

BEST OF THE BEST

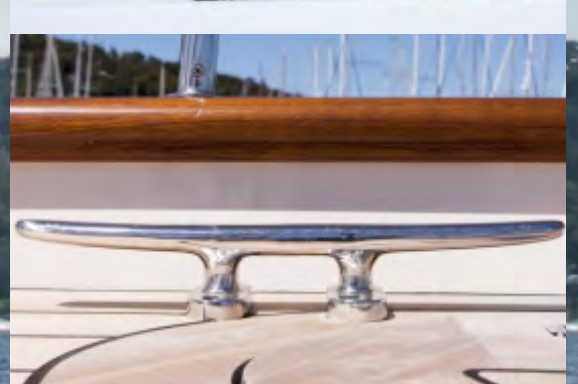
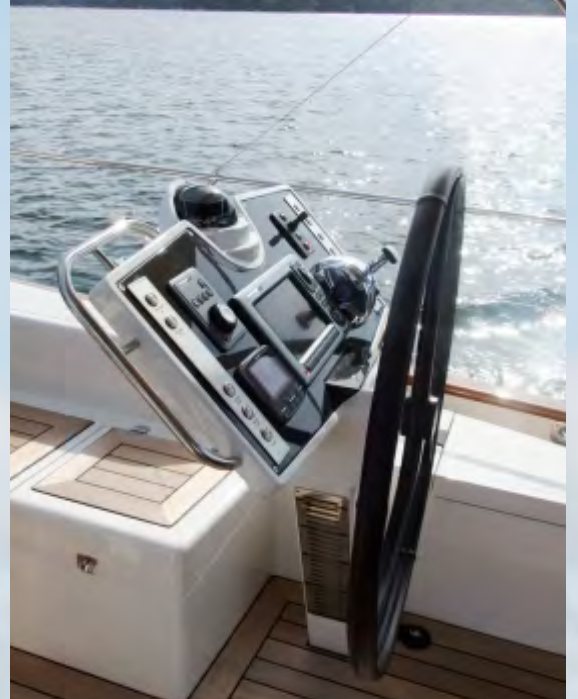
Proudly All Australian - the magnificent Buizen 52

STORY PETER SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA FRANCOLINI & PETER SCOTT

Since we launched GO BOATING Magazine in 2004, we have never followed the development of an Australian built semi-production boat as keenly as we have the recently launched Buizen 52 Pilot House cruising yacht.

It was at the Sydney International Boat Show in 2009 that Steve Howe, Managing Director of Mastercraft Marine, builders of this fabulous yacht, first told me he was planning to develop a 52 foot Buizen. In mid 2010, I visited Steve's factory in leafy suburban Terrey Hills on the northern outskirts of Sydney to see the 52 being laid up.

We'd been to the Buizen factory before to see the supreme craftsmanship that had established Buizen as the cruising yacht of choice for discerning yachtsmen with serious cruising on their minds. On the occasion of my visit to see the Buizen 52 in its infancy, going from 3D CAD drawing to CNC cutting of the yacht's form, I noticed a very different vibe at the factory. Floor space had been expanded to allow for the build of the new yacht but there was a firm commitment and a good deal of enthusiasm towards the new model, quite apart from the usual passion associated with the build of a Buizen yacht.



The Buizen 52 was to be a work of art - a combination of traditional old world craftsmanship where second-best or dummy fits were never an option, to a new 21st century yacht embodying high end technology, new age boat building techniques and the very best of locally sourced materials. To allow such an idea of a world class Australian built cruiser to come to life, Howe has invested heaps in hull design, tooling and technology and this is clearly evident in the form of the new Buizen 52.

Howe enlisted Peter Lowe Design (led by Peter Lowe and Will Hardcastle), to take the concept to reality. Lowe and Hardcastle were well credentialed for the job as was the interior design team led by Anthony Starr who had considerable experience working on superyachts. With Howe's master craftsmen, they have created a master yacht - a 21st century pilot house cruising yacht that ticks every box. To say that the Buizen 52 is a masterpiece of design and construction capability is an understatement. I have never seen an Australian built craft of such quality - it is simply the 'Best of the Best'.

So it behoves me to tell you why I rate this new cruiser so highly.

