



## 5 Top Tips from the SEAbbatival Summit

Multihull Central recently hosted the first SEAbbatival Summit in Brisbane, with over 70 people attending listening to 6 expert speakers on how to cruise before retirement. Here are just some golden nuggets of information that came from this extraordinary day:

### 1 – Safety is key when choosing a cat

For Pam and Eric Sellix, crossing the South Pacific from Mexico to Australia was just as daunting as it is for most non-sailors, because Pam had never really sailed before they purchased their Seawind 1160 catamaran and had never been cruising before departing on their epic voyage. So for Eric, selecting a boat that would keep them safe and comfortable was paramount and took precedence.

When asked what does 'safe' mean in terms of a boat, he responded by saying, "I see safety as the construction methods of the boat and the history of the manufacturer being very important," Eric explained, "Because you don't have to have the biggest boat, just the strongest boat."

"For us, it was also really important to have the helm and living spaces on the same level with a boom that was not too high, to reduce the risk of a fall at sea."

### 2 – Tourism is the future

Tim Dwyer from Shirlaws Group, specialises in helping business owners transition out of their businesses towards retirement and provided some fascinating insights into global trends.

"80% of all businesses in developed economies are owned by baby boomers, who are planning to exit their businesses, retire and go on holidays and adventures in the near future," Tim explained.

"Where do you think they are going to spend their money? Tourism".

So the decision to invest in the booming Australian tourism industry with a charter boat in preparation for a SEAbbatival cruise, is well founded.

Mark O'Donoghue confirmed this notion, having been involved with the Australian charter boat industry for decades by financing many of the charter boats through his company Finlease Australia. Mark has also owned a charter boat in the Whitsundays and Sydney Harbour.

"In the peak of the charter industry, there were around 210 or so bareboats operating in the Whitsundays, but now there are only 130, so there plenty of scope for many more boats to be added without impacting returns."

“You can have a boat in charter, with all costs covered, good access and good returns.”

“It’s a great way to own a boat for those preparing to go cruising”.

### **3 – Charter boats are better looked after than you think**

Craig and Kerry Margetts circumnavigated Australia onboard their Seawind 1160 sailing catamaran, after it had been on bareboat charter in the Whitsundays for 5 years. After returning from his journey, the boat remained out of charter and kept privately at their home in Brisbane. Craig dispelled the myth that charter boats get poorly treated.

“I had always held the belief that charter boats get pretty knocked around and are not look after very well,” Craig explained, “But I was pleasantly surprised how well my boat was looked after.”

“In fact, now we have had the boat back home, I can say that the charter company maintained my boat much better than I have been able to”.

The reason for this is that the business models used in Australia since the Australian Tax Department Ruling back in 2003 has meant that guaranteed earnings are not allowed, unlike some charter operations around the world. This means that rather than charter companies being incentivised to look after their own bottom line by keeping maintenance costs low, they are instead incentivised to ensure the boats are in excellent condition so they are attractive to tourists / charterers and retain return business.

### **4 - Radar and AIS are invaluable tools for cruising**

Pam Sellix explains the importance of AIS (Automatic Identification System) following a close encounter with two ships.

“We were sailing at night and realised after our AIS alarm sounded, that we had two ships coming from opposing directions and we were not going to get out of their way fast enough.”

“So we called up one of the ships after taking their call sign from the AIS system and requested they change course, which they did and this gave us enough room to pass clearly.”

Greg White runs the Multihull Seamanship Course in partnership with Multihull Central onboard his Seawind 1250 cruising catamaran and has a lifetime of experience racing and cruising on catamarans. Greg explained how important Radar still is despite having AIS or not.

“Though AIS is very helpful, it doesn’t show other boats without AIS transponders or the fishing boats who turn their AIS off,” Greg said.

“Radar also is very helpful identifying rain squalls on the water before they reach you, both during the day and the night, allowing you to prepare your sails well in advance.”

### **5 – Smaller production can offer stronger resale**

Multihull Central’s Director Brent Vaughan has spent close to 20 years selling cruising boats, most of which has been selling cruising catamarans. He gave some insights into resale.

“There are some real simple things you can control to help with resale, but before you buy a boat, consider how many substitute products are out there,” Brent explained.

“If you buy a high volume production boat, consider that there will be more competition when it comes to sell.”

“Unlike cars, boats can be easily bought and sold all around the world and can be moved around the world, so though your boat might be in Australia you could be competing with boats in the Caribbean, Europe or Asia”.

“My experience with lower volume production boat builders like Seawind and Outremer has been that resale has remained stronger as there is ultimately low supply of product on the global market”.

These are just a few points that came up during the day, but there were many more with great information shared amongst the speakers and the group of aspiring cruisers.

Come along to our next SEAbbatival Summit in Sydney on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of August and learn how to cruise, before retirement. To register visit [www.seabbaticalsydney.eventbrite.com.au](http://www.seabbaticalsydney.eventbrite.com.au) or visit [www.seabbaticals.com.au](http://www.seabbaticals.com.au) or call 02-9810 5014 or email [info@multihullcentral.com](mailto:info@multihullcentral.com)