



three experienced minds launch one-design catamaran

■ by IAN GRANT

The passion to design and project build an exciting one-design offshore racing catamaran has finally become a reality with the eminent launch of the revamped *Raider* catamaran.



THIS passion has lived independently with three champion sailors Geoff Berg, Roger Overell and the multiple Brisbane to Gladstone multihull line honours trophy winner Jamie Morris.

All three are successful Gladstone Race sailors with Geoff Berg and sons Tim and Joel winning the Australian Multihull Offshore championship with the prototype *Team Raider* design.

However there has always been that individual burning ambition to race the 306nm classic off the stick with absolutely no interference from measurement rules or handicap ratings.

Finally the trio have drawn the resources of Geoff Berg's Allyacht Spars and the meticulous construction skills of the Roger Overell-managed Lightwave Catamarans with the innovative boat modification experience of the highly successful offshore catamaran skipper Jamie Morris to the boardroom table.

Three very smart sail thinking brains are always better than one and the collective ideas applied to the revolutionary *Raider* One-design

Simply the Best in 50th Brisbane to Gladstone. Winner of 4 x Line Honours.

promises a new meaning to sailing in the fast lane.

At least three new Raider One-designs will be on the start line for the 2008 Easter blue water classic starting a new era in the 44 year history of Australia's only true offshore race for multihulls.

Both Geoff Berg and Roger Overell have wisely appointed Jamie Morris to be the project manager and the senior person to develop all aspects from creating the moulds to administering the class and formulating the racing program.

Jamie who first started a career in the sport shortly after he could swim enjoyed racing his Sabot with Melbourne's Sandringham Yacht Club.

He first sailed the Gladstone Race with the Rob Mundle skippered *Eyewitness News* in 1985 and has become progressively obsessed with both the development of the race and associated thrill of sailing in the faster lane.

"I remember that race well, it was the turning point to becoming a skipper in my own right," Morris said.