For a start, it is as Australian as you can get - conceived, designed and built right here in Australia and at a time when the very core of Australia's manufacturing is under extreme pressure from the power-house capacity of Asia and its attractively cheap labour force. Not only is this boat competitive on the water, it is also competitive on price, albeit at the top end of what one would expect to pay for a pedigree cruiser. It has also to be said, as has been said many times before, 'you only get what you pay for' and there is no better example of this truism than the Buizen 52.

But, let's start at the beginning. The first Buizen 48 was launched in 1991. The smaller Buizen sibling, the 40 was launched in 1996 so it had been some 15 years since this master builder of semi-custom yachts had released a new model. Steve Howe recognised that in an increasingly tough and diminishing market, a new model must have an edge on its competition and slot into a niche market where quality and craftsmanship are major considerations. Howe's brief was to develop a luxury cruising yacht with a performance aspect. He also found an owner willing to back his concept and imagination. The rest, they say, is history but it is history well worth knowing.

From my first glimpse of the yacht's form on the factory floor in 2010 to it proudly sailing on Sydney's magnificent Pittwater on a beautiful autumn day in March 2012, almost 20 months had passed. I'd been off the scene for almost that long due to ill-health. During my many months of rehabilitation, I'd often asked those from our team who came to visit me in hospital, if they knew of the progress of the new Buizen.

Steve Howe, Managing Director of Mastercraft Marine, at the helm of the Buizen 52





Over time, I gleaned snippets of information and it was with some eagerness that I awaited the news of its launch, thinking on more than one occasion, I had missed the launch due to my incapacitation. Press releases emanating from Mastercraft Marine in late 2011 put the launch date as early this year and so it was that when the news arrived that the 52 was in the water, I could not get on a plane to Sydney fast enough to allow me to go aboard this luxury all-Australian cruiser.

I had earlier tests to do that day and had arranged with Steve Howe to rendezvous with the new Buizen out on Pittwater when the afternoon breeze had kicked in. On approach, I was surprised by her livery - a stunning burnt orange hull with boot stripe and cream topsides. This was totally unexpected and a considerable departure from the rich royal blue colour schemes that had prevailed in the Buizen 48s.

Later, when discussing the yacht's hull colour with Steve Howe, he told me he had drawn inspiration from a feature we had run in GO BOATING back in 2009 on a Dutch built innovative luxury cruiser, Marmalade of Manchester. That yacht had featured a beautiful orange hull and while Steve confessed the owner had originally proposed a British Racing Green colour scheme, he had been suitably impressed with Marmalade of Manchester and said to Steve, 'go with it'. The colour is 'Sound Scene' - a brilliant burnt orange of superyacht quality. It is an interesting name for a colour but as Steve Howe explained, "Scene is the colour and colour brings emotion. Sound is the vibration we feel". What a wonderfully apt description of a superlative paint job!

When approaching the yacht to get a few on-water photos, I called Steve to ask if he intended to put up more sail as the Buizen was making way using only the power of her mainsail. Steve's cheeky reply was, "Happy to oblige with more sail but you'll have trouble keeping up!"

I could not help but chuckle - we were in a super quick tender and I'm thinking this was just wishful thinking on Steve's part - not for a moment recalling that his design brief was for a performance cruiser with round-the-world capabilities.

In an instant, courtesy of the self tacking 53.6 square metre jib, the big orange yacht powered away from us. It was an impressive sight as she ran downwind in a freshening afternoon sea breeze. She has a rated hull speed of around 10 knots and before long, this impressive pilot house yacht had the Raymarine instrumentation showing 8.5 knots in 14 - 16 knots of breeze at 30 - 35 degrees angle. Upwind, she is no slouch either showing 6.5 knots in a 16 knot breeze and as for tacking ability - enough said. She will literally come about on a sixpence. Under full sail, she is as quiet as a church mouse - no creaks, no groans, no straining rig. She has an impressive sail displacement ratio of 19:1 which



positions her well in terms of competitive cruiser class sailing. Her turn of speed will take many by surprise.

I immediately thought this new Buizen is going to be competitive in division racing - she is certainly no slouch when it comes to speed over the ground and will be more than a match for many in such events as the Audi Hamilton Island Regatta and Sydney Hobart would be nothing more than a stroll in the park. Her automated sail fit out which includes an electric hydraulic in-boom furler, Harken two speed winches, both primary and secondary and hydraulic back-stay and boom vang makes short-handed sailing a real breeze. She is easy to handle courtesy of the automated sail set-up which includes a traveller mounted above the coach house roof and space-age twin helm controls. The yacht, when under full sail, responds quickly to helm movement, heels beautifully and lifts impressively when the breeze is captured.

