





GO ... to work off-shore



We caught up with John Cameron and Annie Laurence soon after their circumnavigation of New Zealand in their 53' Benny. I loved Annie's explanation of why they chose to make this trip... "Well, it was there and we had the time". And time is the one thing this couple cherish - time to cruise, time for golf, time for fun and, of course, time for work... eventually.



Deciding to quit the corporate rat race and go cruising was an easy decision for John, and became easier for Annie when she realised that technology would enable her to maintain links to the office.

The couple examined a wide range of production cruising yachts - and were dismayed. The gap between what they wanted and what was on offer was huge. John wanted a yacht with real sailing performance and all the comforts of life. He regarded most production boats as heavy and ponderous, slow and not much fun to sail. Annie disliked stairs down into the cabin and galley, away from fresh air and light. She especially disliked the interiors which were dull. Clearly they were going to have to strike out on their own and design something more exciting and contemporary. They have done exactly that and come up with a uniquely stylish, contemporary yacht, which is now available internationally through Benny Yachts.

They were thrilled to discover a boat by New Zealand designer, Greg Elliott, which combined relatively light displacement with large interior volume in a sporty pilothouse configuration.

Like all Elliott yachts, the emphasis is on efficiency and performance under all points of sail.

Greg Elliott brings a straightforward philosophy to his work, producing off-shore yachts that are fast, functional and sea-kindly. As with most simply-stated aims, achievement is less than straightforward. Over many years, however, Greg has consistently done so, both with racing yachts, that often as not break new ground, and with cruising yachts. Off-shore racing yachts have to sustain big daily mileage in any conditions and "yachts like "Go" have already proven that they can achieve 200 miles (320km) a day, day after day, in normal cruising conditions", says Greg.

Elliott cruising designs borrow directly from the research and development of his racing projects, including the record-setting

passages from New Zealand to Fiji (Future Shock), round New Zealand's North Island (Elliott Marine) and the very fast Pacific crossings from California to Hawaii and from Australia to Japan. His yachts emphasise maximum waterline length, light to moderate displacement, fine entry and powerful aft sections, with excellent balance and lift characteristics. In racing circles, Elliott's muscular, stripped out machines allow no compromise in their quest for speed. Cruising yachts, by definition, are required to answer a wider range of demands than pure speed, but Greg has always retained performance as a high priority.

John saw the potential to utilize modern sailing systems to make it easy for a husband and wife to handle, without losing any performance. The large internal volume, protective pilothouse and, particularly, the integration of cockpit and interior on a similar level excited both of them - no traditional "dungeon". Greg Elliott's cruising shapes offer considerable internal volume. Principal features of the yacht include: furling headsail, a gennaker (set from the bowsprit with the help of a retrieval sock), fully-battened mainsail set on a Leisure Furl furling boom, and highly efficient lifting keel (hydraulically operated). The large volume of the yacht allows considerable carrying capacity, including two tenders, bicycles, diving gear, surfboards and assorted toys and equipment.

"The interior must be more than just functional. It needs to add an extra dimension to the way you live".

Both John and Annie, successful business people in their own right, had commissioned the Sydney firm Burley Katon Halliday to undertake a major office fitout, the design of a laboratory and two residences. It was logical to turn to them again to assist with this new nautical project. "The interior must be more than just functional," said John. "It needs to add an extra dimension to the way you live". Clean lines, contemporary materials, lots of curved surfaces and a fresh approach to





space utilisation were part of the brief.

