

# Cruiser Division Newsletter

## December 2023



*Progressive Lunch Raft Up 2023*

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## A Line from the Captain

### Darren Sutherland

In my 5 months as captain a lot has happened. There have been a lot of highs and one devastating low.

Unfortunately, our good friend, the charismatic, and vibrant Steve McCluskey passed on the 3rd of October. We will all miss him dearly. Please take time to read the Vale Steve McCluskey article by Tom Muir. Our thoughts and love go out to Tracey and Curly.

Steve was a key player in so many fun times and great memories. I am sure we will all raise many a toast to him over the coming months and years. Cheers Steve..

It's hard to believe it is now December and Christmas is quickly approaching. From all of your committee members we trust you have a wonderful time and a safe and prosperous year ahead.

We look forward to seeing you on the water soon.

# Orange Land Cruise

July 2023

Another highly successful Land Cruise. The Land Cruise to Orange sold out that quickly, we were all stunned with the popularity of the event with 49 in attendance.

Friday started in the afternoon with a wine tasting at Ferment, we sampled 6 signature wines from the region, accompanied by a matched food sampler menu. This was a great way to ease us into the region. In the evening we had short walk to Mr Lim's restaurant for a Korean, Chinese banquet meal.

Saturday we visited the Borrodell winery for a truffle hunt followed by a 3-course truffle lunch showcasing the exquisite local truffles. Dinner was not a planned event but we all somehow found the Hotel Canobolas.

Sunday afternoon we had a private tasting at the Parrott Distillery which was followed by a visit to Phillip Shaw winery. We enjoyed a private behind the scenes tour of the winery followed by wine tasting and hand-crafted pizzas.

A big thank you and round of applause to Fiona Lake for organising an excellent event.

*Darren Sutherland*



# Vale Steve McCluskey

On third October, 2023, a stalwart of the Cruiser Division in the form of Steve "Macca" McCluskey, passed away peacefully with Tracey and Curly (the dog) by his side on the Gold Coast. Steve had finally succumbed to his long battle with cancer at the age of 69.

Steve and Tracey were a feature at many Club and Division events over the last decade and Steve's colourful language and antics were often something to behold.

Tracey honoured me, together with Shane White and Col Velaires (one of his oldest friends from Newcastle) by asking us to speak at his celebrations of life which were held in both Newcastle and in Newport (at the Club). In those talks attendees heard many humorous stories about Steve and the full video of the Newport event can be found on You Tube on Peninsula Funerals' channel.



I am privileged to say that Steve has been a close friend for the last 9 or 10 years, during which time my wife Lou and I enjoyed numerous holidays with Steve and Tracey both domestically and overseas, boat trips up and down the coast (always of course at 21 knots which was Steve's only speed), and countless weekends boating with the McCluskeys in and around Pittwater. Our first social get together was at the Sydney boat show, where we had lunch, drinks, dinner and more drinks and experienced that phenomenon which became known in Pittwater circles as being McCluskied. I understand the Newcastle version was known as getting Mattered. But it was amazing that no matter how much had been drunk or how late he retired to bed, Steve would always manage to get up, as he would say, "at the crack of ten".

Steve achieved much in his life and one of his major achievements was, of course, to develop a successful insurance business based in Newcastle. There are many Club members who have utilised the services of McCluskey Insurance. Steve looked after his staff very well and was always available to his clients to offer some free advice when needed. Away from his working life, Steve was an accomplished water skier and snow skier using his skills both domestically and on many trips overseas.

Steve also excelled at martial arts reaching the pinnacle of this endeavour through representing Australia at the full contact World Championships in Kuala Lumpur when he was in his twenties.

In Steve's own words, he said the best thing he ever did in his life was to pursue and marry Tracey. She was acting as his travel agent and he thought she was pretty hot and elegant and Tracey thought he was quote "Obnoxious" unquote.. Notwithstanding her initial impressions, since then Tracey has been by Steve's side in business and in pleasure and without her organisation, particularly of holidays and social events, Steve would have been lost (and many of us as well). Indeed, Tracey's dedication to caring for Steve in those final weeks in very difficult and challenging circumstances was absolutely amazing to witness and a true testament to the love they shared.