She has enormous freeboard and her stability is as a result of an alloy, keel-stepped, triple-spreader mast which carries an 128 square metre mainsail and self-tacking headsail offset by a six tonne lead fin keel drawing a little over two metres. She has a design displacement of just under 20 tonnes.

Around the decks, she has clean lines with all halyards concealed and all hatches are flush mounted. Stanchions are screwed into sockets on the cap rail and the anchoring gear is absolutely first class. Powered by a electric winch running 50 metres of chain and a stainless steel Ultra anchor, security at anchor is guaranteed and there is a concealed deck wash to ensure the deck, rode and ground tackle remain clean when the anchor is lifted.

Auxiliary power is supplied by a 160hp Yanmar diesel. Access to the engine is through a hatch in the saloon floor. The yacht is equipped with twin 600 litre fuel tanks and Racor filters. The Yanmar has the capacity to power the yacht at around eight plus knots and the frugal power plant will give close to 1000 nautical mile range under power. This yacht is designed for world cruising and as such has a 785 litre fresh water tank supplemented by a 150 litre per hour Sea Recovery desal unit. Her power train consists of a shaft drive with a Gorie overdrive feathering prop.

The all-electric interior including four air conditioners is powered by an Cummins Onan 9.5kVa genset . The boat is also equipped with a 5000 watt inverter.

I attempted to draw a parallel with the Buizen 48 and although from the same stable, the 52, it has to be said, is a clear notch or three above the 48 in terms of looks, styling, fit out and performance although she has clearly inherited the same quality craftsmanship and attention to detail as evident in the earlier Buizen marques.

Coming alongside, I boarded via the fully





hydraulic garage door, come swim platform which, when lowered, provides a great deck for swimming, entertaining, water activities and also conceals a spacious under deck tender garage.

Climbing into the cockpit, one's attention is immediately drawn to the beautifully designed and angled helm pods with an impressive array of Raymarine electronics and electronic throttle controls for the Yanmar diesel. Vision from the helms is very, very good and all push button controls for winches and hydraulics are within easy reach. The Raymarine instrumentation deserves special mention and consists of a mix of E120 and E90 multi functions screens, 48 nautical mile radar, data instrumentation and autopilot. The Buizen 52 is also equipped with satellite television and communication.

It's a big, spacious cockpit with the signature Buizen pushpit seats, bimini, spray dodger and infill to provide shade over the cockpit when enjoying meals at the fold-out table which generously accommodates eight adults.



I was suitably impressed with the bright work, side boarding gates, teak decking and teak capping rail. This is a cruising yacht with a good deal of style and finesse yet her equipment is made to endure the rough and tumble of long distance passage making. There is a good deal of skill in constructing a vessel with the build sturdiness of a state school outhouse yet with the design signature and appearance of an opera house. In this regard, the Mastercraft team have excelled.

Her clean lines continue in the bright, thoroughly modern interior. From the cockpit, there is a step down to a grated sump to protect the saloon from deck wash and two timber framed glass alfresco windows open the saloon to the cockpit. It is an impressive design feature.

The saloon is extremely spacious and the tasteful orange Italian leather lounges contrast beautifully with the light American Oak interior and dark Wenge trim and equally impressive is the Zebrano high/low dining table which doubles as a retractable coffee table.



The side glass windows are an impressive 12mm hardened safety glass while the forward glass panels are 14mm safety glass. Clearly, this boat has been built to deliver lifestyle luxury with the safety aspects expected of a world class cruiser. The forward and side glass panels are equipped with pull up blinds for privacy when at anchor and two overhead hatches provide for open air ventilation.

For entertainment, the Buizen 52 is equipped with all the mod cons including an audio visual system and flat screen LED pop-up television. Wiring is all C-BUS digital and all electrics are concealed behind the saloon cupboards while overhead, solid grab rails make movement around the saloon extremely safe in difficult conditions.





Tabula Rasa
SYDNEY



The pilot house helm station is set forward of the lounge and to starboard. It is a most impressive station with all controls including electronic throttle, bow thruster toggle and full instrumentation and superb vision from the single helm skipper's arm chair.

