

## **ORANA 44 REVIEW**

*By Louise Coates (May 2008)*



I was introduced to boating at a young age when my parents bought a 'Heron' to race on Sundays at our small local sailing club. Dad was Commodore for many years while he and my mother enjoyed the racing and social aspects of belonging to a small and friendly, family sailing club. Gordon and I raced at that club and our romance developed resulting in an on board relationship based on mutual respect and enjoyment of being on the water together.

We have always had some contact with the water in either a sailing vessel or a motor craft as our family grew. We shared the dream of one day owning a sailing boat large enough to live aboard for an extended period of time, but small enough for just the two of us to manage on our own. Friends introduced us to the world of catamarans and we were impressed by the room on board, so we started investigating different makes and models. There was no rush since we anticipated that our dream would not become reality till Gordon retired so we settled in to the fun of shopping around for our 'dream' boat.

Gordon enjoyed doing his homework by reading books and magazines as we attended Boat Show after Boat Show looking at just about everything we could. It became obvious that a few things were must haves on our list. They included; galley up, a craft that was easily manageable by just we two, good visibility, large enough living quarters for an extended live aboard time, flat entry from cockpit to saloon, owners hull, a real sea worthy vessel that would stand the test of time at sea as well as being comfortable to entertain and share with our family and friends in our local waterway.

The internet also became a valuable source of information and education - what did we do before the internet? Fountaine Pajot was one of the stand out products. With a long history of catamaran production and designs drawn up by naval architects with many features we knew to be important, we decided to contact EC Marine to have a closer look at the boat itself.

We met Peter Cohen at the Southport Yacht Club to look at a second hand Belize 43. We were impressed by the strength of construction. The rigging was more substantial than what we had seen on similar sized cats and the overall condition of a six year old boat was impressive. It was also obvious to us that these cats held their value.

Although we were impressed, there were still a few points that were not ideal, and let's face it, we were not ready to make a decision just yet! When we were asked by Peter what our list of requirements were, he listened and understood exactly what we were envisaging. We talked some more and explained our time frame as he got to know us and

# *Fountain Pajot*

we him. A design for the Orana 44 was shown to us soon after this meeting and we immediately fell in love with it! It had so many of the features we had been looking for and it was going into production in the near future. Maybe we would look at it when the opportunity presented itself in the years ahead.

However, Peter and Mark were keen to have the Orana in Australia for the Boat Shows for the following year so they put it to us, that we could be the first owners of this model. After much deliberation, we agreed and were invited to visit the factory in La Rochelle where we were again impressed by the production facilities and team at Fountain Pajot. In the mean time we justified our decision to place the order somewhat earlier than we had anticipated by telling ourselves that we should get the boat, learn how to manage it and outfit it as we require so that by retirement we will be ready to take off! One can justify anything if the emotions are strong enough.

Our decision was made sight unseen. Friends and family told us that we were mad! We knew that the design and all that we had seen in France were as we wanted them to be, but nothing compares to the reaction we both had when we saw the finished boat for the first time. We were delighted!

We have now done over 2,000 nautical miles and can attest to the great performance of the Orana 44. It sails well and the galley and accommodation is most comfortable and works well. We have thoroughly enjoyed our new boat and the continued relationship and support from EC Marine. They have been most helpful and interested in our boating experiences. I believe that we made our decision based on sound valuations of the product, a confidence in Peter and Mark at EC Marine and a solid commitment to each other that this was the right life style decision for us and our family.

I tell this story and write about our Orana 44 in a very different way to how my husband Gordon would. His article would include all the technical information and comparisons and go into the engineering insight into why we made our decision. He would tell you that we have sailed it in all conditions and that the performance has been most impressive. I on the other hand, have provided a rather different perspective, but a perspective that others may easily relate to when making the big decision as to which catamaran to buy.



*Louise Coates*  
*Orana 44 – 'La Rochelle'*