

THE ITALIAN JOB

THE FLAGSHIP OF THE FERRETTI YACHTS GROUP, THE 881 RPH, IS A SPECTACULAR PIECE OF ITALIAN STYLE, FLAIR AND LUXURY AND AS **BARRY WISEMAN** REPORTS, THE FIRST BOAT DOWN UNDER HAS THAT SPECIAL AUSSIE TOUCH.





The Fremantle Doctor was already in as we cleared the rock walls and headed south. The prevailing sou' westerlies blow all year round along the West Australian coast and the Doctor brings a welcome cool relief to the scorching summer temperatures and hot easterlies from the desert. In winter it brings the Indian Ocean storms. Today it was cloudy and mild and the Doctor had a bit of a chill as the guys from JW Marine in Western Australia invited me aboard for a shakedown cruise to Mandurah, 70 kilometres south of Perth.

Only days before, this mini ocean liner had been unloaded at the mid-west port of Geraldton direct from the factory in Italy and hurriedly driven to its berth within the Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour by dealers principal John Farrell and John Silverthorne – the Ferretti 881 RPH was making its Australian debut at this season's Mandurah boat show. RPH translates to Raised Pilot House and in a practical sense means more room where it counts compared to the standard 881. However, this particular boat has been "Australianised" – specialising in long distance cruising in any conditions. Readers will remember John Farrell as the man behind the name Oceanfast Boats, builder of luxury superyachts at Henderson, south of Fremantle. As a marine engineer, he designed and built luxury vessels for the international market. The company was later taken over by Austal Ships which moved into the massive high speed passenger and vehicular ferries and military patrol boats. Farrell now likes to spend more time at the helm than at the drawing board but his mind is still in that "think big" mode. "Australia is a big country so you need a big boat. Unlike the Mediterranean where you can motor port to port in a short time, Australia offers magnificent destinations which are beautiful but remote. To do this properly we needed a craft that, until now, was not available in Australia," he says. "It's no good if you're days from your nearest port and something goes wrong or you're getting low on fuel and you want to explore up that river round the next bend. Or head off to some promising looking coral reef to throw a

line in. You need to 'think big' and that's where the Ferretti 881 RPH comes in." Anyone who has visited the West would know when you turn the bow south out of Fremantle you head into the commercial shipping lanes leading to the safe anchorage of Cockburn Sound, its shore lined with industry and loading jetties for grain, fertilizers and fuel. Garden Island and its causeway leading to HMAS Stirling naval base provides protection from the full brunt of the weather from the south west. Today was no different. The wind was picking up and the Sound had a short, sharp, chop which can knock a small mono hull boat around. JW Marine had provided a second boat for me to use as a camera platform to shoot the big Ferretti and we headed into the lee of Garden Island so I could make the transfer via the marlin boards. West of the island there is the Indian Ocean and Africa. Farrell welcomes me to the pilot house of this 27 metre Italian piece of luxury as we clear the 'coat hanger' bridge on the causeway with around three metres to spare. The South Channel which runs between Cape Peron on the mainland and the southern end of Garden Island is well known for its rolling swell as the ocean flows through the narrow waterway. The white caps are many in the waters beyond and the wind is around 20 knots. "Now you will see what I am talking about," Farrell says as the swell builds to around three and a half metres. The Ferretti 881 is fitted with twin MTU 2,200hp engines capable of pushing this vessel along at 31 knots. However, today and in these conditions the throttle levers are set around 18 to 20 knots as the occasional green water smashes across the pilot house located a good six metres up. Time to batten down the hatches and



LIGHT SOURCE
Large windows let in plenty of natural light and allow an uninterrupted view from the luxurious saloon. Deckspace is designed for entertaining.

A LONG LIST OF OPTIONS (56 IN ALL) INCLUDE ELECTRIC SLIDING REAR GLASS DOORS TO THE SALOON, TWO KOHLER 28W GENERATORS WITH TWO SMOKE SEPARATORS, ADDITIONAL FRIDGES AND FREEZERS, TWO STAINLESS STEEL ANCHORS, DOORS ON THE SIDEWALKS, SIDE AND AFT.



close the rear door leading to the upper flybridge deck.

A couple of days earlier I had met John and his son Sean Farrell dockside for an extensive look around the newcomer to Australasian waters. While in the massive engine room below John explained about the twin Mitsubishi ARG 4000 gyro stabilizers fitted under our feet.

“You can see what I mean now that we are heading into rough seas. The stabilizers counter the wave action while underway, as well as at rest on a mooring. They help smooth out the bumps,” he adds as the wipers clear more foam and water from the screen in front of this airliner-like helm station complete with Furuno electronics, four flush mounted monitors plus engine management displays.

Five or six guests either joined us at the wheel or visited the galley for snacks without any hint of a spilt drink as the flagship of the Ferretti Yachts range had its first taste of what Australia has to offer.

