

Sydney to Darwin on Wine-Dark Sea

By John Hancox



David Salt thanks Sarah Goddard-Jones and Peter Lowndes

Sarah Goddard-Jones and Peter Lowndes provided a very detailed and interesting insight into the six month coastal cruise to Darwin in their Lyons 49 sloop Wine-Dark Sea on 23 May. The cruise was intended to be a circumnavigation over two years but had to be truncated at Darwin because Peter had won a significant amount of work in his business that could not be managed effectively on limited, or at times absent, internet service.

They took time to explain to the 75 guests the details of the boat and how it had been set up or modified for the anticipated long overnight passages. This covered sails and rigging, fuel and water capacity, battery capacity and charging methods including solar panels and a medium size generator for 240-volt power to operate a water maker. They had sold everything at home and were intending to live on board for the entire time.

Their presentation was in three parts: Fraser and Curtis Coast, Towards the Whitsundays and Beyond the Whitsundays. They enjoyed fabulous weather most of the time and explained many of the excellent features of these areas. The further north they went, the better for snorkeling until the best was experienced along Cape York. Their trip across the Gulf of Carpentaria was particularly nasty because of strong easterly winds and shallow water with a washing machine chop.

Once in Darwin with the decision made to return home they decided to truck the boat back which required removal of the deep keel, rudder and of course the rig. To their great relief it all went smoothly, and Wine-Dark Sea arrived safely in Sydney, was put back together and is participating in winter racing.