When I think of Steve and his many attributes, the one thing that stands out for me was that he was one of the most generous people I have ever met. Steve would share anything he had with you and if he didn't have it, he would try to get it for you. Many was the time that a bottle of red would be finished on the McCluskey boat and myself or somebody else would offer to go and get another. But Steve would sit you down and say "don't worry I have another eleventy-eight of those where that one came from". And of course, allied to his great generosity was Steve's sense of hospitality always welcoming to one and all to join him on his beloved "Mirage". Steve only had one rule when you boarded his boat and that was "Don't touch my Switches, my Bitches or my Clears". But everything else was there to be shared with you.

It's a great tragedy that Steve no longer has the opportunity to create new stories and memories with us. So, as we say Vale and farewell to Steve, we should remember him as a devoted and loving husband to Tracey, father to Curly, a long-time and generous friend to many and in addition to all that, just generally a top bloke.

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## Looking after and Servicing inflatable life jackets

Although it is the law in NSW to service inflatable life jackets once a year, the most important reason to do so is for the safety of yourselves and everyone else who is onboard.

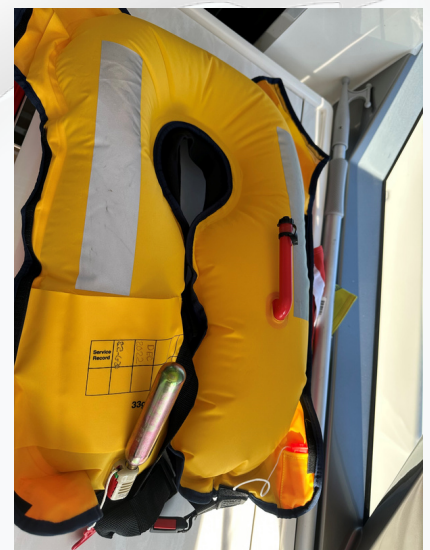
Life jackets should have a tag on the inside, which is filled in at every service, so it is easy to see when it was last done. Time does pass by quickly, so it is a good idea to get into a regular habit at the beginning of each boating season, which is now, to check and service all safety gear.

It starts with the basics: rinsing off salt and checking for damage after use, followed by storing your lifejackets in a dry, well-ventilated spot away from sunlight. Remember, lifejackets aren't meant for cushions or fenders, so keep them away from oil and fuel. When storing new lifejackets, free them from their plastic wrapping for proper ventilation.

Take extra care with inflatable lifejackets, as they require special attention. Before wearing them, carefully inspect for wear and tear, ensuring that CO2 cylinders are securely fastened. Keep an eye on the auto-inflation cartridges, making sure they are functional (there is a weight marked on each cartridge so just use your kitchen scales to make sure they are each still within the specification) and within the expiration date. Manually blow up each life jacket and leave overnight to ensure they do not lose pressure. Also make sure that the pull tag for all inflatable life jackets is free and ready to use.

For self-service, follow the manufacturer's instructions, Roads and Maritime website for videos or written instructions

( <https://www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/waterways-safety-and-rules/lifejackets-and-safety-equipment/lifejacket-care> ) or attend Transport for NSW (Maritime) clinics for assistance.





# Progressive Lunch 2023

On Saturday 30 September, the Cruiser Division held its annual Progressive Lunch in Refuge Bay adopting a "Wild West" theme for this year.

The 41 participants on 21 boats enjoyed a fun day and adopted the theme with gusto resulting in many well-dressed cowboys, indians, saloon madams and even a horse. Everyone enjoyed great food and company beginning aboard "Water Lou" for pre lunch drinks and awarding of Prizes.

Best dressed boat was awarded to Nor East (Doug and Christine Barrow). Best dressed couple went to John and Marcia Paxton. Best dressed lady went to Kathy Jacques and best dressed gentlemen was awarded to Steve Branch.

Thanks to everyone who went to so much trouble to help make the day such a successful event.

Tom Muir



# Safety Equipment required for Tenders

As the summer boating season approaches it is good practice to review the safety equipment that you carry in your tender. The following are the requirements of NSW Maritime;

A tender is any type of boat up to 7.5m long used to transport people or goods between the shore and a parent vessel or another vessel. It is no longer classified as a tender if it travels further than 1 nm from it's parent vessel.

