

The unassuming *Berri*, a standard production Brolga 33 with very few modifications. You will often see sister ships advertised in *Trade-a-Boat* for around \$45,000.

# CIRCUMNAVS NOT CIRCUMSPECT

Australian sailor Alex Whitworth keeps company with bluewater sailing elites such as Chichester, Knox-Johnston and more...

**N**ot many people get to rub shoulders with the likes of Sir Francis Chichester, Eric Tabarly, H.W. Tillman, the Hiscocks, Dr David Lewis, even Minoru Saito or Pete Goss, but one Australian is accessible to anyone and very much the man alongside them all.

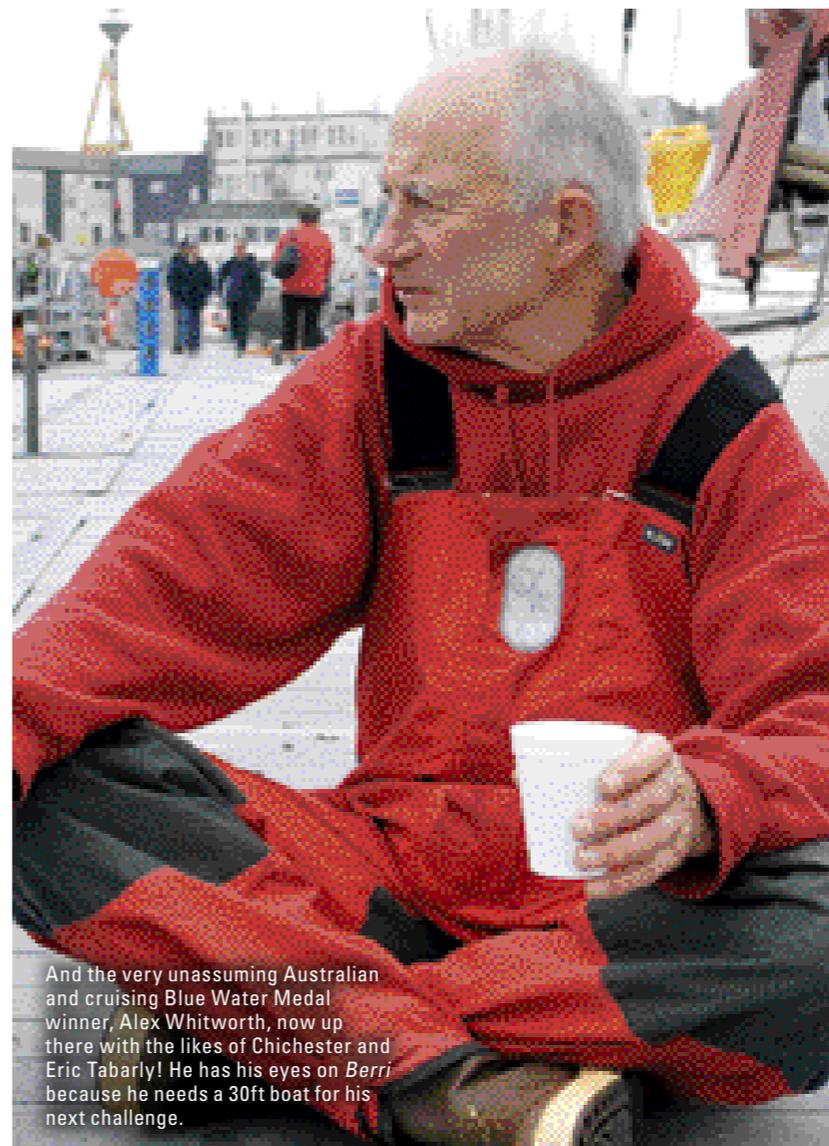
The above were all awarded the Cruising Club of America's highest honour, the Blue Water Medal and so, too, has our own Alex Whitworth! Why? Well, I reckon Alex could not afford an anchor, so just kept sailing, twice shorthanded around the world.

His first was East West in 2005 and the second time, North South via the Northwest Passage in 2009. He has some truly amazing stories to tell. Alex now works with Offshore Marine

Training Australia (see [www.marinetraining.com.au](http://www.marinetraining.com.au)) passing on his knowledge, expertise (and scary stories) during the RYA/ISAF & STCW Sea Safety courses.

We met up again while Margie and I were doing another five-day STCW course as part of our Antarctic work. It was not long before Alex and I both got talking about Jester-type solo challenges. It looks like it may be a Sydney Hobart event via NZ to starboard, in boats 30ft or less for summer 2011/12. There are four boats I know of that are already up for it. Alex's problem is that his beloved *Berrimilla* is 33ft, so she may have to go to make way for a 30-footer??