Annie had a particularly challenging request - a bath. And a bath she has been provided, snugly concealed in the starboard side cabin under the berth. Voluptuous curves feature throughout the interior, with an intriguing circular shower right on the centerline just aft of the main suite, which boasts a large island bed. A second suite is situated in the starboard quarter, with second head and shower in the port quarter. These two cabins would suffice under most circumstances, but John and Annie have provided further quarters on the port and starboard sides of the mid-section of the boat. However, instead of closing these areas off and confining the interior, an innovative design sees the cabins closed off entirely when not in use, creating a wide accessway to the master cabin. Simply fold four doors across the accessway and two completely private cabins are created. Iain Halliday of Burley Katon Halliday examined what boats of this nature are principally used for. "Most of the time, a boat of this type is sailed by two people. There will not be many occasions when there are lots of houseguests around. So the real question is how to best make use of the space for the way the boat will be used for 90% of the time, while still maintaining the ability to accommodate occasional guests".

The major feature of the interior, however, is the pilothouse, flowing directly from the cockpit. It includes a navigation area

with remote control internal steering, a lounge/dining area and well-appointed galley, allowing the social areas and activities to be fully integrated. The galley's design has been further enhanced by the inclusion of high-performance domestic-standard Miele microwave and cooker, and a huge fridge/freezer. The galley appliances are electric, as John has always believed gas to be a safety issue on a boat. Having a generator means the couple don't have to be obsessed about conserving and generating power. The watermaker produces up to 35 gal/hr of drinkable water, ensuring virtually unlimited water for daily hot showers and Annie's bath. A washer/dryer is fitted, along with a garbage compactor and watermaker.

The notion of full inclusion is further emphasised by having sailing performance repeaters in the pilothouse so that everybody remains in touch with, and part of, the sailing experience.

The objective of space and light was greatly assisted by the basic layout of the Greg Elliott design, which is unusual in having the cockpit and pilothouse floors on a similar level. This integrates the inside and outside areas and provides open sightlines through the boat. A reliable and efficient Raytheon Autopilot ensures the focus is on enjoying the journey, only hand steering when approaching dock or in a difficult seaway. Other Raytheon equipment includes a Raychart colour plotter, L470 fishfinder, DGPS, Pathfinder radar and a ST60 depth

speed wind and close-haul wind multi-instrument. Long-range weather forecasts and navigation charts can be accessed from the computer-living proof that, with the right equipment, you can run a business from a boat.

John and Annie utilize hi-technology to the full, enabling them to run their business from anywhere they chose to sail. Although John has sold his business, Annie still manages a pathology practice with 2 partners. She handles the finances, reports and annual accounts for 5 pathologists (a staff of 33) from the luxurious confines of "Go", utilising the internet and satellite telephone...living proof that, with the right equipment, you can run a business from a boat. In fact, during her recent travels on "Go" she has met others doing just that. Both Annie and John maintain that even if they didn't need the technology for work purposes, they would still have it on board to maintain links with family and friends whilst cruising, as well as for a safety issue.

Intended for cruising over a number of years,

the Benny 53 offers a quite unique combination of contemporary styling and comfort with the high performance synonymous with Greg Elliott yacht designs. The pedigree is evident in every detail and refinement, enriching the sailing experience and, in fact, taking it to a new level. Annie points out that an unusually high number of male visitors to the boat at shows have remarked "If only I had a boat like this. I know I could get my wife to enjoy sailing!"

"We both wanted the freedom and excitement that comes from adventuring to places unknown and meeting new and different people," concludes John. We have already experienced the rewards of adventure and have found them to be far greater than we could have imagined."

"Go" is currently up for sale as John and Annie await delivery of their new baby, another Greg Elliott designed Benny, due to be launched in the very near future. We'd like to wish them happy sailing as they head to distant shores, and look forward to catching up with them again in the not too distant future.

BENNY 53 GLOBAL VOYAGER DIMENSIONS

LOA	16.30 m 53 ft 10"
DWL	14.38 m 47 ft 6"
Beam	4.80 m 15ft 10"
Draft keel up	2.00 m 6 ft 7"
Draft keel down	3.50 m 11 ft 7"
Displacement	13,500 kg 29,700 lbs
Ballast	4,500 kg 9,900 lbs
P	18.50 m 61 ft 0"
I	19.85 m 65 ft 6"
J	6.33 m 20 ft 10"

