



RL24

"Slyfox" reborn

DARREN DYER TELLS HOW THE RL24 SLYFOX WAS RESTORED TO WINNING FORM.

ANDREW Pike was a keen racer as a young bloke sailing at Lake Wellington YC on his father's Yvonne cat and Capri 18 TS. He then bought his own Mini Quest, and a few years later a NACRA 5.2. After a move from Sale in Victoria to Brisbane, boats were sold and sailing was on the back burner as family and purchasing houses became priority.

After a long time out of the sport, Andrew decided it was time to introduce his wife, Theresa, and two boys, Michael and Jason, to sailing. He was looking for a boat that could be used as a family cruiser with the opportunity to go racing if the family become keen enough. Andrew always admired RL24's at LWYC while he was racing cats. He was also still in contact with mates from LWYC who were now sailing RLs very competitively. So the decision was made to look for an old RL24 to do up as a cruiser/racer.

Andrew explains his *Slyfox* project; "We bought the boat in 2001 from a young guy who had it stored out the back of a factory. His intention was to restore the boat but he didn't have the know-how. He bought it from an old guy who was probably the original owner and kept it moored in some mangroves at Scarborough. When I bought her she was covered in barnacles and shellfish below the waterline. The rig

controls were very basic - halyards, sheets and vang. The mast had been lying in the water for a period of time as it had some sort of sea sponge and shells growing in it. From the outside she spelt WORK but I knew the basis was there for me to build on.

"Below the waterline had to be ground back with an angle grinder before faring and sanding could take place. After three months of faring and sanding on the hull she was ready to be painted. We sprayed the hull with two-pack paint and after a good polish I could see that the time and effort was worth it as the finish was fantastic. I still get comments on the immaculate finish on the hull. I also removed the swing keel, reglassed it and replaced the pivot point with a 20 mm diameter swivel pin.

"All the wood trim was replaced – gunwales, handrails and trim around the cabin door. The topsides were sanded to remove chalky gel-coat then polished. The inside was quite good, the only items I added was a porta loo and a water bladder. The trailer was painted. I replaced rollers, springs, axle and brakes.

"Up to this point I had spent 12 months working on her whenever I could, so I was starting to get a bit toey to go sailing – to see if the family would enjoy it as much as I knew I would.

"Our first voyage was in the Brisbane

River under motor. Over the next three years I taught Theresa and our two boys, Michael 10 and Jason 8, to sail while we cruised Morton Bay and the Gold Coast Broadwater, spending time at well-known anchorages such as Amity Point, Tipplers and the Bedroom on the North and South Stradbroke Island.

"With Theresa, Michael and Jason now being confident sailors it was time to go racing. We joined the Morton Bay Trailer Boat Club and sailed in the combined series comprising Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, Wynnum/Manly Sailing Club and Trailer Sailor Club of Queensland.

"After the first season of poor results, the mast was showing signs of bad corrosion and the sails looked worse than our bed sheets. During the off season I fitted a Goldspar mast, a new set of North racing sails and to control direction a 49er aluminium centre board section was used as a new rudder blade. I also upgraded and added many more sail controls to make the whole thing work.

"The next season our results started to improve. Our first trip to the RL Nationals in 2007 proved to be a great learning curve improving sailing technique and rig tuning which increased boat speed further. This also encouraged us to return to the nationals in 2009 for more valuable experience."

Andrew's most recent results show how the boat is now performing. *Slyfox*, crewed by Andrew's sons Michael 17, Jason 15 and a mate from Victoria, Darryn Dyer, put in a big effort at this year's Bay to Bay Trailable yacht race. The race is from Tin Can Bay to Hervey Bay, with *Slyfox* coming home; first in Division 3, first on CBH Division 3, first on PBH Division 3, first RL24 on CBH, first RL24 on PBH and finished a credible seventh out of all the trailer sailers. Not bad

PHOTO JULIE GELDARD

LEFT: *Slyfox* powers away from the field in the annual Bay to Bay event.

Andrew Pike hard at work sanding *Slyfox*'s hull.



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The Bay to Bay race was a great event for the RL 24s which boasted the biggest class fleet with 20 entries and plenty of close racing. In Division 3 there were four RL24 swing keels in the top five places on CBH. 1st-*Slyfox*, 2nd-*Go For It*, 4th-*Chill Quat*, 5th-*Charlie Brown*. In Division 4 Brad Taylor's *F-Troop* (RL24 Drop keel) was 5th on CBH.

Andrew plans to compete in the RL24 National Championships which will be held at Southport Yacht Club between January 8 and 15, 2011. I encourage all RL24 sailors to join in this great event for a week of fun racing and socialising.

For more information contact RL24 Owners Association President Darryn Dyer email: dgs@aapt.net.au or view the RL website at www.rlyachts.net.

for a thirty-four year old boat.

Slyfox is a credit to all the hard work that Andrew has put into her. It is interesting to note that the boat is rigged to class rules and managed to beat all the modified boats across the line – you don't have to have big sails to make these boats go, you just need to have a well set-up, efficient rig that works.