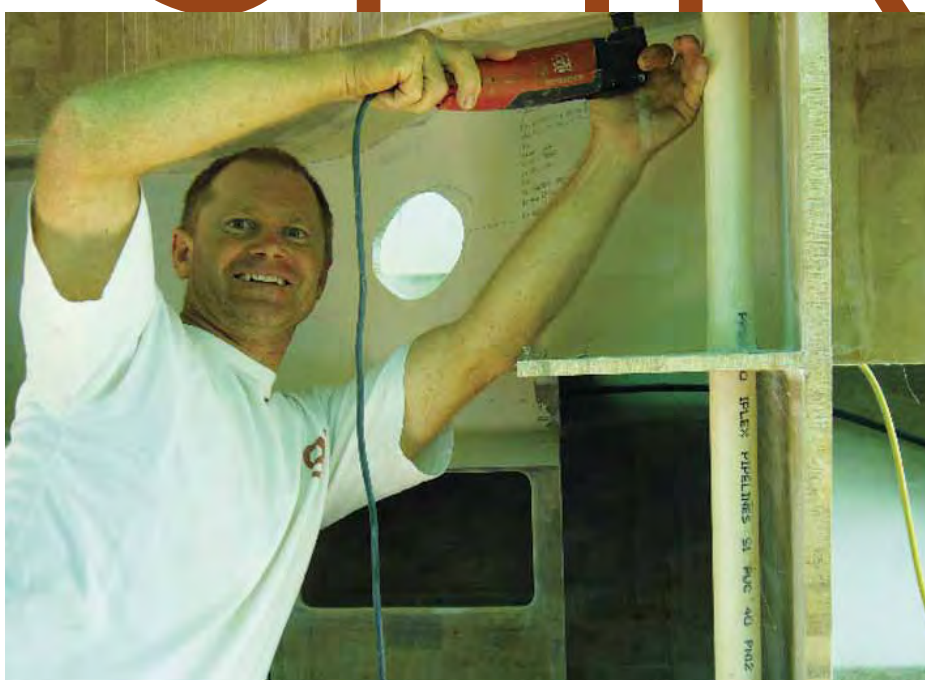


that's the SPIRIT



THE SPIRITED 380 DESIGN BY SPIRITED DESIGNS HAS HAD A LOT PRESS already and has been much vaunted in its class, thus, further talk on the merits of design is perhaps redundant. There is however much to say when it comes to individual build qualities; and particularly so when it comes to the individuals behind them.

SEAN EDWARDS AND South East Cat Co. in their first build of the Spirited 380 have clearly set the most uncompromising of build standards not only in the integrity and finishing of the glassing but also evident in the many customisations. The result is a Spirited 380 that will appeal very much to the top end of the market yet still offer the value inherent in the class.

Sean Edward's 25 years in the marine industry has brought him to pit his skills against all manner of repair, redesign, restructure and refurbishment jobs. It is perhaps this wealth of experience in so many facets that yields the expertise and the passion that is now getting put into practice on South East Cat Co's builds.

'Uncompromising' is a tag of no surprise to those who know Sean – and particularly those he has done work for.

Sean Edwards. (above left)
Main bathroom with head pedestal for 'sitting pretty'. (above)

Those that have worked for Sean may indeed use other words. Although unprintable here (children might be reading), they are uttered with the kind of good humour that reflects an employee's respect for tough standards.

As an interesting aside, just before setting up and working full time on South East Cat Co, Sean was involved in the full rebuild of American built offshore power racer 'SUV DODGE RAM'. When it



Rear seat.

came in from America the first thing its owner – Mat Humphreys – did was to get Sean in to check it out. Sean was appalled at what he found. After some good humoured castigation of Mr Humphreys for not sending Sean to America to do the check out first (boats are sometimes like women. People often set their heart on them despite the flaws), Sean set to work. The result was the internal transformation of an offshore powerboat that was simply unsafe for the continued purpose, into a powerboat able to withstand the most brutal of races and come out on top. And in fact, *Team SUV Dodge Ram* took first place in one of the roughest offshore powerboat race's Queensland has ever seen – the Superboat X Cat Class held on the Gold Coast in 2008 – went on to win the series unmarred (in a bruised, battered and broken field) and is currently leading the 2009 series.

