

SQUADRON CLASSIC

WINE-DARK SEA

BY PETER LOWNDES

Wine-Dark Sea was originally built for Squadron Member Geoff Hill as *Strewth* in 2001/2. She is a Lyons 49 and is Australian designed, by David Lyons, and built by Mackman yachts in Queensland. Only two hulls were ever made and both are still active in Australia. The other is *Never a Dull Moment* which sails out of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia. I purchased her with my late partner Sarah Goddard-Jones in 2010 and named her *Wine-Dark Sea* as Geoff had taken the name *Strewth* to his TP52.

While I might be a bit (OK a lot) one-eyed, I think she epitomises a modern performance cruising classic. By the numbers, she is 49ft long (14.95m) with a three metre draft, a beam of 4.25m and a displacement a shade under 12 tonnes. This places her as a middle weight in her class with modern 50ft carbon fibre racers weighing in around eight tonnes and cruiser/racers up to 20 tonnes. She also has a finer entry in the bow compared to most modern cruiser/racers that tend to sacrifice performance for internal volume.

This is not to say *Wine-Dark Sea* is short of creature comforts. She sports three double cabins and two heads, along with the typical drop-down dining table to provide another double bed. She is also furnished with fridge, freezer, espresso machine, watermaker, generator, 240V inverter and 480W of solar panels.

My understanding is that Geoff competed with her in Cowes Week, Fastnet, King's Cup, San Fernando Race, five Sydney to Hobarts, as well as racing in both Sydney and Hong Kong. Sarah and I were regular Friday and Saturday racers with RSYS and Winter Series with CYCA. We also contested a couple of Pittwater to Coffs races and northern campaigns in 2016 and 2017. 2017 was part of a planned trip around Australia that was cut short in Darwin. *WDS* was awarded the Squadron's prestigious Koonya Cup for this voyage. After returning *WDS* to Sydney by truck in early 2018, new cruising plans were afoot until Sarah tragically passed away in a diving accident in June 2019. I dedicated a 'Spirit of the Regatta' trophy in Sarah's name at Magnetic Island Race Week.



I continue to race in Friday Twilights and am currently preparing the boat for the 2025 Melbourne to Osaka two handed race. Modifications will include a carbon fibre rig and small bow sprit. While aiming to be competitive, as always, my co-skipper Greg Lake and I are planning to do it in style, making full use of the freezer capacity to avoid resorting to freeze dried rations... and of course, the espresso machine! ⚓

Wine-Dark Sea
with her distinctive
spinnaker.