The galley is set forward and on the same level as the owner's state room. It is a full beam U-shaped galley with twin stainless steel sinks, Corian benchtops, full height stainless steel fridge with lower level freezer, waste disposal, twin ring gimbal mounted electric cooktop and an LG Solar Dome convection microwave oven. These ovens are absolutely superb. All panels in the galley are removable and provide access to the chain plates and deck tracks. There is a myriad of storage, dishwasher and a Miele washer/dryer concealed on the port side of the galley.

If there was any doubt that the Buizen 52 interior was superyacht territory, any doubts as to her stylish and innovative interior are set to rest when inspecting the forward state room and ensuite. On entry to the state room, the ensuite immediately impresses with its innovative louvre ventilation, large wall mounted mirror, Corian benchtop, teak shower grates, teak shower bench, dual glass shower

doors and Tecma twin rinse electric toilet. All clean, practical design elements as well as an overhead hatch for ventilation.

Moving forward, there is a desk and stool for those studious owners, an impressive island double with padded bedhead, more than ample storage including raw cedar drawers, LED lighting under the kickboards and bedhead. The cabin sole is finished in light American Oak. The state room, with its overhead hatches and impressive decor, is a perfect owner's retreat.

From a practical perspective, the companionway sole provides access to all plumbing manifolds as well as in-floor access to all hydraulics.

Additional accommodation is provided in two aft cabins, both equipped with separate ensembles. The portside cabin is fitted with a double bed while the starboard cabin has two single bunks.

One of the many practical aspects I liked about the Buizen 52 is the access provided to services. Again, the starboard cabin provides access behind removable panels to the tunnel which accommodates, amongst other machinery, the water maker. Ventilation to the cabins is provided by two overhead side port lights.





Ensuites for both cabins are similar only reversed. There is a shower, fresh water flushing toilet and vanity basin as well as teak shower grates and folding shower doors to maximise space. My only criticism of the Buizen 52 in her entirety, relates to the aft cabin ensuite - they are a little cramped and lack adequate ventilation however I have often asked myself, 'how big does a head have to be if it does the job' and cabins with ensuite are far superior to shared facilities.

There are other niceties such as the soft LED lighting and courtesy lights on all steps however it is the overall package which impresses. So too is the confidence-building warranty offered - five years structural and of course, manufacturer's warranties on all equipment.

The Buizen 52 is a beautiful boat - the result of more than 18,000 man hours in design and construction. Her appeal will be widespread, By that I mean that she will appeal equally to those who like to cruise under sail as well as those who prefer power as she is a virtual hybrid luxury motor sailor with substantial and impressive range - a feature that is a must on any vessel aspiring to be rated as a genuine passage maker. She will be well in the mix in competitive divisional racing but her real strength is her blue

water cruising pedigree. In that respect, she will be unequalled.

Well done Steve Howe and the Mastercraft team - you have made Australian boat building proud. The Buizen 52 was well worth the wait. To prospective owners, my advice is simple. Don't dally with an order. Hull numbers 2 and 3 are already in build and with limited production capacity of this semi-production cruiser, demand will be at a premium. Investing in a Buizen is clearly a lifestyle choice protected by enduring and stylish lines and a slick cruising capability.

On the international stage, which is where the Buizen 52 will ultimately be compared as there is nothing in Australia to equal it, this superb luxury cruiser will take pride of place - she is quite simply, the 'Best of the Best'.



SPECIFICATIONS

<u>LOA</u>	51 feet 6" (15.85 metres)
<u>LWL</u>	46 feet 2" (14.20 metres)
<u>Beam</u>	15 feet 6" (4.76 metres)
<u>Draft</u>	7 feet 2" (2.2 metres)
<u>Displacement</u>	20,000kg
<u>Ballast</u>	6000kg lead keel
<u>Mainsail</u>	74.5 square metres
<u>Jib</u>	53.6 square metres
<u>Engine</u>	Yanmar 160hp diesel with shaft drive Gorie feathering prop
<u>Generator</u>	Cummins Onan 9.5kVa
<u>Fuel Capacity</u>	1200 litres
<u>Fresh Water</u>	785 + 150lph desalinator
<u>Cruising Speed</u>	6 - 10.5 knots
<u>Fuel range</u>	> 800 nautical miles
<u>Accommodation</u>	Three cabins - all with ensuite - sleeps 6 plus
<u>Priced from</u>	\$2.195 million
<u>Built by</u>	Mastercraft Marine Pty Ltd 75 Myoora Road Terrey Hills, NSW
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