By the way, he will be presented with his Blue Water Medal (inaugurated in 1923) at the New York Yacht Club in March next year.



And the very unassuming Australian and cruising Blue Water Medal winner, Alex Whitworth, now up there with the likes of Chichester and Eric Tabarly! He has his eyes on *Berri* because he needs a 30ft boat for his next challenge.

## HAPPY DREAMING

Wow, holidays and another year. How was it for you? Any reality checks lately? I had a few this year. Some too big to think about and others I would rather not remember, but at the end of the day, I always maintain perspective and calm by going to that special place called Dreamtime.

If you are an adventurous sole on the ultimate holiday/adventure, you may one day push through the boundaries of life that define or categorise who we are. Suddenly, you can feel very alone, outside the box and in a scary place, but you probably made it there yourself, with no regrets — and yes, it is exhilarating.

You may have arrived there having simply decided to be

true to yourself. That is the one thing that many people are really scared of, being and believing in themselves. Doing it just for you; acting on that inner passion or real desire. You only get one life, which is not a trial run, so if you really want to do something, the crazy holiday/adventure, just listen to your inner-self, grab life with both hands and give it ago.

What is my Dreamtime? Simple, it is when I marvel at all the opportunities there are in the world to have fun, expand horizons and get out there to do things, making the most of life.

How do I do that? Well, I'm a "magazineaholic" and once got up to 20 mags a month on all different subjects. Returning from a year of isolation in 1995, having lived in a box, chained to rocks in

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Antarctica with Margie, I headed straight to the newsagent so excited. I picked up a pile of mags and rushed out, without paying! (Some 200m down the road Margie asked if I paid... oops... I ran back).

Now mags still feature in a big way but Dreamtime is powered by Google as well. So many things to do, places to see, people to meet and challenges to face. Life is good and how lucky are we that we live in Australia. We are free to use that life.

Every day somewhere in this world, some of the greatest adventurers of our time (who rarely get to blog) are risking their lives to protect us and that lifestyle. Military forces, search-and-rescue organisations are all at it. Lets hope this Xmas they all make it home, too.

## SOLO CHALLENGERS

This month, my inbox has been really exciting, with so much going on. Next year looks like a big one for Aussie solo sailors with three non-stop solo-unassisted circumnavigation attempts likely to set out. All have differing goals and aspirations. None has been officially

announced yet, but watch this space.

There is a 75yo Queenslander maybe sailing another S&S34 to glory, a 52yo Victorian sailing a Cole 43 and a 25yo Tasmanian sailing a modified McIntyre 50 IOOD racer.

The current Australian record for a global circumnavigation is held by Tasmanian Ken Gourlay, and at 180 days it is going to take a hammering I think. There is always a bit of luck involved here, so it is never over till the fat lady sings. It promises to be a busy blog season!

**WHY?**

A funny thing happened to me the other day. I experienced a bit of what other people think about me. Strange really, so now I have to think carefully how best to explain this, with the objective of trying to show you why and how these little adventures I sometimes do, actually happen. You can do the same.

It was a revelation to me. I was at anchor in Tonga on the very nice Nordhavn 78, *Ammonite*. Just six months before, I had been in that very same anchorage in my [www.taliskerbountyboat.com](http://www.taliskerbountyboat.com) 25ft open whaleboat, with not enough food or water, about to set off across 4000nm of ocean into the unknown. I was recreating William Bligh's epic journey following the Mutiny on the *Bounty* (read my untold story in next month's *Trade-a-Boat*).

At the time, I just got on with the adventure, raised the anchor and set off without any real fear, just excitement and anticipation. Now on *Ammonite*, I imagined that if I saw four guys in that little boat, with 30cm of freeboard and little water about to set off I would have said: "No way! Why? It is too dangerous, you will never survive!"

That day, I really imagined that that is what I would have said to any other four guys. But then I confused myself, I knew I was

happy when I actually left and did not even think about that at the time. We just departed. No problem. I always believed we would be okay.

So what is/was the big deal? I hope you can see the contradiction. On *Ammonite* I now thought that would be a crazy trip — too dangerous.

So the question again: "Why?" My answer: "Because it is fun and partly because I can." It is the answer I often give.

It then comes down to, "How can I?" Not just why. To achieve this, on every adventure I have ever done, there is a simple formula: planning, preparation and execution.

If you do it well and play the game right, you know the odds are stacked in your favour, so no worries. On the outside looking in, it looks very dangerous, but from the inside looking out, when you have been living every detail for four years, it is a bit "ho hum". Touch wood! 🍀

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