more serious test sails ensue, (in other words - more fun!) before a photo shoot on Sunday. Owners John and Sue finally got a look in and chance to enjoy their very first multihull. Their smiles probably beat Jays in the stoked department!

So whaddya do when you have three days to get your new boat to the boat show? Make it a Surf Safari of course! With seven boards on the tramps, the Stallion crew set off on the following Friday to enjoy the cruisability of the boat they'd created. "We had a dream run" said David "maintaining 18 knots most of the time in about 18-20 knots of NE, without screecher or spinnaker. (cos we didnt have any yet!) and enjoying the odd stop for a surf. The boat was really comfortable as well, even with seven motley crew aboard!"

And the highlight of the trip? "Scurfing behind the boat outside the Seaway!" all agree. So you could kind of say the first Stallion Spirited 380 literally surfed into the scene at Sanctuary Cove. And the wake barrels on!