



# The Buizen way

TUCKED AWAY ABOVE NARRABEEN LAKES, THEY'RE STILL MAKING YACHTS IN THE TRADITIONAL MANNER – SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY

While cost-cutting and calls for greater efficiency continue to drive boatbuilders offshore, it's refreshing to be reminded there are still craftsmen out there, producing watercraft of distinction and taking their sweet time about it.

And not just eccentric fanatics painstakingly recreating bygone classics in their garage, either. We're talking modern boatbuilding factories, based here in Australia, turning out a highly-sought product.

Of course, value for money and market demands remain key to any successful business and there are ongoing pressures to drive down cost-per-unit. But there are also discerning sailors prepared to

settle for nothing but the best and Buizen Yachts is happy to oblige these customers.

The company was founded by Eddy Buizen in the late '70s, when Eddy and his brother Frits helped produce timber fitouts for Mariner Cruisers, plus Cavalier and North Shore sailing yachts.

As the business grew, Eddy saw a niche in the Australian market for a locally-produced yacht with a large pilothouse which would appeal to both sexes for its ample accommodation and interior helm position.

With the help of designer Joe Adams, Eddy developed the Zeston 40 in 1980 and the DNA of this classic design can clearly be seen in the modern Buizen yachts.

Since the 1980s, the company went on to produce 38 Zestons, plus a further 16

Buizen 40s and 36 Buizen 48s.

Current owner Steve Howe joined the company in 2005 and has since built the past seven Buizen 48s, but 2014 finds the company concentrating on the very contemporary Buizen 52 Pilothouse yacht.

While the Terrey Hills factory high above Pittwater remains much the same, the Buizen team has also remained true to its core principle of uncompromised quality, but the latest builds have definitely benefitted from advances in technology.

Some might balk at the 12 to 14 month lead time for a new yacht, but when you see the level of finish on a Buizen yacht and examine those sleek, yet sturdy bluewater hulls, it becomes apparent that good things take time.

The biggest change has

been the introduction of CAD design platforms coupled with a CNC router.

Where once shipwrights had to wait for a hull to be completed before beginning work on the interior, Buizen now has two teams working simultaneously, with each knowing their handiwork will fit together seamlessly, as per the CAD design.

Howe explained to *Trade-A-Boat* that when Buizen Yachts began developing plans for the 52 in 2009, the challenge was to produce it more efficiently.

He said the CAD system allowed designer Anthony Starr to completely model every aspect of the boat inside and out (including a level of semi-customisation) before any work began.

"This allows us to build the hull independently of

**OPPOSITE PAGE** *Infinity* nearing completion at the factory before the rigging and keel was fitted.

**TOP** These blokes build yachts that can take you around the globe in style.  
**ABOVE** Deck and hull employ vacuum infused vinylester resin.

**TOP** Laminating the deck of the 52's female mould.

**ABOVE** Interiors for the 52 are fully assembled on the factory floor before being dismantled and installed in the hull. CAD design ensures a perfect fit.

the joinery," Howe said. "We know we can have the hull and the joinery moving along concurrently and we know that the joinery will fit exactly inside that hull."

"This also allows us to build more complicated, complex interiors but without the impost of increased labour."

The mostly American oak interiors are fully assembled on the factory floor and it's a neat thing to be able to wander from the saloon to the guest cabins and examine the

workmanship up close before it is dismantled for lacquering and progressively installed into the boat.

It's plain to see the company's timber shipwrights are proud of their work, and rightly so when you discover details such as fibreglass laminating on the rear of every join to eliminate the possibility of any squeaking at sea.

Hull no.2 of the 52 Pilothouse was racing at Hamilton Island when we visited and hull no.3, named

*Napea* is headed for West Australia following a handover in September.

That latest build saw nearly a 15 per cent reduction in man hours as Buizen Yachts further refined its processes and the company is now turning out around three boats each year.

As Howe explained, that still-lengthy build period allows owners to develop an appreciation of the work that goes into their new yacht.

"The journey of construction is very enjoyable

for the owners, as they can come and see the yacht being built and gain a deeper understanding of their yacht, especially its structural capabilities and strength," he said. "The boats are built with an outcome in mind, which is structural integrity as a true bluewater cruiser should have, the engineering for extended cruising and of course, the finest joinery inside the boat."

"And that's always been the company's reputation." ■

## INFINITY RACER

Among the one-design race boats and sleek maxis at this year's Audi Hamilton Island Race Week was a metallic grey Buizen 52 hull.

