

Barker's Passage Update
No.1
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A slow start

At seven o'clock in the evening, on Monday the 4th of June, Bowtie Lady sailed out of Sydney Harbour on the start of the world tour. It was also at the moment I hoped that mother nature would set the timetable and that is what she did. On board with me was my brother-in-law, Lance Pattullo from Auckland, who joined me for the first leg to Mooloolaba on the Queensland Sunshine Coast.

First stop was Newcastle and when we arrived at 8 in the morning at the marina we were met by Jason and Shay, the electricians, closely followed by John Denton and Steve of Whale Spars, Rod and Chris the shipwrights and Chris Ayers from Seaspray Stainless. All had last minute jobs to finish on the boat for the voyage.

The next day we sailed north. The late afternoon weather forecast warned us of a low off Coffs Harbour that was heading south. The decision was easy, turn around and head for Port Stephens to shelter from what was the storm of storms, bringing 17 metre seas and huge winds. A bulk carrier ended up on the beach in Newcastle as a major disaster struck the area. We were well tucked away in the marina at Nelson Bay with double lines all around but huge wind gusts still made the Lady lean over. We were there for 4 days waiting for the wind and seas to drop. It was the opportunity to set up the boat, pack away stores, enjoy the company of the crew of a super yacht and take in a little of the country music festival that was all but washed out over the long weekend.



Our next attempt to head north was cut short when a strong wind warning made us take shelter at Coffs Harbour for the night. It was then back to sea and 36 hours later we were in Mooloolaba. The joy of being at sea. Whales migrating north put on a continual show, augmented by the spectacle of dolphins playing on our bow wave.

The two days spent on the Sunshine coast was a delight. Family and friends from Brisbane visited the boat and Joanna Taylor, my great mate who had spent the last six months working on the boat with me, replaced Lance as crew member. Together we continued up the Queensland coast to where we are today off Gladstone enjoying a strong breeze as we enter the waters of the Great Barrier Reef.

I look upon this leg of the journey to Darwin as a shake down cruise and the opportunity to learn to cook with a pressure cooker without burning the food, be competent with the new navigation tools and to find stores that elude me at the moment.

Back on the home front. If you know of anyone who would like to rent my apartment in Balmain for 12 months it is theirs. Check the website barkeraustralia.com for details.

Please pass on this update to others whom may be interested in this little adventure.

Thank you to my supporters:

- Medical Industries Australia for an extensive offshore medical kit
- JSE Marine Electrical for extensive spare parts and tools
- Endeavour Marine for spare parts for the Volvo Penta engine

It is a wonderful journey.
Peter Barker