

# Our marina magic

## Story

Marvel at the manner of craft

**Gra Murdoch**

Clarence Valley Council Tourism and Economic Development Office

I LOVE airports. It must be the wide-eyed 10-year-old in me. I can't help but thrill at the shiny planes docked at terminals, the vehicles buzzing intently around the place, even the cryptic arrows and letters painted on the tarmac. They all speak of passage to faraway places, destinations unknown. It's just all too exotic.

I get a similar thrill every time I drive past the Yamba Marina on my way to and from work. I look at the assortment of craft lined up side by side, and my imagination stirs.

I wonder where these beautiful, sleek yachts, catamarans and cruisers have been, what stormy oceans they've crossed, what remote islands they've anchored by, what lies over the next horizon, and what it must be like to spend days on end out there, with nothing but ocean wherever you look.

Of course not all of these boats have ranged as far and wide as my imagination has, but I'm sure many have.

These craft are only part of the picture though, and they suddenly appear a little less self-assured when compared to the rugged bunch of workhorses sitting shoulder to shoulder along the far wharf, the trawlers.

From the road, particularly on a windless morning when the water's a sheet glass mirror, the trawlers look pretty, almost delicate, but even then, with their antenna-like booms and stabilisers, there's a real sense of utility about them.

I can almost imagine the trawlers talking among themselves, comparing notes on last night's catch and making the odd disparaging comment about a spotless



THRILLING: Yamba Marina with its trawlers, yachts and catamarans. PHOTO: DEBRAH NOVAK

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civilian craft nervously berthing nearby. “Ooooh, mind you don't hurt yourself, petal, (snigger). Never worked a day in its life I reckon,” etc.

My curiosity got the better of me the other day and I turned off Yamba Road into the marina to have a closer look. I drove around to where the trawlers were parked.

Up close, they're even more impressive, purely for how hardy and purposeful they are. There's nothing on board that's not directly connected to the function of work.

The wear and weather of innumerable bar crossings, of bashing into seas of all descriptions, of long cold nights on the job, it all seems scoured into every inch of deck, hull and cabin. It makes you respect even more the men and women who work hard aboard these craft.

I thought of my dawn beach walk earlier that morning, seeing one of these trawlers closing in from the horizon, silhouetted in the sun, ghosted by seabirds, coming home.

I tore myself away from the trawlers and turned my attention to the yachts. All of them spoke of some kind of adventure. When you look closely, no two craft are the same, the broad shouldered catamarans, the not-quite-super yachts (both sail and motor) that still clearly cost a few bob, the odd cheeky runabout and barby boat, and lest we forget the eccentric-looking mustard yellow trimaran that's anchored back out towards the river.

But the boats that really call out to me are the smaller, well-travelled yachts. They remind me that an absolute legend of the Clarence Valley calls this place home.

I read Kay Cottee's book *First Lady* when it came out in 1990 and was transfixed by every detail and every page.

The book details Kay's record-breaking circumnavigation of the world sailing solo, nonstop and unassisted aboard her 37 foot yacht. It was a feat nothing short of heroic.

When I recently learned that Ms Cottee lived here and ran the marina, I was taken aback: Where was the statue?

The billboard? The queue of sailors beating a path to her door to shake her hand?

Yeah, I know, Kay's feat occurred a few decades ago, but deadset, we're talking a National Treasure here, folks.

One day I will pluck up the courage to call on one of my heroes and say g'day, but for now, I'll be happy every day to drive past the marina, marvel at all manner of craft, and the humans who take them to the horizon.



➤ Get your copy of 52 Discoveries in Our Big Backyard. This fun little book is free and available at information centres, cafes, holiday parks and other places humans tend to gather. Call 6643 0800 and the council can send one out to you.

TO THE Sea is the stunning saga from d author Christine Dibley

On a clear summer day, Detective Inspector Tony Vincent answers a call-out to an idyllic Tasmanian beach house. Surrounded by family and calm waters, 17-year-old Zoe Kennedy has inexplicably vanished.

Four storytellers share their version of what has led to this moment, weaving tales which span centuries and continents. But Tony needs facts, not fiction: how will such fables lead him to Zoe the truth?

As Tony's investigation deepens, he is drawn into a world where myth and history blur, and where women who risk all must pay the price to every generation.

It is for fans of Kay Morton and Alice Horn. Born in outback New South Wales, author Christine Dibley arrived in Tasmania 30 years ago. She has been held there by a strange bond island around their inhabitants.

Christine raised five children while developing a career in the human services, primarily in

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