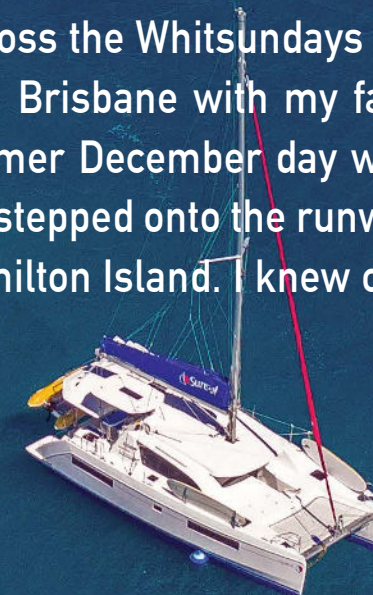


MILESTONE

in the Whitsundays

A picture-perfect island playground, stretches far over the horizon as we descended into the airport. The mountainous peaks seemed to ascend from the ocean as I watch as a catamaran sail effortlessly across the Whitsundays passage to her anchorage. After departing Brisbane with my family on an unusually cold and rainy summer December day we were greeted by tropical breezes as we stepped onto the runway, with the tranquil island vibe of Hamilton Island. I knew our holiday had started.





After a comprehensive briefing we departed the marina past the Hamilton Island Yacht Club and then a swift motor along the south coast of Whitsunday Island

There are three dining areas, one on the aft deck one on a flybridge and another in the saloon. The main galley was furnished with a stand-up fridge freezer, dishwasher, bar fridge, filtered water and the most impressive set of appliances that made me want to remodel my own kitchen at home.

We were led to our spacious cabins on the portside. My two young daughters shared a forward double cabin and we were aft, each cabin had its own bathroom/shower and air-conditioning. Luxury!

After a comprehensive briefing we departed the marina past the Hamilton Island Yacht Club and then swiftly motored along the south coast of Whitsunday Island. We cruised from the front deck which could be accessed either from either side deck or through the saloon. This gave us an uninterrupted view, fresh air and room to relax. As we passed through Solway passage, we rounded the headland and we were met with the expansive vista of Whitehaven Beach perfectly framed with white cumulus clouds, aqua marine water and pine cover peaks.

Whitehaven is famous for its fine silica sands and stretches as far as the eye can see. Deploying the tender off an electric platform I felt I was on the set of an Ian Fleming movie. We tendered ashore and in minutes were bathing in what can only be described as paradise on earth. Our girls were super excited to practise their snorkelling skills so no sooner had we set foot on this idyllic beach they reached for their dive skins and masks in eagerness for 'finding Nemo' on the fringing reefs over the coming days.



We had planned a 10 day stay in the Whitsundays to celebrate a milestone birthday and were thrilled to be invited to join friends on a boat to cruise the islands. What a destination to start such an adventure with my family and friends.

We were met at the marina on Hamilton Island and walked down to the boat with some trepidation. I must admit that my boating experiences were very limited with only a day spent on a 42ft monohull. I recall heeling over at an alarming angle (to me) whilst clinging onto each child. I had put on a brave face thinking sailing isn't for me. With this memory in mind, I was both relieved and delighted when we approached this glistening new power catamaran. Our friends had chartered her through Whitsunday Rent a Yacht and *Lady Lynne* a Leopard 46 was to be our new home for a cruise around the Whitsundays

As we walked aboard the excitement and anticipation quickly elevated any previous anxiety. I was amazed that this boat had all the modern features of a luxurious apartment. Panoramic views through the saloon which lead straight out to the bow through an opening door. On top was a huge enclosed flybridge and aft was a back deck large enough to entertain all of us in the utmost comfort.

I was amazed that this boat had all the modern features of a luxurious apartment



Back aboard for a late lunch we continued north along this impressive beach to find our anchorage at Tongue Bay. As the sun set, constellations and myriad stars appeared in full view from the flybridge and from the aft deck we watched garfish darting across our stern as they played (and feasted) through our blue underwater lights.

There were stand out snorkelling and luncheon spots with conveniently placed mooring balls close to the fringing reefs along with a desert island beach

THE WHITSUNDAYS IN SUMMER?

The weather was settled for the four days aboard with south easterlies around 15-20kts for the first three days with a change to light northerlies at the end of the charter. Our friends had planned an anti-clockwise trip around Whitsunday Island to take advantage of following seas and planned stops at Border Island, Stonehaven, Butterfly Bay and Black Island to the north. The latter were stand out snorkelling and luncheon spots with conveniently placed mooring balls close to the fringing reefs along with a desert island beach on the tip on Black Island.



