

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

Seawind Catamarans, Iconic Australian catamaran manufacturer, celebrates 35 years of non-stop production with owner and Managing Director, Richard Ward at the helm steering the company through ongoing successes.

by Shane Grover

35
CELEBRATING
Years





In 1982 Richard started his boat building business following several years at sea cruising through the South Pacific onboard a 32' monohull, after his earlier career as a Chartered Accountant working for firms including Arthur Andersen. Having identified many simple design needs that were not being met by his boat or others on the market he sought to produce his own designs specifically targeting cruisers with the aim of providing a safe, comfortable and ergonomic vessel. Richard comments, "The boating industry is quite fickle at the best of times, however it's through our innovation in design and construction plus a superior quality that keeps us growing both in Australia and internationally."

Early success was gained with manufacturing smaller beach catamarans including the extremely popular Maricats and the Seawind 24 which had been built since the 1970's. From here the company grew and started building larger custom designed catamarans including the 65ft Sydney Crystal and the lightning fast Formula 40 catamaran. However the biggest breakthroughs came in the early nineties with the launch of the 28ft Seawind 850 which was an instant success and lead the way for the award winning Seawind 1000 that was launched in 1994, winning Australia's Boat of the Year, the first time the award had been won by a catamaran. The Seawind 1000 model was a huge success with over 240 boats sold worldwide. This model introduced the iconic indoor/outdoor concept which was an instant crowd pleaser in all tropical climates.

Other models including the Seawind 1200 and Seawind 1050 Resort and the Venturer power cat range were all models produced by Seawind over the years, but the Seawind 1160 lead the way as Seawind's big success story being recognized in Australia and the USA as a winning formula of innovative design, practical systems and performance cruising hulls.

In October 2010 Seawind acquired Corsair Marine International, the world's foremost trailer trimaran manufacturer. Corsair who had built over 2,500 boats during their 30 year history had spent 20 years manufacturing in North America before relocating their management and manufacturing facility to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. For over 9 years Corsair have been building high performance, light weight composite boats built from fibreglass and carbon, using the latest technology including resin infusion and vacuum bagging. Seawind relocated the production of all Seawind models to the Corsair production facility, along with their own team of shipwrights, tradesmen and management to oversee the manufacturing and to take on a rapid development program, introducing 10 new catamaran and trimaran models between 2010 and 2017. The Seawind Group now employs over 200 staff with more than 20 sales offices internationally, exporting to all parts of the globe. With six production catamarans, five production trimarans and high skilled production capabilities, the Seawind Group are placed as one of the largest multihull manufacturer in the world.



1982

Seawind Catamarans have advanced in leaps and bounds over the years, developing multihull designs that have significantly influenced Australia's fleet of modern catamaran while enjoying the success from overseas interest. In 1982, the company commenced operations building small "off the beach" catamarans of 4 to 5 metres in length known as the "Maricat". These recreational craft quickly became the most popular Australian produced catamarans with over 3,000 built.

1984

Corsair Marine was founded by John Walton who was the son of Sam Walton - the founder of the retail giant, Wal Mart. Corsair Marine was based in San Diego (Chula Vista), California.

1987

Through the 1980's Seawind was best known for the amazingly successful Seawind 24. Years ahead of its competitors at the time, this 24ft cruising catamaran became a world benchmark for small cat design and over 350 were built. They were successfully exported throughout the world with proud owners in America, Japan, Holland, Hawaii, Thailand, Papua New Guinea as well as Australia.

1990

Seawind have also offered design and construction facilities for the custom catamaran buyer. These custom projects have been quite diverse with some well - known examples being the Scott Jutson designed Formula 40 racing catamaran, "Simply the Best" which for many years was the fastest sailing boat in Australia. Also the super luxury 65ft catamaran

"Sydney Crystal" was built at a cost of \$3 million for a very large Japanese Tourist operator and is one of the most elegant charter yachts on Sydney Harbour. These were two ends of the custom yacht spectrum.

1991

The 1990's witnessed a revolution of modern larger cruising catamaran designs from Seawind. Firstly introducing the 28ft Seawind 850 in 1991 with immediate success, despite Australia being in the grip of a recession and the world sailing market very low. Approximately 25 of these were launched and sold to mostly Australian owners who placed many in charter companies in the Whitsundays. This popular cruising catamaran paved the way for the Seawind 1000 to become the success it is today.

