

## The Dolphin 25 Fisher plans are ready

The Dolphin 25 Fisher has finally been finished after a couple of up and down years in its production! Basically it was constructed in between frenetic bouts of work, overseas trips, cruising the Whitsundays, illness and several location moves! But finally it's ready!

However, one could possibly conceive it as delayed pleasure, I suppose!

The D25 as it's known was originally designed to be one of the largest, if not the largest stitch and glue project boat in Australia. ( whether or not that is actually true I know not until someone else claims differently!)

The idea came about when I had completed a Dolphin 19 Yawl and got to thinking,

" There's not an earthly reason why you couldn't continue to create frameless stitch and glue boats as big as you want to? Why doesn't anyone else do it?"

As far as I am concerned that question still hasn't been answered and next year's project will be an extension of the D25 into a proper grown up 35 foot stitch and glue frameless boat that could either be made as either a yacht or a power boat until late into the construction. It will have optional swing keel or bilge keels or if power only a long straight keel.

Some of the readers of this magazine are aware that I built the 'Nicky J Miller' as a frameless yacht but she was actually built out of strip planking. (visit [www.dolphinboatplans.com](http://www.dolphinboatplans.com) and follow the links to "The Nicky J." She has seen ( and survived! ) some fearful seas and has performed faultlessly over the last six years. So any sceptics should rest assured that it isn't just a "flash in the pan!" The ongoing wonders of epoxy!

However, I digress, back to the D25. Several design changes were made during the initial construction. The boat was turning out to be much larger than I had perceived it in my mind's eye and I realised that we could get the boat strong enough for a really big outboard if people wanted one, if we made a few changes to the pod and the transom.

In fact the D25 is fitted with a 90 h.p. Yamaha outboard and it can take anything up to a 120 hp motor. The pod has a large amount of positive buoyancy and keeps the stern up nicely giving a few benefits along the way.

These include, heaps of room inside, clear space out on deck for fishing diving gear and passengers. The outboard is quieter of course, being so far aft and the pod's buoyancy helps the boat stay level when a big handful of power is applied and, more importantly she rides the big stern wave nicely when power is reduced suddenly.

Another exciting innovation with the D25 is that she is absolutely stuffed with around two and a half 'flotation' tonnes of the amazing new Thermotec buoyancy foam. Considering that the boat itself only weighs around a tonne, dare I think it, let alone say it, that the D25 that I have built is unsinkable...well, I'll let you draw your own conclusions!

The Thermotec foam is the latest in hi-tech buoyancy foam and it is a boatbuilder's and surveyor's dream come true! It is so easy to install, it's not true. My foam came in two metre by one metre by 15 centimetre black sheets but it comes in every conceivable shape, square and round. I simply cut it up with a sharp knife and squeezed it into place and glued it with builder's glue! You cannot believe how simple that is. The technology is the brainchild of Thermotec the people that bought us the pool noodles except this foam is high density especially for positive flotation.. The buoyancy factor for the foam is 910kg buoyancy per cubic metre. Therefore one sheet 50mm x 1000mm x 2000mm would have a buoyancy factor of 91kg

No more brainwhirling calculations, two part mixing or building special compartments or sticky mixing, measuring and pouring and running away from the fumes! Just slice and glue!

This great foam has the honour of being accepted as suitable for the first commercial registration and a Lewis ski-boat has the honour of being the first Australian boat to be registered commercially using this foam. The ski-boat underwent very rigorous swamp tests, being totally flooded and stayed level and floating with six large adult men standing upright in it !

The added bonus is that this foam is closed cell, fuel proof, chemical proof and fire retardant...doesn't get much better than that!

When I saw the photos of their test I decided on the spot to do the extra work to accommodate the foam and although the boat was delayed it has been very much worth it for peace of mind.

The D25 has been designed for the very maximum utilisation for divers and fishermen especially. The huge rear deck allows up to six fishermen to have room to fish a'plenty. The lowered transom allows the fish to be landed and dealt with on the rear platform that covers the pod.