Tenders up to 3m long must carry:

- Paddle or oars
- Bucket, bailer or bilge pump
- Waterproof torch at night (between sunset and sunrise)

A tender must carry the same equipment as powerboats and sailing boats if it goes:

- More than 200m from the shore on enclosed waters
- on open waters

Tenders over 3m long:

A tender over 3m long must carry the same safety equipment as powerboats and sailing boats.

If you have further questions, check out the NSW Transport Boating safety checklist for both mandatory and recommended safety equipment. The checklist has useful information related to lifejacket selection and use, and all the safety equipment required for power boats used in enclosed and open waters plus PWC, canoes, kayaks and SUPs safety equipment.

Author: Fraser Douglass

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## Oyster Shed

We had a great turn out for our lunch at the Oyster Shed. The weather was not great, we did however enjoy breaks in the rain which allowed dry passage to and from the Oyster Shed. We all squeeze aboard ANEGADA, dropping anchor in 1.7m on a 1.4m high tide on the northern side of Spectacle Island. We all ferried ashore using 3 dinghies. A special welcome to new members Helen & Shane, we trust you felt welcomed and we look forward to seeing you at future events.

Deb and the team were excellent as always. The oysters, prawns, fish, and the seafood chowder were fantastic.

If you have not been there yet, make sure you plan ahead and ensure you have a high tide or you will run aground.

Your deposits if you were wondering have gone to the Oyster Shed's staff.



# The CEO Trophy

On Saturday 25th November 2023 the Cruiser Division held The CEO Trophy, the first of three navigational events for the 2023/24 season in the Pittwater.

The CEO Trophy had seven vessels entered and they were Anegada - Skipper Darren Sutherland, Jay Jay - Skipper Jayson McDonald, Good Paddock - Skipper Graham Pickles, Pelara - Skipper Peter Haig, Escape Now - Skipper David Rogers, Water Lou - Skipper Tom Muir and Obsession - Skipper Fraser Douglass with a total of some 30 guests and crew on board. The event started from Stokes Point in the Pittwater and made its way around the bay to finish off Great Mackerel Beach. The weather was pleasant but cloudy with a few light showers, an 8 knot north/north westerly breeze, and on a falling tide. After finishing the course, the fleet moored in Towlers Bay for the results and some well-earned lunch and refreshments.

Jayson McDonald, our CEO, gave a short speech to the entrants and members and spoke about how the Cruiser Division has been running this type of navigation event for some 30 years and how important it was to "maintain these core traditions specific to each division" as we move forward as a club.

Fraser announced the results, Jayson presented awards to the place getters and Peter Haig presented the Trophy to the winner, Jay Jay & Jayson McDonald. Prizes included a bottle of wine and gift vouchers of \$100 to winner, \$75 to second place and \$50 to third place.

Results were as follows;

**First Place Jay Jay: Skipper - Jayson McDonald, Navigator - Ian Walter**

**Second Place Water Lou : Skipper Tom Muir, Navigator - Lou Muir**

**Third Place Good Paddock: Skipper Graham Pickles, Navigator - Jana Pickles**

Congratulations to winners and all entrants on a great day of navigational excellence! We look forward to welcoming more Cruiser Division vessels to the RMYC BB Cruiser Division Navigational Series in the second half of the season with the next event, The Peter Haig Trophy, scheduled for Saturday 17th February 2024. For those interested on information on how to compete in the event, please contact Fraser Douglass, mobile 0435 770 599 or via email at [fraser@douglass.net.au](mailto:fraser@douglass.net.au).

The overall winners of the RMYC BB Cruiser Division 2023-24 Navigational Series will be announced at the Annual Cruiser Division Gala Evening in July 2024 with awards for the "Vessel of the Year" and "Navigator of the Year."

Fraser Douglass



# WHY IS THE RUM ALWAYS GONE?

Yes indeed, why IS the Rum always gone? Or the Whisky, or the Gin, or in our case the Vodka? There is nothing worse than planning on settling back in the saloon, music playing, perfectly still water outside and discovering that the friends on board last week have left you dry bottles everywhere! But despair aside, there is a solution, and we have it - make your own and never run out again!