*Infinity's* Tasmanian owners made the voyage north for their second tilt at the popular regatta, where the 52 proved her racing skills with a third overall in the Division One Cruisers. The owners improved on their 2013 results, finishing fifth or higher across the line in the six Hamilton Island races this year, even beating several maxis in the final race – clear evidence of Buizen's renewed focus on the

sailing performance of its yachts.

"While our boats can sail around the world and can handle, structurally, all the demands of a bluewater cruising yacht, we also wanted that focus on performance that allows owners to race competitively in social regattas like the Hamilton Island Race Week," Steve Howe said.

Contact Buizen Yachts at [buizenyachts.com.au](http://buizenyachts.com.au) or brokerage representative Peter Hrones at Team Windcraft on 02 9979 1709 or visit [windcraft.com.au](http://windcraft.com.au)



# Pilothouse Perfection

IT'S BEEN A WHILE COMING, BUT BUIZEN YACHTS OWNER STEVE HOWE BELIEVES HULL NO.3 IS THE BEST YET

More than a mere step up from a mass production sailing boat, Buizen Yachts are clearly in a class of their own.

The company is the last remaining Aussie boatbuilder still turning out bespoke sailing vessels from its Terrey Hills factory and while each new Buizen takes more than a year to complete, the reasons become clear upon inspection.

Having just sail-trialed

no.3 of the 52ft range for a WA customer, hull no.4 is well underway, employing vacuum-infused vinylester resin during construction to create a true ocean-going yacht.

Given the inevitable evolution of layouts (and meeting the owner's semi-custom needs) in the first two 52 builds, owner Steve Howe reports the team was extremely satisfied the latest hull no.3 *Napea*. This three cabin single level saloon design will now be replicated in subsequent 52 builds.

Large windows on the distinctive pilot house allow light to flood the bright, airy interior, offsetting elegant joinery in oak and walnut.

A clever "stable door" offers access to the saloon from the cockpit and this can be folded down on itself and the two bulkhead windows opened out, to allow interior ventilation and a connection between cockpit and saloon.

There's a saloon helm station on starboard with unimpeded views for navigation, alongside a throttle, Raymarine joystick

and engine monitors for when the weather is less than inviting. The yacht's CZone digital systems are also controlled from here.

Down a couple of steps is the modern galley and the master cabin is forward, with en suite. Aft of the saloon, the starboard guest cabin is adjacent to a day head and an office adjoins the port cabin. The finish is akin to a modern superyacht and Buizen's dedicated team has produced a world-class product that will safely carry committed owners around

**OPPOSITE PAGE** New sails freshly fitted, the latest Buizen 52 struts her stuff on Pittwater.

**ABOVE** *Napea* drew plenty of attention at the Sydney show.

**TOP** Light modern timber and clever cutaways create an enhanced sense of space in the galley and saloon.

**TOP RIGHT** Master cabin in the bow enjoys lots of natural light.

**ABOVE** The expansive windows provide great views whether at anchor or helming from the pilothouse station.

the world in comfort and with a high degree of style.

On deck, wide teak caprails surround the bulwarks and a keel-stepped carbon mast utilises in-boom furling for convenience and sailing performance.

Riggers were still fine-tuning the Leisure Furl boom when we visited last month, so a sail trial was not possible, but the new 52 will prove slippery on the race course (and on passage) with its Hood sails, and self-tacking headsail.

Halyards and sheets are run through the decks back to Harken winches in the cockpit, where the skipper operates from twin consoles, each fitted with Raymarine instruments, full sail controls and sleek black wheels.

All sail operations such as raising, furling and trimming are hydraulically controlled from here at the touch of a button.

A glossy teak cockpit table can be folded away when not required, but it's big enough to host elaborate meals under the folding bimini

when the occasion demands.

There's also underfloor access to the lazarette which holds a decent tender plus more room for gear and when this garage door is lowered, it creates a solid teak inlaid swim platform, accessed through a folding gate alongside the pushpit seating. This is truly Australia's own pocket superyacht and Buizen Yachts has rightfully carved out on enviable reputation based on impeccable craftsmanship, which looks unlikely to change.

As Howe said: "We value our reputation, so we'll never compromise what we do." ■

## quick specs

### Buizen 52 Pilothouse

**MATERIAL** Fibreglass  
**TYPE** Fin keel monohull  
**LENGTH** 15.85m  
**BEAM** 4.76m  
**DRAFT** 2.2m  
**DISPLACEMENT** 18,400kg  
**FUEL** 1200lt  
**WATER** 785lt  
**ENGINE** 160hp Yanmar  
**GENERATOR** 10Kva Fisher Panda  
**MAINSAIL** 74.5m²  
**JIB** 53.6m²  
**PRICE APPROX** \$2.25 million