1994

In 1994, the company launched the Seawind 850's bigger sister, the 33ft Seawind 1000. In that same year, this boat was awarded the "Australian Sailboat of the Year", the first time ever such a prestigious award had been bestowed on a catamaran sailboat. This new cruising catamaran became an instant success with strong demand from many countries. As with the Seawind 850, many boats were placed in charter companies in the Whitsundays, Pittwater, Sydney Harbour, the Gold Coast and more recently, Darwin, Perth and Melbourne. The versatile features of this safe, easy to sail and roomy yacht has been appreciated globally with exports to many counties including the East & West coast of America, Italy, New Zealand, Mexico, the Caribbean, Brazil, Europe and South East Asia.



1994

John Walton sold Corsair Marine to Paul Koch who was the then Australian Dealer for Corsair Marine. In addition to the Corsair dealership, Koch owned a boat building company called OSTAC.

1998

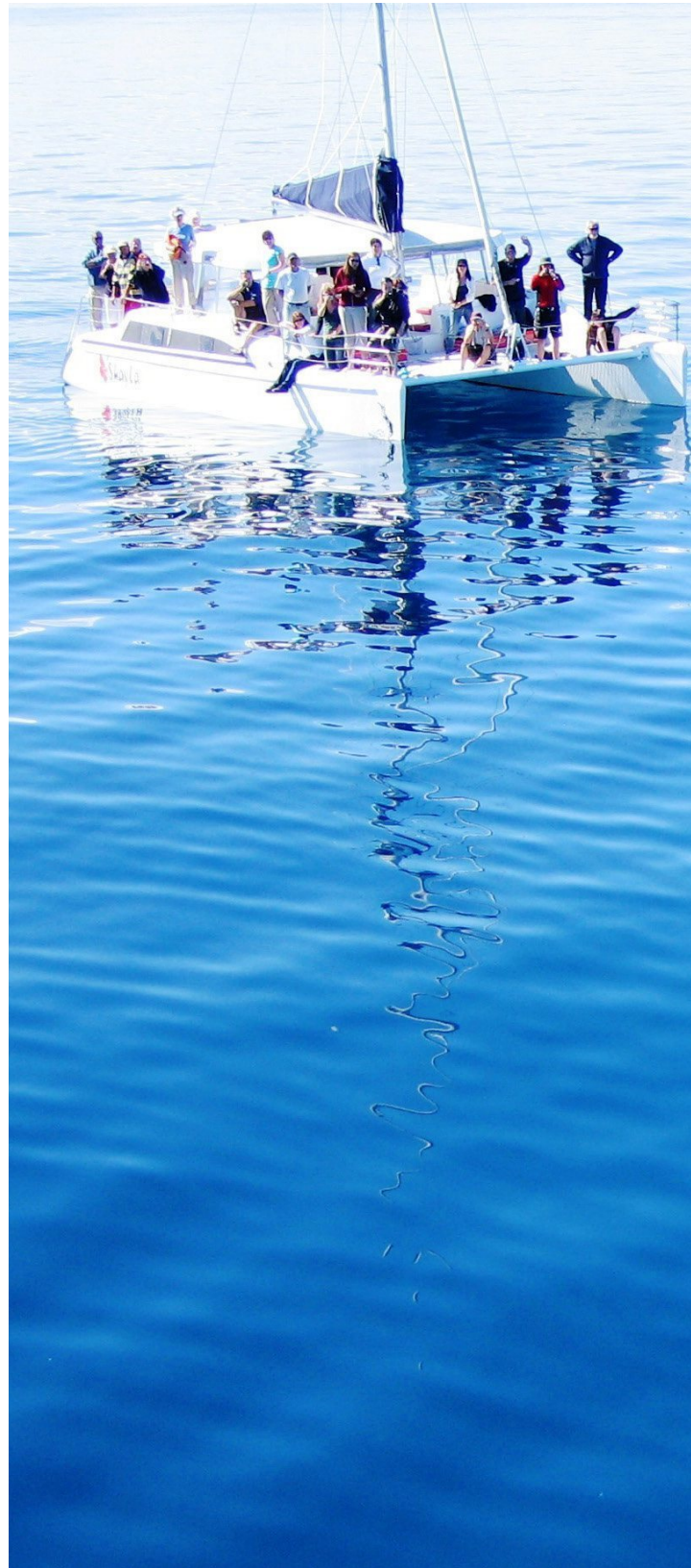
Seawind Catamarans introduced two new designs to the marketplace. The Seawind 1050 Resort, a 35ft purpose built day sailor was developed and approved for commercial use for up to 32 people. The design formula provides a very viable investment for the day charter operator. The boat offers the exhilaration of sailing in safety and comfort by maximizing deck area and sailing performance combined with easy to clean interior finishes and high passenger capacity. As a result, the Seawind 1050 "Resort" has been a great success along the East coast of Australia. The first annual Seawind Regatta was held in 1998 and has been a huge success every year since with on average about 25 or more boats attending this fantastic weekend of racing and social sailing on Pittwater, located just north of Sydney Harbour. Seawind Catamarans also commenced the Seawind 1200, a top of the range, luxurious world cruising catamaran of 40ft length. Appointed with beautiful Australian timbers including Rosegum, Jarra and Ash, 25 of these beautiful blue - water ocean cruising cats were built in just over 5 years with this model being just as popular for charter use as it is for live aboard cruising.