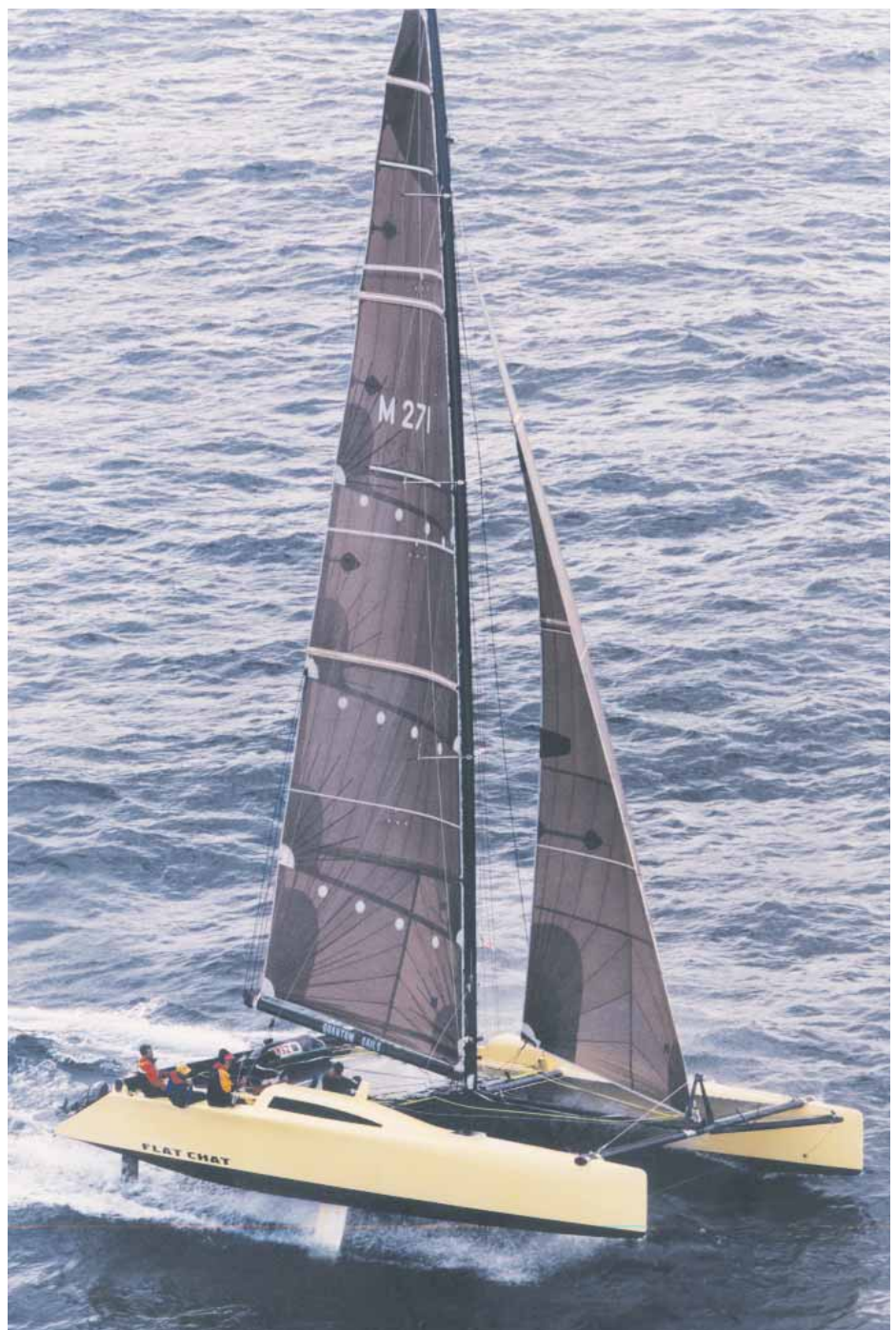
There was always plenty of space and comfort on the Adrian Rogers built record breaking *Shotover* but Morris has never been one to boast about crew comfort or how to relax in a dry bunk.

It is thanks to the guidance of a grandfather, who he idolised, that Morris became a sailor who was encouraged and educated to race with the ultimate result as the major priority.

So much so that the term near enough is never good enough and that fact has never entered into his racing philosophy.

This reputation has become his personal guideline leaving nothing to chance in his ongoing search for changing the gears for more speed.

His long association with specialist monohull sailor Duncan Van Woerden added a new important and ongoing episode to learning more about the sail-fast technique.



Jamie Morris and Roger Overell: *Flat Chat* Winning crew, 2002. (above right)
Flat Chat 2002 Brisbane to Gladstone.
Winner of 2 x Line Honours. (right)

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"Duncan is a very smart thinker and besides having sailed on the best big boats he had the experience of building boats and bits for boats," Morris said.

The healthy respect for each other allowed the extensively modified *Simply the Best* to create an unbroken 53 race line honours record before she was sold to race in America where she is still *Simply the Best* by continuing to win.

"There is always that urge to do something different, we had taken *Simply the Best* from being an exciting catamaran to a super fast performer when the time came to sell," Morris said.

"I guess most sailors are guilty for making some career changing decisions at sea and I'm one of those."

"The torment of failing to crack the Brisbane to Gladstone record was the catalyst and it all started during a Sydney-Brisbane delivery voyage on Wayne Huxley's Grainger catamaran *Desperado*".

"Some hours into the trip, we were in the thick of a nasty low pressure system which closed the coastal bars."

"Life on board *Desperado* was a little desperate, we were left to the mercy of battling against a huge swell and cold 35kt winds with bent rudders when it was decided to take the chance of running the white water on the notoriously rough Ballina Bar."

"At one stage we were heading for a beach landing before managing to slip past the rock walls."

"It was a close call between surf and safety," he said.

Morris was in the driving seat when *Desperado* lost her mast when leading the Gladstone Race fleet on a blast reach across the Redcliffe Peninsula.