Acting may seem an odd parallel to draw to boat building. But, veteran stage actors will tell you that the joy and appeal of a stage play is found in constantly building meaning and vitality into the script rather than just trotting out the same lines night after night. In this instance the script – and a very fine script – is the Spirited 380. And to Sean's delight – and surely any new owner's delight – the meaning and vitality has been expressed in the many clever customisations. Or perhaps, comfortable customisations might be as apt a description.

Nothing should interfere with the epiphanic moment of sitting on the bottom transom step, dangling one's legs in azure waters and having your brain go blank with the sheer mind numbing pleasure of aquatic escape. Certainly not stainless ladder tubing digging into one's surf or swim sculpted behind. Consequently, the boarding ladder folds neatly away in its own flush customised compartment leaving the bottom

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step free and flat when the ladder is not needed.

And you'd be having that extra glass of chilled Sauvignon one might be contemplating at the end of a day's cruising. The main stairs and stairs to forward berths have been custom shaped and sized for surer movement about the cabin. They're also marvellous in rough weather of course.

Speaking of things lovely and chilled, a larger cabinet has been custom made to house a more convenient front opening fridge/freezer. A choice of four sizes is available though the largest option is currently fitted. This custom detail also frees up space above for an additional cupboard. The re circulating air from the fridge below makes it an ideal linen cupboard.

To Sean, there is something deeply unsatisfying in the usual pigeonhole cabinet doors. So South East Cat Co's

cabinetry feature full flush mounted timber veneer doors as one would expect and enjoy in modern home cabinetry.

Something any new owner may not see however is the simplified steering system. A little thought went a long way towards making the steering firmer, more responsive and more durable. The multiple sheaves and wires have been reduced and custom Morse cables were made to fit perfectly. The added bonus is more free space in the rear lockers.

For those rather more drawn to sitting pretty than steering, you'll find something highly valued, though undoubtedly, all too often unseen and unappreciated (ring a bell with your better half?). The rear cockpit seat has custom molded, top opening, self draining hatches keeping things dry and comfortable. And that goes for all other external hatches.

On the theme of sitting pretty, the two

Custom bench space, steps and fridge. (top left)
SECC hatches. (top centre)
Transom foldaway ladder. (top right)
SUV Dodge Ram. (above)

heads both feature porcelain big bowl toilettes with electric flush and their own blackwater tanks (forward STB head has an 80 litre odourless holding tank). Sean also reconfigured the interior of the main bathroom by pushing out the inboard wall (an insignificant movement topside) to create welcomed space over the sink. And by contouring over exposed plumbing, both bathrooms not only look better but are also more easily cleaned and more hygienic. The cabinet is also self draining to the floor, which then drains forward into the under floor; easily serviced, custom sump.

In fact, when it comes to drains, Sean's philosophy is definitely one of 'no pain

drains'. All drains and seacocks throughout the boat are easily accessible for inspection and isolation.

Although a self confessed Spartan, Sean seems to have found the epicurean spirit in the interior fit out. Sustainable southern myrtle veneer and solid timber doorframes and fiddles will feature throughout the boat. Soft ceiling linings and saloon down lighting will be fitted in timber feature boards further adding to the luxury feel in this build. Indeed, South East Cat Co.'s first build may well be one of the plushiest cats in its class.

Of course, there was little point in providing the extra comforts without including the facility for extended cruising to enjoy them. Sean has nearly doubled the fuel and water capacity by building in two water tanks each holding 175 litres and two fuel tanks, again, each holding 175 litres. These tanks include their own sensors and gauges. A 22 litre hot water tank made from stainless steel and installed in its own locker under the aft starboard bunk (thereby balancing the



Davit.

black water tank on port side) is the final touch to ensure homeliness on the high seas. The hot water tank feeds all taps throughout the boat including the rear hot and cold fresh water deck shower.

Speaking of high seas, particular attention has been paid to the davits making it a true blue water passage maker. No tempest shall part this cat

from its tender. The davits have been constructed with Kevlar using a seven piece hinge configuration tied through to the structural core of the boat rather than just adhered to the back seat and utilising three quarter inch stainless rods.

In the spirit of structural integrity, innovation, comfort and very pleasing form, South East Cat Co.'s first Spirited 380 looks set to make its mark in the professionally built and delivered Spirited 380 market. Of course that's not to say that South East Cat Co. are not happy to build the very decent standard Spirited 380 to any order. But, as professional boat builders, there is pride and joy in offering something above and beyond the capacity of home boat builders. Because, when it comes to the utmost quality, customisations and outside the box thinking, in the immortal words of professional stunt men, "don't try this at home".



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