When Farrell and Silverthorne were

5 STAR STYLING
The Ferretti 881 RPH combines pure power and super stability with comfort, making it perfect for long distance cruising.



looking at expanding the JW Marine operation into Western Australia they wanted to offer something different to big boat enthusiasts. They jetted off to Rome and in northern Italy met up with Norberto Ferretti, who with his brother Alessandro founded the company in 1968 building wooden motor sailers. Their first motoryacht came in 1982 and now the Ferretti name is up there at the top.

“The Ferretti Group is now recognised as the top producer of luxury maxi-yachts in the world and we are very proud to be associated with their products,” says Farrell.

“There are many fine European, American and Australian brands available but we wanted to offer a product which is rich in Italian design and style and one that can cope with our kind of boating which is very different to being on the Mediterranean.”

“This vessel is for long distance cruising and as part of its promotion we plan to take genuinely interested parties to experience life aboard the 881 RPH in the Kimberley and in the surrounds it has



been designed for. That will happen this year during the dry season, around June or July.”

Not only does the raised pilot house on the 881 give a commanding view over the bow, the extra space created elsewhere on the vessel is highlighted in what is no doubt the busiest area on any vessel – the galley.

In this day of equal opportunity, whoever is assigned to galley duty enjoys the same outlook at the skipper one deck up.

The galley takes up the whole 6 metre-plus full beam and is fitted with the latest equipment, doubling up on stoves and refrigeration. As you enter on the port side there is a spacious breakfast bar with L-shaped leather settee seating. There are great vistas and plenty of natural light.

Heading astern and down three steps brings you to the main deck and the official dining area where a nine piece suite is mounted on an electrically-operated sliding floor. This allows for maximum space from the saloon to the galley but on formal occasions the whole floor, plus setting, moves away from the central wall to give greater access. Conveniently located nearby on the starboard side is the day head and the staircase to the pilot house above.

When you enter the vessel from the rear teak deck you are greeted by a huge, uncluttered saloon, with the white leather lounge settees port and starboard blending in against the light oak wood grain lining on the walls and the off-white vinyl ceiling. The huge windows on both sides flood the area with natural light and provide almost 360 degree views.

A central entertainment cabinet houses the large flat-screen television and

provides heaps of storage.

Down a curved staircase to the lower deck and turning left towards amidships is the master cabin, again flooded with daylight from the large side tinted glass windows. Incorporated twin portholes allow natural ventilation if you don't need the air-conditioning.

The king size bed runs port-starboard facing the windows and there's lots of walk-in wardrobe space, cupboards and drawers. The bathroom is located to starboard and comes with a huge shower and 'his' and 'hers' facilities.

Towards the front of the vessel and down a couple of steps there's a twin single berth cabin to port and queen berth quarters to starboard, each with their own bathroom. The main VIP guest cabin is located at the bow.

The light oak timber and neutral fabric theme continues below deck. Extra refrigeration has been added down here in the walkway so you don't have to go

KING SIZE VIEW
The master cabin has a king bed with uninterrupted views through side-tinted glass windows.



upstairs to the galley during the night. Back on the main deck there's a rear staircase leading to the two crew cabins plus a galley. In Australia this area would probably be allocated to extra visitors, or teenagers seeking their own space rather than for an official crew.

As mentioned earlier, this vessel has been optioned for long distance travel in mind so consequently the options include doubling up on major hardware in the event of a breakdown. Twin Furuno navigation systems, two stainless steel anchors, dual tropical air-conditioning plants, two generators, extra fridge/freezers, additional lights and two side deck doors to name a few.

The 881 RPH is a 'go anywhere' vessel and to suit Australia's remote locations Farrell ordered greater fuel storage capacity. An extra 1,500 litre fuel tank gives this boat a total capacity of 11,500 litres.

“With the amount of remote coastline we have in Australia I think a vessel should be able to comfortably cruise 900 nautical miles and still have plenty of fuel, particularly in the Kimberley where you can do a lot of exploring,” Farrell added.

The engine room on this 27 metre vessel is very spacious and to get there you walk through an air-conditioned workshop, complete with bench and vice. The hub of the electronic monitoring system is also housed in this temperature-controlled area.

The 881 has many areas for entertaining and although not included on the review boat, there is the option for a spa to be fitted on the large flybridge deck which would be very handy in the tropics.

On the transom there is a garage and the hydraulic door lowers to form a big teak-decked wet area and access to the PWC.

With the weather in our face for the whole trip the throttle was set for a leisurely 14 knots at 1600 rpm, using a combined 350 litres of fuel per hour. Ideally in long distance cruising mode we would reduce that to 11 knots when both engines would consume a more affordable total of 120 litres an hour. Adjusting the course direction while still on autopilot, the 881 responds immediately and you really are oblivious to the true conditions outside thanks to the stabilizers.

The review boat comes with a long list of options (56 in all) including electric sliding rear glass doors to the saloon, two Kohler 28W generators with two smoke separators, additional fridges and freezers, two stainless steel anchors, doors on the sidewalks, side and aft floodlights, two BBQ's on the flybridge, and a centralised vacuum system.

The Ferretti 881 offers the best of the best in Italian engineering, style and, of course, luxury. ○

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