



PBYC 2010 Cruise – The Log

After considerable discussion, planning and negotiating the Cruising Division of Palm Beach Yacht Club are ready for a New Year's trip to Broughton Island.

The core fleet consists of *Free Spirit*, *Bow Wow*, *Soleil*, *Yantara* & *Flying Colours*

Day 1 Sunday 3 January 2010

Weather – Cloudy & light mist S-SE wind 10 knots

Free Spirit arrives first at the Basin and takes up residence on the club mooring with John, Damien, Alice & Amy aboard.

Jim & Debbie make a passing visit then head back to Careel Bay to discharge their out-of-state house guests and have a last meal with them.

Michael & Vicki finish provisioning *Bow Wow* and head over to join *Free Spirit*.

Geoff spends the night on their mooring at Palm Beach in readiness for the early departure next morning.

Day 2 Monday 4th January

Weather – Light cloud. Wind E-NE 5-10 knots

Southerly swell with an easterly sea building.

Soleil (Rob & John) lead the charge departing from Taylors Point at 04:30 to rendezvous with the Basin fleet at 05:00. *Yantara* joins the fray and motor sailing is the order of the day as the fleet leaves Mother Pittwater bound for Newcastle, 52 miles away.

Flying Colours is delayed by their visitors and finally gets away around 08:00 so it's a game of catch up for the rest of the day.

Slowly the coast winds past and the "sailing" could best be described as less than challenging. The cross-sea makes conditions lumpy and less than pleasant.

Soleil had a good day fishing and landed a nice stripy tuna about 0.9 m long – fresh fish for tea !!

Bow Wow hooked a few bonito but it was mostly a catch and release program. Eventually Newcastle harbour comes into view so it's time to make port.





Fortunately the sun decides to come out in the afternoon and the whole fleet is into the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club marina by 16:30 (and very glad to be tied up there). After a quick tidy up it was time for drinks on *Bow Wow* – very relaxing.

Saw *Etiad Stadium* parked at the end of the marina arm – you can see why the mast had to ship out to Oz in two pieces. The wonder of it is that the whole thing can stay up at all !! Also spotted an enormous ketch (around 130 ft) on the opposite bank. The masts are so tall that they had red anti-collision lights on the top for

low flying aircraft.

By now the ladies have prepared themselves so a shore party was formed and five of us sampled the delights of the NYCC bistro for dinner.

Back on board and ready for a good nights rest, lulled to sleep by the sound of the extractor fans on the floating dock moored opposite the marina.

Day 3 Tuesday 5th January

Weather – Sunny, NE winds 5-10 knots building to 20-25 knots

Seas moderate on a northerly swell

Up at a reasonable hour to get under way for Port Stephens before the afternoon sea breeze is too strong. Headed out of the Hunter to traverse Stockton Bight with only 5 knots of breeze – definitely a need for the “Diesel wind”. *Soleil* elected to sail from the harbour entrance and so fell behind the rest of the fleet. In company the rest of us proceeded to tack our way up Stockton Bight into a building sea breeze.

A bit like the frog in the pot of cold water coming to the boil we experienced strengthening wind conditions that slowly made you wonder, “is it time to put in a reef?”



Flying Colours had started the day with a reefed mainsail and finished up with a double-reefed main and a furled jib. *Bow Wow* elected to go for the motorboat look while *Yantara* experienced the trauma of a blown clew in the headsail. *Free Spirit* went for a headsail change and romped along in the 25-knot wind. *Soleil* was a bit further back and experimented with different sail configurations.

We finished up reaching past Point Stephens with sheets slightly cracked and making 7 ½ knots with only the double reefed main. Entering Port Stephens with a run out tide against a strong breeze was a bit ugly. The prospect of a rogue wave putting you broadside adds a bit of spice to life. Passing Yaccaba we experienced a gust of 36 knots – fortunately from behind.

Once inside the Port it was easier sailing. *Free Spirit* went in to Dalbora's to pick up a new battery while *Bow Wow* & *Flying Colours* continued on to Fame Cove to settle in for the night. *Yantara* was the next to arrive and Geoff was very happy to drop the pick in a quiet location then join the team for Sundowners and prawns on board *Flying Colours*. *Free Spirit* arrived shortly thereafter and rafted up alongside *Yantara*.



Now only *Soleil* remains adrift but a listening watch was maintained on Ch 77 while a noodle feast was prepared for dinner on FCII. After an hour or so Ron radioed in that they were in Port but needed some Sailing Directions to reach Fame Cove. Now it is time to switch to a visual watch for their imminent arrival. Around 23:00 Debbie spotted nav lights heading past the Cove at high speed, so a flash of the lamp alerted the boys to our location and they altered course to head in and settle down for the night after what has proved to be a very long day.

To be continued.....