The cabin allows a large double bed or twin singles to be chosen and can be changed on the spot. There is a special station outside for cooking and contains a portable camping gas stove alleviating the need for the dreaded gas certificate and a sink. Under this is storage a'plenty and the same goes

for inside where there is a large cupboard space, room for a porta –potty or permanent sea toilet inside a shower compartment. This boat is easily live aboard for a couple for weeks on end.. One customer who has purchased the plans intends to live on his permanently, his own dream come true, fishing and cruising for life! Incidentally there is six foot two inches standing headroom in the cabin.

## CONSTRUCTION

The basic construction is from epoxy composite ply, epoxy resin and cotech 450 gram woven cloth. When the ply sheets are presoaked before glassing the longevity is remarkable. A D25 built from this construction can expect to be around in twenty years if maintained as should be, as should any boat built this way, for that matter.

The boat has been like all Dolphins that have preceded it, to be built from the simplest of plans that have completely dispensed with lofting ! Lofting is the bane of all boatbuilders and after one has fought with billowing paper plans that flap, rip, tear and soak plus driving you batty, the simply 'Easy-build' process is a joy to use. An X/Y graph is drawn onto one side of the floor and hull sides treated plywood, using a felt tip marker, dots made where the given dimensions on the plans intersect and then using a bendy batten the dots are joined up and the shapes of the floor and sides are done!

All that remains is to cut 'em out using a jig saw.

When that side is done you simply lay those shapes over the second side, draw the shape and then cut out again! So quick!

One great thing is that you can pre-soak, glass and fair the sides and floors before construction saving a huge and difficult uphill job of fairing when God and gravity isn't on your side!..the time savings are significant and the whole hull and floors should only take about a week before fitting them together.

As to the cost overall it is really quite inexpensive compared to a 'shop bought'. If labour is NOT taken into account ( if you are doing it yourself, that is!) and NO rented premises are used and the price of the motor is NOT included it should be possible to build the basic boat for around six thousand dollars. For a 25 foot by nine foot six beam boat that is not dear at all ( actually with the pod it is 27feet six inches L.O.A.)....Compare the price of ANY 25 footer new or secondhand, you wont get near it . In fact there is a tidy profit to be made building a D25 if you so wish.

However, if it is to be a commercial venture I am willing to grant a licence for any interested parties should that be the case...contact details below!

The plans are available on CD rom ( you get the plans printed out at your local copy shop and the are two sheets of AO size paper ( about a metre square each) and that's all you need . The full set of instructions book consisting seventy pages can be printed out as desired but isn't necessary. AS a bonus over 200 colour photographs of the D25 build are included on the CD showing every stage of construction from start to finish and the price??

Well originally, I had envisaged a tag of around three hundred dollars for the plans ( I even quoted a few enquirers, remember?? ) but after all is said and done I have always been proud of bringing my boat plans to the readers of AABB very cheaply ( a great mag, eh?) so I am selling them initially for FIFTY FIVE DOLLARS ONLY !! as an introductory offer. You get a CD with full instructions ( seventy five pages) and a complete range of build photos, over 200 in all.....A bargain? You bet!

I'm not really sure how long I will keep them at this price so go to [www.dolphinboatplans.com](http://www.dolphinboatplans.com) and there will be a free download study plan and more info there, just follow the links.

Any other enquiries please email [arcus1@bigpond.com](mailto:arcus1@bigpond.com) or telephone mobile 061414347874 ( Australia ) I can answer you queries.

Happy boating as always!

Terry Buddell, Dolphin Boat Plans.

## About the Author

Terry Buddell is a freelance writer, boat builder and marine surveyor who lives on board his own yacht the "Nicky J Miller" in Gladstone, Queensland Australia. Terry has designed a series of boats that he sells from his website on the net and also built his own 42' yacht which he refers endearingly to as "his filthy old lugger". Terry writes for several boating magazines and specializes in the " How to do it " kind of article using practical ideas and basic common sense! Terry is only too happy to help people who wish to build their own boat from a dinghy to a yacht and his contact details can be found on his website <http://www.dolphinboatplans.com>

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