

AS SITUATIONS CHANGE IT
SOMETIMES WORKS TO CHANGE
YOUR METHOD OF CRUISING.

DINI MARTINEZ



Third yacht lucky

 **SEASONED** *Cruising Helmsman* readers may remember several articles on and around our previous boats: in 2010 about our share in *Sharona*, a portmanteau of ‘shared’ and ‘owna’; when we had a Beneteau 38 to skill up my Patagonian hubby for our big sailing trip; then in 2012 when the Moody 425 we bought in Greece turned into our infant and toddler’s Mediterranean playpen for the next three years.

When it was time to come back to Sydney we needed a boat which was not too huge, i.e. expensive, to maintain; yet comfortable to sleep the five of us most weekends for holidays exploring Pittwater, Broken Bay and the whole wonderful deep depth and amazing remoteness of the Hawkesbury River and its tributaries (see CH April 29 ‘Sailing Broken Bay’).

FINDING OUR MOTTLE

Third boat round we were a little more affirmative as to what suited our young family. A centre cockpit was a must.

So was sturdiness and good seaworthiness with a certain degree of comfort. If this was to come at the expense of some sailing performance, we could live with it. After all, racing was not anything we were interested in, especially with a one, three and five year old.

It was more about hanging in some beautiful bays, going for sunset skinny dips and sipping some Chardonnay while the kids could run under waterfalls and explore the beach.

Some of the boats we looked at included a Compass 32, a few Adams and a Catalina. But, like with our Moody 425 in the Med, the moment we saw the first Mottle 33 we knew that she was it.

The safety credentials and layout were the clincher. The Mottle 33 has an encapsulated two ton lead keel, high ballast ratio and is a proven cruising yacht. From there on it was just about finding the one that was within budget and not too run down.

Between the South Coast and Lake Macquarie we looked at a good handful. Some were a wreck, others completely overpriced for the condition.

In the end, we found one close to home. *Rigel* was conveniently moored in Manly and the name, referring to the brightest star in the Orion constellation the Hunter, seemed like a good enough omen.

THE INTERIOR

How we knew she was it? With boats, just like with people, sometimes you just know.

It is a gut feel more than anything. Nevertheless, adding conviction from the



left brain-half, Rigy's, as we now affectionately call her, interior was in a realistic state to start spending weekends on her as it was.

The sizable V-berth forward came with a fitted mattress, the midship section with twin settees. We later added a centre-folding table which sits up to six people and some chalkboard painted shelves as the old ones had worn out.

The massive 12 volt fridge opposite the two-sink, stove and oven, starboard galley was able to hold plenty of cold beer and enough food for a whole week for the five of us.

"THE MOTTLE 33 WAS BORN IN 1975 OVER A DRINK IN A SYDNEY PUB."

The moment after we put up a few fruit nets and filled them with aromatic apples and oranges, we knew we had a new sailing home for plenty of rejuvenating weekends and unforgettable holidays.

Portside of the companionway, the heads with toilet, sink, showerhead and ample storage provides a hint of privacy. It also leads into the huge locker space sitting under the port cockpit seats, which holds not only the holding tank but

also buckets, a manual bilge pump and plenty of spare ropes and fenders.

The crawl-through under the starboard cockpit seats also features plenty of storage, plus three-way engine room access and potentially another quarter berth.

The large owners' aft cabin can have two single V-berths or one huge queen size berth, which is too large to fit even queen size fitted sheets. There is more storage in the aft cabin, including a hanging locker.

ABOVE DECK

Outside, Rigy was in a reasonable state of care which, with a bit of extra varnish and regular maintenance, we have further improved.

The fantastic new 180 watt solar panels have been keeping the new 200 amp-hour house battery happy. New hatches, a radar reflector, a new anchor with 35 metres of chain and 60 metres of rope, functioning sails with a few spares stored in the massive space under the forward berth, new davits and outboard, autopilot, plus new standing and new running rigging made her fit for coastal cruising.

The owner was selling her because he had moved to Tasmania to open up a café and had no more spare time for sailing.

ABOVE: Each family member has their favourite spot, here is our six year old snuggled up in the mainsail bag.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Big enough to store what a family needs for a weekend or a holiday.

When the survey came back with no major issues and the owner was willing to give us a substantial discount for the new engine and the antifoul which was due, a deal was struck.

Finding a dinghy ended up being almost more difficult than finding our boat. With hindsight, we now laugh about the few times we ended up in the water, gear and all, as we paddled our way through tinnies in our unstable fiberglass washtub until we finally bit the bullet and got our new inflatable dinghy. More money well spent that we have not regretted since.

DESIGN AND HISTORY

The Mottle 33 was born in 1975 when George Mottle, a successful Sydney yacht broker, with designer Joe Adams, were having a drink in a Sydney pub. George lent his name to the masthead, fiberglass sloop and marketed them until 1978.

Back then, his most common builds were low-cost, sail-away packages. The interiors were left undone and finished by the respective owners.

In 1978 a company called Naut Yachts took over the boat and decided to sell it as a production yacht with options. An attempt to rename the boats to Naut 33 failed. They continued to be known as Mottle 33s.

Changes which did stick included the three Houdini hatches for ventilation, a bow anchor locker and lighter interior moulds and joinery. By the end of 1979 Naut Yachts had sold a whopping 36 boats for over \$40,000 each.

Further options could be added on, including a ketch rig and a raised deck, which gave 6'3" headroom, yet was still just short of standing

headroom in the aft-cabin. Naut Yachts Mottle 33s came standard with two water tanks under the saloon settees holding up to 400 litres, a 100 litre stainless steel diesel tank, wheel steering and a 13 horsepower Volvo saildrive.

After our above mentioned \$22,000 engine upgrade, *Rigel* now flies away with a new 25hp Beta Marine. We have never looked back, especially when 30 knots was blowing us through the super-narrow Ettalong Channel, just two metres off massive rocks and boulders.

RIGEL

Rigy has a skeg mounted rudder and counts 3.3m across the beam. With a draught of 1.58m and displacement of just over 4 ton, she sails beautifully up to at least 60 degrees, even in roly conditions, while at the same time providing ample and comfortable living space down below.

From what we know about her history, she has stayed mostly local. But we know of several sisterships who have set sail far and beyond the horizon.

In summary, *Rigel* is not our forever boat but, for the past few years, she has been perfect. We have met several other Mottle owners, couples and families, who are all very happy with their boats. Moreover, like with Kombies, many other local boat owners regularly pop in for some comments and stories, given the well-known builder and designer of our boat.

As our kids grow older and my dreams for sailing the Pacific get bigger, it will not be long until we will be on the lookout for boat number four.

Watch out for the next instalment of our family adventures at SailingYogaFamily.com. ≈



DINI MARTINEZ

Dini has lived three years with her family on their Moody 425 cruising the Med. Currently they are back in Sydney for baby #3 break, before hitting the Caribbean and the Pacific before too long. More on their journey and yoga events Dini runs worldwide: SailingYogaFamily.com.

View to Rigy from Cottage Pt Cafe.



SPECIFICATIONS	
LOA	10m
LWL	9.19m
Beam	3.37m
Draught	1.58m
Displacement	4,173kg
Ballast	2,273kg
Working sail area	40.9sqm
Designer	Joe Adams
Builder	George Mottle
Hull Type	Fin keel with skeg-mounted rudder
Rigging Type	Masthead Sloop