Is it legal I hear you ask? Well yes and no. The main obstacle is the Aust Tax Office (just like the rest of life really) not health and safety concerns. You are allowed to have a still of 5 litre capacity but since most home stills are 25 litres, you will need a license from the ATO or stow it away in a handy locker and not tell anyone. There is a very good article outlining the rules and regulations at <http://distilleryking.com.au/blogs/news/is-it-illegal-to-distil-alcohol-in-australia>

Is it safe? Will I go blind drinking my own Moonshine? Yes, it's safe as long as you aren't greedy and follow the guidelines - more on that later. No, you won't go blind and Moonshine it's not. Most home brewers take great offence at the term Moonshine which is a rough, unsophisticated product of sloppy practices and ingredients and that's not what we're aiming for.

Will I become an alcoholic and have a hangover all the time? Possibly. The cost of making your own alcohol is so inexpensive that your intake may increase and you'll end up with all the Rum gone again. A bit of discipline is going to be essential so as not to end up being a drunken sailor all the time. Hangovers are much less problematic with your own mix as you'll only use the best and most purest part of your harvest.

So how do I craft spirits? Its seriously easy. The first time is a bit fiddly, but practice makes perfect. There are two types of stills - a triple distiller and a pot still. We'll go into the first type only as pot stills are in another dimension altogether and not as simple to use - this is the type that infamously explodes. There is a bit of equipment needed and if you are interested in pursuing distilling, starter packages are available through brewers' shops such as Country Brewer or Distillery King either online or instore. It's a bit of an investment to start but once you have the equipment, the expense diminishes to just the dextrose and yeast.

The batch basics are: - first step is to make a mash of the dextrose and water. Yeast is added to ferment the mash. Once fermentation is finished, the mash is decanted into the distiller which heats up the mix to a desired temperature of between 77-82 degrees. This is the important bit - too high or too low and you end up with very dangerous spirits like ethanol or metho - not what we are aiming for! Once the correct temperature has been reached, the spirit gets produced via a drip hole in the chimney. We remove the first 500ml of output as it can be tainted while the temperature is establishing. Generally, the output is between 3-4 litres per 25 litres of mash which can take a few hours and then the temperature begins to rise when distilling is finished. Once the temperature begins to rise, any further output is also discarded. The result is 100% pure alcohol so don't be tempted to take a swig - it can kill you quicker than the Kraken can. This pure alcohol is then diluted to 50% with water and then put through a double bucket and charcoal filter. The resultant filtered mix is 50% vodka which we then further dilute to 30-35% alcohol as per standard spirit mixes. But does it taste good? Yep, we think it is even better than Grey Goose. For those mathematically minded Mariners, the 3-4 litres of pure alcohol make up 7-8 litres of vodka which costs roughly between \$2.76 - \$3.31 for a 700ml bottle of finished product.



So, what about the Rum since we've only produced Vodka? Well, the brewer shops stock concentrate additives of pretty much every type of spirit conceivable which you can add to the base vodka. So you can make Rum, Gin, Whiskey, Bourbon, Frangelico, Baileys, Chocolate Liqueur etc etc etc etc to your hearts content. Some of these additives are more successful than others so it's a good idea to ask likeminded brewers or search online what is recommended and what isn't - remembering that personal taste is varied. You can also successfully mix your base vodka as it is with lemonade, tonic etc. It's also possible to make your own liqueurs with fresh fruit or nuts keeping in mind this takes weeks to months for success and involves a bit of prepping. We've successfully made Limonchello, Mandichello, Frangelico, Raspberry Gin, Sloe Gin and Honey liqueur from online recipes. And much more easily made Frangelico, Baileys, Chocolate Rum, Pink Gin, Rum and Whiskey from the additives.

So now you have the secret - the Rum may never be gone again.

Cheers from Shane and Helen Caughey

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## Future Events

### Australia Day Celebration.

We hope all Cruiser Division members will join in for the club's celebration of Australia Day and sail past on Friday 26th January 2024.

### Friday 2nd February 2024

BBQ in Refuge Bay

### Friday 16th February 2024

Cruiser Division Monthly drinks and dinner at the Club - Waterview Terrace "Hawaiian Shirt"

### Saturday 17th February 2024

Peter Haig Trophy - Navigation Event

### Friday 26th to Monday 29th July

Save the Date - Hunter Valley land Cruise



## Thank you to our Contributors

**Our contributors this addition are:** Darren Sutherland, Fraser Douglass, Tom Muir, Sue Rogers and new members, Helen & Shane Caughey

