

Cruising Renaissance

Bluewater Yacht's 420 Raised Saloon cruiser combines good looks with performance and real passage-making attributes. David Lockwood takes a closer look...

"It's the trip there that is the attraction," proffered the amicable husband-and-wife team, Michael and Pip Kalajzich, speaking their mind, and that of so many cruising couples before them.

Like a well-oiled team, she lifts the royal blue Corian freezer lid as he reaches in to pull out a cold drink from the bottom of the deep fridge.

We resume our position on the settees, warmed by the beautiful rich-red wood tones of myrtle joinery, and cooled by a 12-volt fan sucking the cool air through lots of big open hatches...

There and then I realise that this couple are realising their life-long dream — to head for the horizon in a big, safe, comfortable sailing boat.

They'd outgrown their 32-footer and, after much shopping around, a Bluewater 420 dubbed *Renaissance* was the one for them; the home away from home cruiser.

An Australian-built yacht, it promises everything to make your cruising dream become a pleasant reality.

The 420 is easily managed by a couple, strong enough for crossing oceans, powerful under sail (and engine) and finished well enough inside and out that a Swan won't steal the limelight when it parks alongside you in

that picture-perfect tropical cove.

Come July, the Kalajziches will set sail north on the 'Great East Coast Trip' to the Whitsundays. They will sail the passage in stages, however, flying back to Sydney to tend work duties as they come up.

Such is life for a modern-day adventurer and, in a way, it struck me as being a metaphor for the Bluewater 420.

A modern approach to a traditional concept, this boat is a way of overcoming the tyranny of distance by making travel as user-friendly, safe, and comfortable as it can be. Indeed, the trip may well be the attraction.

ADAMS AND AUSSIE

Built to typical Australian engineering standards, the Bluewater 420 is made for the long haul. The hull, the foundation for the home of every cruising sailor, is a Joe Adams design (who better than he?).

The lines are attractive to the eye, accommodating of a crowd both on deck and below, and definitely designed to be one with the sea.

While the bow sections are fine to cut the waves — and that it does without being too wet — the hull is a wide-bodied, medium-to-heavy-displacement type.

At its widest point, the beam is almost four

metres, so this 40-footer feels big inside and out. It has great stability due also to 4500kg of ballast in a low-aspect fin keel which is moulded into the hull.

The rig isn't tall, either, and though there is lots of beam there's always that sharp fore-foot to split the waves first. Thus, this fulfils its design specifications not to pitch too much at sea.

But the big beam means something else — a big interior, sure, but also a huge amount of tankage. Try 1200lt of water and 500lt of diesel. And if you can get through all that in your passage north, you're not a cruising sailor.

TOUGHER THAN NAILS

The hull is solid glass. The deck, surrounded by a 75mm fibreglass bulwark and anodised toe-rail, is Divinycell cored.

The hull and deck are glassed, not just tacked, together. And structural floors are foam filled.

Combined with a flush foredeck, radiused raised cabin top with handholds, heavy-duty stanchions and high lifelines, and an optional teak decking for g-r-r-i-p, the Bluewater 420 is an easy and safe boat to move forward on... Not that you need to leave the cockpit to tend anything.

If you want to sail as a couple, as carefree as can be, this is the way to go. A roller furling headsail is standard, but *Renaissance* also had an in-boom furling main from Hood. There was a windlass button on the steering binnacle and room inside at the nav station for joystick controls if you really wanted them.

Winches are from Anderson, two two-speed 52 primaries and 40 secondaries, aided by an electrically-operated 46 for the furling main.

Nothing is too hard to crank on or ease off, including the halyards, and you can easily sail single-handed since all the control lines lead aft into the deep cockpit.

With wonderfully comfortable pushpit seats there is room in and around the cockpit to stage a big picnic. You could put eight in here and mostly they'd all be picnicking under the shade of the pushpit arch.

A dodger over the companionway with protected seating, near the halyards and huge companionway, offers further protection and it has a removable panel for ventilation.



