

# My Favourite Photographs

**Rob Legg**

Over the years I have kept a great number of photographs of sailing boats, and there is not one that is my clear favourite. I am a believer in the saying "A picture is worth a thousand words". Often it reveals a lot about the people that sail in that boat, and why the boat may, or may not, perform as well as it does, or it may be simply a nice picture.



"Spiral Navigator"

Owned by Wayne and Gretta Hill is seen here crossing the notorious "Rip" entrance to Port Phillip Bay, and in the distance to the south west an approaching cold front

Rugged, used in all weathers and under shortened sail when necessary, she appeals to me as a much used and adventurous family boat, used to explore the waterways of Victoria and it is the owners ambition to have sailed every navigable stretch of water in that state before they are done. Now 36 years old, Spiral Navigator has many sea miles to her credit, most of them on the cold and unpredictable waters of Australia's southern states.

As at 2016 Wayne and Gretta bought a boat in Greece called it "Northern Navigator" and cruised for several months down the coast of Greece and Italy. Then they were back to Paynesville for the 2017 RL24 National championships.



"Three RL28s leading the fleet."

A gift from Julie Geldard, that dedicated photographer of sailing boats, and taken during a Bay to Bay race, this was something I thought would never happen. "Three RL28s leading the fleet".

Well, maybe they did have a ten-minute start, and I had fiddled a bit to make the three boats a little closer together, but it does make for a very colourful picture.



Not for the feint hearted!

On the starting line a big fleet of 24s during a National Championship series at Paynesville.

This picture still excites me even after the 20 years that have passed since I last sailed a "24". They were the only boat of the many that I had owned during 50 years of sailing that had that elusive something; the light responsive feel of a dinghy, the excitement of the acceleration on a reach. So easy to launch and retrieve, and all on a boat that you can live aboard in reasonable comfort for a weekend, and trail with ease.



"Go for it"

Was an exciting boat, and Steve North used to push his boat to the limit. Unfortunately she was pushed beyond her limit once too often during a race and was lost.

Even though she often carried sail beyond the class rules, and was at times driven beyond normal sensible limits, this photograph sits above the desk in my office as a reminder of the excitement of sailing in a boat that will plane.

Steve just could not wait to set up another boat, and I guess that "Go again" will be driven just as hard. Good luck with her Steve, but please stick to the class rules this time, if only for safety sake.



"Ohau-Rua" - Photo courtesy of Australian Sailing.

Taken during the National trailerable yacht championships at Geelong.

Note in the strong breeze, "Ohau-Rua" is in perfect trim. I know that her helm is light because her tiller is in line with the centreline, the mainsail is flattened, and the headsail tufts are streaming.

Simon Walsh has been the Drop Keel champion for many years now, and "Ohau-Rua" is undoubtedly the fastest and best sailed boat in that division, and always kept in immaculate condition. I always like to see owners try something new and use their own ideas, and Simon has introduced many of his own to create a consistent race winning boat.



"Whatever" owned by Darryn Dyer.

A consistent winner in the Swing Keel division, and most likely the best sailed boat I have seen, always in complete control even in the hardest breeze, she is a great example of a boat that has been rebuilt to like-new condition. Not often do you see the photo of a boat hard on the wind in extreme conditions being sailed flat, with main sail flattened off, sailing fast and high.



On a screaming reach.

Paynesville again, and another championship series, one of the few venues where you can sail during those cold fronts that sweep through Victoria, and who else would you expect to be leading the fleet in this sort of weather, but Simon Walsh in "Ohau-Rua". On these reaches in 30 plus knots of wind, speeds of up to 14 knots are common and thrills abound.



Aftermath of the Victorian bushfires. The saddest photo ever sent to me.

Over the last 38 years I had known of only three RLs that have been lost for all time, and of those only one was lost at sea, one was damaged beyond repair in a road accident, and one an RL28 in the Victorian bush fires. When I requested that the owner at least salvage the keel from the remains he explained that the fire was so intense all that was left was a big blob of melted iron under all the ashes.



Ohau Rua. At Paynesville 2017

Just one more that I could not resist. Ohau Rua in full flight during the 2017 National championships.