

New Moon

It's a year to the day today.

Exactly 365 days ago that we took delivery of a shiny new 43 foot O'Brien.

5 minutes ago Cathy Freeman won Olympic gold for Australia in the 400 metres.

One hour ago the Australian Women's hockey team thrashed the Netherlands.

12 months ago we kicked a huge goal for our business by taking delivery of that new O'Brien 43!

First of all a little background would be in order.

New Moon Charters commenced operations in 1993. Our original business plan was for a supported boat leasing operation rather than a fishing charter business.

The business has always been busy; largely because of the success of Kim Andersen and his charter business, Kim Andersen's Sport Fishing Adventures. Some of the statistics are impressive. An average of 170 days fishing per year from the start. 25,000 engine hours since day one. That's right, 25,000 hours!

The point is simple. My boats work – hard!

How Hard?

Well, try this for size. Our latest acquisition the O'Brien 43 vessel "New Moon" was launched on about the 20th of September. Commercial pressures for "New Moon" to start work on 29th September were significant. (Hah! That's an understatement).

Initial sea trials were conducted with Cummins personnel to ensure the 450C's were performing to spec. One day was allocated for final fitout of outstanding electronics.

A four-hour trip around Magnetic Island served as vessel familiarisation.

Next day "New Moon" was to be relocated to Cairns, about 180nm to the north and home base for Kim Andersen's Sport Fishing Adventures.

A moderate to fresh Sou' Easter saw the trip completed dock-to-dock in nine hours for an 810 litre fuel burn.

The family arrived at Cairns relaxed and rested after a totally trouble free transit.

The economy of the vessel remains an underlying strength. 90 litres an hour is always achievable at around 20 knots. Load makes little observable difference. With 2200 litres of useable fuel the steaming range is in excess of 450 nm.

"New Moon's" first charter was scheduled for the 0700 on the 29th of September, just 35 hours after we arrived in Cairns.

The log shows that "New Moon" worked 60 out of the next 70 days. No breakdowns, no unserviceabilities, no lost time or days at all.

One year later "New Moon" is one of the better known game fishing boats operating out of Cairns. Work continues to flow in from what can only be described as a very satisfied customer base. Of course the "fishing experience" is fundamental to a successful charter, but today's customers are looking for a "total experience" where the boat, crew, food, drinks and comfort levels offer all round value for money.

This is where "New Moon" really shines.

The interior layout is open, light and airy. Seats are large and comfortable with excellent visibility back to the cockpit. The ensuite main cabin affords couples the privacy they deserve, with four V berths in the forward cabin. The main bathroom contains vanity, shower and head, with a generous amount of space.

I chose a brilliant white interior with minimal timber finishes.

Peter O'Brien is flexible on these things.

What isn't flexible is the uncompromising approach to quality in the construction and finish.

Lockers and storage spaces abound. The galley has ample food storage area, with a two burner cook top, two bowl sink, and a convection microwave ensuring food preparation is a snap. A large commercial style two door fridge and bar occupy the area opposite the galley. I haven't measured its capacity but it must be in the order of seven or eight hundred litres.

Two large chest freezers built into the front of the cockpit keep long term food supplies and bait under control.

Out in the cockpit, the teak deck and covering boards look great, with two large live bait tanks built into the cockpit floor either side of the main rudder compartment hatch. For when you need a big livey for the really big ones, two tuna tubes are installed just forward of the cockpit bulkhead on the port side deck.

Up in the flybridge, I put enough electronics to make your head spin. A quality SIMRAD sounder, chart plotter and radar have been fitted. A second station for the sounder plotter are in the tower, as well as a second station for an Interphase Sonar unit. An integrated SIMRAD/Robertson autopilot completes the package.

But don't forget, this boat is so much more than the sum of its parts. New Moon is simply a very pleasant boat to spend time on. The boat looks so damn good, we are finding the potential for walk up charters is much higher than previously.

We still have not lost a charter due to vessel unserviceability, and hope to maintain that record. Running costs are an order of magnitude lower than my previous experiences.

And that makes it a very pleasant business proposition.!!