An overnight anchorage in Nara Inlet was quite unexpected as views are more akin to Norwegian fiords than the tropical playground. The sounds of pheasant, coucal and sulphur crested cockatoos echoed up the channel as we motored past a dozen catamarans for another night aboard with birthday celebrations, music, laughter, fine food and great company.

We continued our journey back down the Whitsunday passage cutting between north and South Molle to stop at the northern tip in Lovers Cove for a light lunch before cruising down The Narrows with our favourite tunes piped around the vessel.

It is strange how quickly you adjust to living on a boat. Waking before sunrise to watch the changing colors across the sky and ocean and setting sun across the Whitsunday Passage.

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Dropping the anchor at Mays Bay we all boarded the dinghy once more for our last magical adventure around the empty anchorage. Turning the motor off, we drifted slowly, all silently grinning and watching the sun set over the mainland. I knew that all of us, including our daughters, felt that same serenity that night, wishing the boat trip wasn't coming to an end so soon. As we came out of our reverie, I had already started discussing our next family boating getaway. We could plan an overseas trip but with the Whitsundays just over an hour away from Brisbane there is still too much for us to see and explore on our own doorstep.

FOOTNOTE

Lady Lynne is 2022 Leopard 46 PC built in South Africa by Robertson and Caine. She is available to charter out of Shute Harbor or Hamilton Island year-round with Whitsunday Rent a Yacht (WRAY)



Two new boats provide a unique opportunity in the Whitsundays



TWO BRAND NEW, CURRENT LEOPARD MODELS are now open for booking through Whitsunday Rent a Yacht; *Lady Lynne*, a Leopard 46 powercat and *Orion*, a Leopard 42 Sailing catamaran.

By adding new vessels to their fleet, Whitsunday Rent a Yacht's customer focus ethos and service offering continue to expand.

Orion, a Leopard 42 Sailing Catamaran, and *Lady Lynne*, a Leopard 46 power catamaran, are ideal vessels for sailing the Whitsundays with friends or family. Both boats demonstrate Leopard's signature balance between comfort and performance and offer features not often found on boats available for bareboat charter in Australia.

Generous living spaces, modern styling, excellent natural light and plenty of opportunities for island views are just some of the perks found on these next-generation Leopards. The pièce de résistance on The Leopard 46 is the flybridge - complete with a large lounge area, helm station, barbecue, fridge, sink, shade and sound system! The Leopard 42 features a cabin top lounge area, above the cockpit.

Accommodation across each vessel includes a spacious owner's suite and two double en-suite cabins. There are also opportunities to convert lounges in the saloon for those larger family groups.

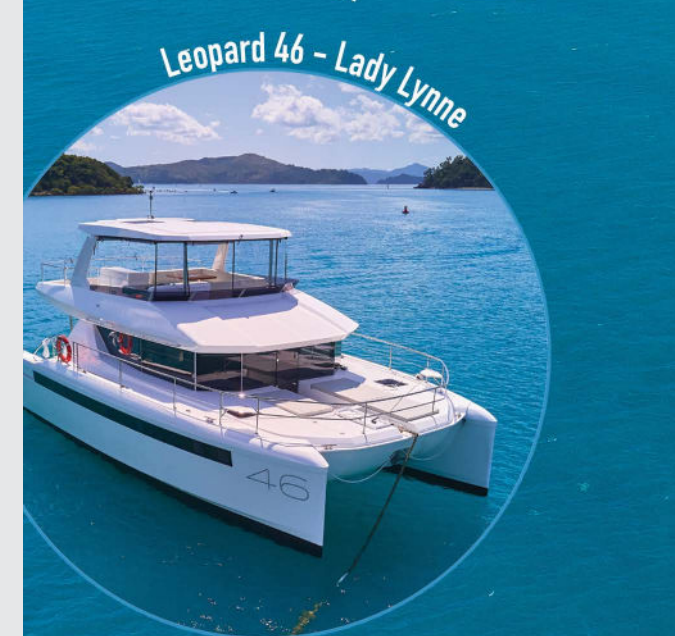
WRAY sales manager James Middleton shared that bareboat charter holidays in the Whitsundays have been extremely popular recently, with many heavily booked boats.

"The new additions to our fleet are not only spectacular boats, but since they have just opened for bookings, they're a unique opportunity for guests to secure a vessel on their preferred dates," says James. "These new boats also offer guests the chance to be among the first to sail them."

Orion is serviced under the 'Sunsail' banner, and *Lady Lynne* is within Whitsunday Rent a Yacht. Head to the Whitsunday Rent a Yacht website for rates or more information.

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Charter the NEW Leopard 46 & 42
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