THE RIG STAYS PUT

Despite these appendages, the vision forward for the skipper is good along both high and low sides. At least I could see the Manly ferry coming... Both times as we headed out through the Heads.

The aluminium mast is deck-stepped, with double spreaders, solid vang, removable inner forestay, and a boom brake to prevent chop-suey Chinese gybes.

With a separate tri-sail tack to cover any eventuality — or at least the one when a big southerly knocks you flat — the rig is like an age-old tree on a headland. In other words, it's not going anywhere.

TIME FOR A SAIL

The hull slips along like a cruising boat should and in moderate airs we had a better than moderate sail. I kind of got carried away sailing out through the Heads, thinking of the places we could go — if only I had the time.

Though the Hood main is 36.32sqm, the number one genoa is a powerful 53.04sqm. It drives the boat to about 7-8kts in 15 knots of wind and you can carry the full head of sail to at least 25kts.

In lighter airs, an MPS will get you moving at say, 6kts in 10 knots of wind; providing, that is, you're not on the receiving end of the East Australian Current gushing down the coast.

In the face of that and no wind, you can resort to the 50hp Yanmar, which is nicely accessible below the companionway stairs.

It's freshwater-cooled for low maintenance and drives a useful 80amp alternator. The prop is a fixed three-blader, and when spinning it drives the hull to 7kts or so without being too noisy.

ANCHORS AWAY

If you're still not thrilled by that prospect, there's always the option of heading for the nearest beach, pressing the windlass button, setting the Danforth and frolicking with chicken and champagne until the breeze fills in.



In recreational mode, the Bluewater 420 excels since it has a big, walk-through transom (the Bluewater 400 is the same boat without the boarding platform) from which you can dive and swim. Or perhaps you will prefer to lower the dinghy on the davits on the pushpit arch, and step aboard for a paddle into shore.

Draft of the yacht being 1.9m, however, a short swim should be all that's needed to reach at least Store Beach in Sydney Harbour, for example.

BACK INSIDE

For all its strengths, it's the heart and soul of the big cruising yacht which pampers me most. The Bluewater 420 is big-hearted, beginning with the wide companionway.

Step below and the light doesn't fade since there are lights right around the raised saloon top. And the myrtle finish on *Renaissance* kept the afternoon light alive.

To port, there is an L-shaped galley with Corian-like benchtops, big fridge and freezer, sinks in which you can pack plates, and plenty of bench space to make anything from a cuppa to a roast lamb dinner.

The layout was a strong selling point for this cruising couple, since the boat can accommodate two couples in privacy in a double cabin each, and at opposite ends of the boat. As this was a three-cabin layout, there was a single pullman berth, big enough and with plenty of ventilation, for a deckhand, too.

The guests cabin is aft on the starboard side and it connects to the day head opposite the galley. The owners cabin, with an obtuse but large double bed, was forward of the saloon. Like some French yachts, its en suite was right in the bow (where crew are least likely to use it at sea).

Both cabins were big on hanging space, drawers and cupboards and the joinery and catches were first class. And just as well, because most cruising couples start out with a wardrobe of clothes onboard.

Finally, we turn full circle and I'm back in the saloon, the widest part of the boat, sipping a



cold drink while testing out the big U-shaped dinette to port and the settee next to the impressive navigation station to starboard

The engineering and the finer points of the construction of the Bluewater 420 are too big a story to go into detail here. And while I agree with Michael and Pip that the *vip* is the attraction, I enjoyed this boat going nowhere much at all.

BLUEWATER 420 RAISED SALOON

LOA	12.27m
LWL	10.67m
Beam	3.96m
Draft	1.9m
Displacement	10,920kg
Ballast	4,500kg

Engine	Yanmar 50hp
Steering	Drag Link System
Fuel	500 litres
Water	1200 litres

Sail areas	
No 1. Genoa	53.04m
Main	36.22m
Spinnaker	800sq ft

Contact

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