

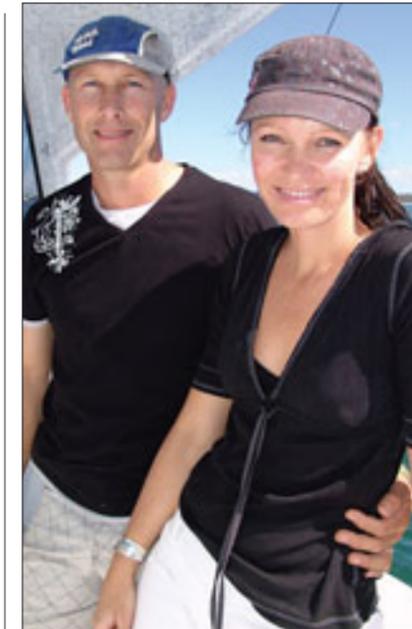


As this issue went to press, these interesting pics arrived from Norfolk Island, of 'Advance 2' arriving on the island - and going through the intricate ship unloading process. This is the process they have to use EVERY DAY with the gantry at the end of the wharf, as there are no other facilities on the island than what we can see here.

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Of all the boat yards in Australia that have coped with the recession brought on by the GFC, very few are doing as well as the Noosacat factory in southern Qld. Working with an almost recession proof range of boats widely used by many different government departments, Search & Rescue operations, and recreational boatowners who know better, the Noosacat factory has once again demonstrated that in the final analysis, there will always be demand for real boats. This month we look at one of the best in the Noosacat range as PW takes an unashamedly affectionate look at one of his favourite craft. . .



Bound for Norfolk Island . . Darren & Shari Bates are deservedly proud of their new 3100 diesel Noosacat.

team on a beautiful autumn day, glorious sunshine, practically no wind, a gorgeous boat and a terrific crew. There are no prizes for guessing which we preferred and that's not to denigrate the Sea Jay either, because as it transpired, it was also an excellent craft - despite the weather! Nevertheless, a good day makes everybody feel better, and if you're going offshore it's the best recipe - especially if you're going out through the shallow Noosa bar which is always a challenge, especially if you are new

River now for the best part of 20 years, and in the writer's opinion, facilities today are significantly worse than they were 20 years ago. They are, frankly, a disgrace - and the various boating authorities in southern Qld should hang their heads in shame.

Nevertheless we clambered aboard the Noosacat 3100 we were there to test, as well as the Noosacat 2300 Walkaround that was rostered onto camera boat duties for the session. Launching and retrieving the boats, parking the trucks and trailers was a lesson in how to make boating difficult for the local people, let alone professionals such as the Noosacat factory team.

But it was a beautiful day and we weren't going to let State political issues spoil it, and our spirits lifted as we pulled away from the traffic jam and confusion around the launchramps and headed for the open space and clarity of the blue Pacific ocean beyond the bar.

Background

I started out the day in the Walkaround, concentrating on photographing the much bigger 3100, as well as taking maximum advantage of being able to study the 3100 coming out through the bar and off into the ocean.

This is relevant to people contemplating buying a new or secondhand boat. It is the writer's contention that you can learn as much, if not a lot more about a boat by watching it perform from another craft, as you can from working it at the helm inside a cabin, wheelhouse or flybridge. Especially if you're not really familiar with the boat and/or starting out in somebody else's environment with a boat that is very different from those you have experienced before.

In this case, we knew the owner / skipper of the 3100, Darren Bates, was at the helm of his brand new diesel 3100, and he soon had it trimmed to perfection once he'd cleared the bar and settled the rig down to cruise offshore.

A professional charter boat operator from Norfolk Island (way off the Australian coast) Darren was taking delivery of the diesel cat just prior to it going onboard the regular freighter to Norfolk Island.

Watching it working in the bar was

Noosacat 3100 For Norfolk Island

Reporting on boats is always a dicey business because of the weather. Today, for example, we had a miserable day on the Gold Coast to test the Sea Jay Preda-King 6.8m Centre Console tested elsewhere in this issue, with the wind blowing with a chilly winter flavour at 20 knots, grey scudding clouds blanketing the sky, and choppy water that just made you want to go home, ASAP.

On the other hand, last week we had to drive from the Gold Coast up to the Sunshine Coast to join the Noosacat

to the area.

In truth, it's not the bar I find particularly fearsome, as it's a reasonably sheltered and fairly obvious bar crossing, but it's Noosa's myriad waterways leading up to it, that is so dreadfully confusing for visitors.

This, aligned with Noosa's sadly decaying boating facilities reminds one that Noosa region residents are getting a very, very raw deal for their registration fees, petrol tax, boat licences etc from the Qld government.

We've been going back and forth to Noosaville, and boating on the Noosa

