

Transition from Racing to Cruising, with Paul Clitheroe By John Hancox



L to R: Paul Clitheroe, Vicki Clitheroe, John Hancox, Jill Henry, David Henry

Squadron Member Paul Clitheroe AM gave an entertaining and light-hearted account of his transition from big yacht racing to luxury motor yacht cruising to an audience of 115 Members and their guests at the Squadron on 24 February. This was a near record attendance, reflecting the popularity of our guest speaker. It was also the first time that dinner was provided from the CCA.

A life-long sailor, Paul sailed Sabots from the age of eight on Lake Wyangan in Griffith and then sailed a Moth throughout his teenage years. This gave him the fundamentals in sailing skills. Moving to Sydney for university, he met his wife Vicki, then started his “Money” business and an accidental career in the media. With three young children, sailing had to remain in the background for over two decades.

In the late 1990s he bought his first *Balance*, an Oceanis 31. This changed to a Beneteau 40.7 and offshore racing. The *Balances* kept getting bigger, and eventually Paul upgraded to a TP52, the fifth *Balance* in 2014 on which he won the Sydney to Hobart race in 2015. Defending the title in 2016, Paul achieved a fourth overall and a win in Division 1. Paul also



had many successes in shorter ocean races and was awarded Squadron Yachtsman of the Year in 2016.

Against this background, Paul had plenty of experiences to share with the audience: sailing close to Montague island in the dark to save a few minutes; surfing at up to 25 knots in following seas with white knuckles on the wheels - all with an amateur crew of friends who stayed with him on this exciting journey up the sailing ladder. The TP52 was undoubtedly his favourite, not only for winning the Sydney Hobart but also for the high degree of thrill and excitement which he conveyed to us in his enthusiastic style.

After selling the TP52, Paul went to the 'dark side' and purchased the next *Balance*, a Beneteau 47 Swift Trawler. Not a sail in sight! Friends were amazed and the sailing community shocked. Not so Vicki, who is delighted with the decision, and as Paul discovered, opened up new opportunities to enjoy yachting in comfort: with running water, hot showers, electric toilets, a dry interior, dynamic stabilisers and ... Netflix. He also discovered that motor yacht cruising is actually quite a lot less expensive than racing big yachts offshore.

The new *Balance* Swift Trawler is equipped with twin diesel engines that will move her along at up to 19 knots and travel over 200 miles in daylight if necessary. It has enough space that he was able to take their daughter to her wedding on the Hawkesbury River in style. It is yet to be tried at long distance cruising, as Covid-19 has curtailed the ability to cross borders, but these opportunities are just around the corner.

Paul and Vicki are both active Squadron Members and live close by. They are keen supporters of the Ensemble theatre. Paul is chair of the Ensemble Foundation and Chair of Recording Artists, Actor and Athletes Against Drink Driving (RAAD). He retains many business interests and is chair of several public companies. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2008 for services to the community and the financial sector through promotion of Financial literacy.