Although the thrill of the ride was cut expensively short he made the successful offer to buy *Desperado* and took her home to a shed at Coomera and rebuilt and renamed the catamaran *Flat Chat*.

As expected the Morris and Van Woerden experience prevailed converting the 'wreck' into an impressively fast Brisbane to Gladstone race challenger winning another two line honours titles before she was sold.

There was an element of anticipation when *Flat Chat* lowered the Surf to City record set by *Simply the Best* when she averaged over 20kts in the first three hours before a collision with a large shark bent a rudder and temporarily halted the challenge.

However a blast reach at 23kts sealed a memorable ride and another impressive race win.

"Roger (Overell) and I have always believed that *Flat Chat* was super fast but we never had the required consistent grunt from the breeze to break the Gladstone record in spite of leading *Raw Nerve* by over 30nm on the first night".

"*Raw Nerve* came home stronger but *Flat Chat* still managed to win by a comfortable margin."

The Jamie Morris career has continued to progress into yet another challenging milestone but he has both the sea time and racing experience to make it work.

He was excited to say the least when he took time away from



Wins the lot: *Flat Chat* winner of 2002 Line Honours, POHS, OMR. (above)

Raider 302 now turbo-charged into the new Raider One Design. (left)

building boats to give the exclusive insight on his next project to *Multihull World* magazine.

Morris is the perfect person to head a project which will introduce an exciting strict one-design catamaran into Australian short course and ocean passage racing.

The catamaran built to category 2 safety and speed sailed by a crew of four will be in his terms a real 'hot boat'.

"My job description now covers all of the career dreams I had of one day helping to deliver a one design catamaran to race around the cans and offshore."

That dream has now become a reality with Jamie Morris back with tools in his hands to steer the project.

"There are exciting times ahead with the Raider One-Design already attracting interest here and overseas," he said.

Ben Kelly's Sail Tech will be the sail maker for the first boats. Ben has built his business around making fast multi's sail faster with his design skills.

Kelly will also be a crew member which will enable him to further develop

this new class into becoming a modern generation racing catamaran.

The first of the new Raider One-Designs will be officially launched in February after which she will be extensively tested to become the benchmark for the class.

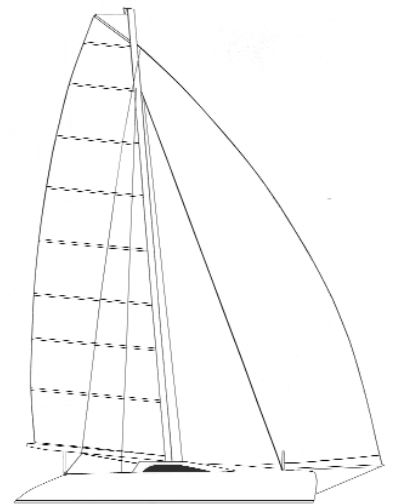
Both Lightwave and the enthusiastic Jamie Morris are on track to meet the mid-February launch date while a number of very interested potential owners continue to watch with interest.

Personally I'm sure the Raider One-Design concept will succeed opening an exciting new challenge for sailors who have been fed up with racing against the time correction factor and giving them a better than fair chance to test their technique and strategy in an even tactical racing environment.

However at the moment all catamaran racing enthusiasts wait in anticipation for the February launching which promises to be a very exciting chapter in Australian Multihull Offshore Racing when they go head to head for the National championship in 2008. ❖



Lightwave head of the class



AUSTRALIA'S leading cat builder, Lightwave Yachts have been announced as builder and campaign partner for a NEW RACING CLASS: Raider One Design. Previously the Raider 302 design has proven its performance credentials in offshore racing around the world, and has now been turbo charged into a true 'One Design' International Class. With ALL YACHT SPARS as joint campaign partner, and headed by professional multihull racing champion, Jamie Morris, the Raider One Design is destined to become one of the most popular international One Design multihull racers.

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