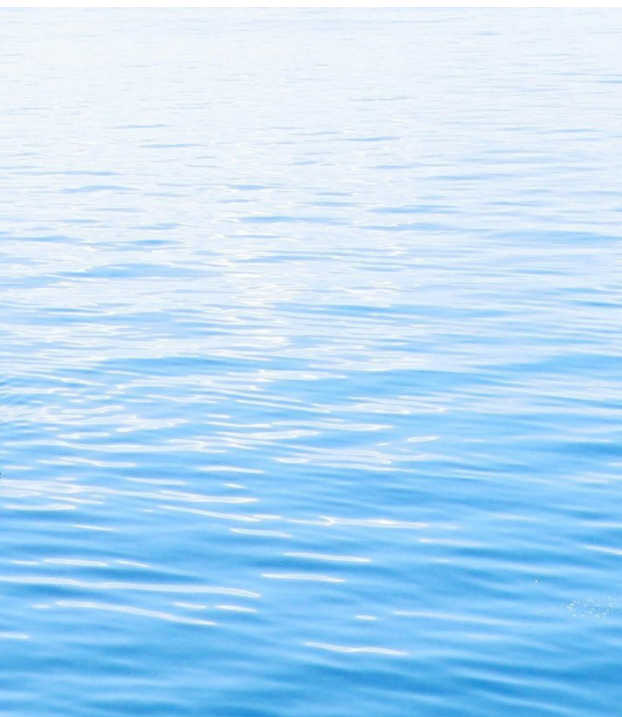
2000

Seawind Catamarans acquired the Venturer range of luxury power catamarans including the Venturer 38 and the Venturer 44 that had previously been exported directly to the USA. Both are in production and to be proven popular fishing, cruising and charter boats.

2002

Seawind was recognised for its outstanding export performance as was awarded by the Illawarra Business Chamber, the "Best Exporter" and also "Best Overall Business".





2004 _____

The latest development for Seawind is the launch of the new 38ft Seawind 1160 which combines design elements of the Seawind 1000 and Seawind 1200 to produce a boat that is both comfortable and accommodating, while creating a unique combined saloon & cockpit that is unmistakably Seawind featuring an innovative TRI-FOLDING DOOR that secures the interior from the elements.

2005 _____

Following the launch of the Seawind 1160 at the Sydney Boat Show in 2004, the Australian Marine Industry Federation (AMIF) awarded the Seawind 1160 the “Best Non-Tralerable Sailboat” of 2005.



2006

Corsair Marine took the strategic decision to relocate its head office and production facility from San Diego to Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Vietnam. In the USA, margins had been under increasing pressure due to escalating costs and a market that was unwilling to pay higher prices. Moving off-shore created an opportunity to avoid charging higher prices. Ultimately, Vietnam was chosen for a number of reasons including its political stability, attractive FDI (foreign direct investment) provisions, booming economy and its young, talented, skilled, energetic, and resourceful labor pool. A number of key staff from California relocated to Vietnam to facilitate the successful migration of the business and the setting up and running of the factory.

2006

The awards kept coming in 2006 starting Seawind's promotional tour of the East Coast of the USA and also won two major categories in the USA Boat of the Year Awards. Back in Australia and Seawind were awarded the Best Business, plus Best Innovation for the Seawind 1160 and Best Manufacturer of the Illawarra region.

2007

Seawind continue to expand with an ongoing program of increased production, new technology and quality management systems.

2010

Seawind Catamarans acquires Corsair Marine. Seawind catamarans' Managing Director, Richard Ward commented that, "This is a marriage made in heaven. The two companies have products and manufacturing processes that strongly complement each other. For both Seawind and Corsair, it will signal new growth opportunities in both the manufacturing and sales areas." "Our loyal Seawind customers will see benefit in technology transfers as well as the cost benefits of a larger overall manufacturing base and the integration of some common componentry, Corsair customers will gain these benefits as well as strong Seawind management and greater financial strength. It's an incredibly good fit for both companies, allowing us to expand and compete in a global market. "

2011

Key staff from Seawind's Australian plant are relocated to Vietnam to manage the acquisition and set up production of the 1000XL2 and 1160 models. The Corsair Sprint MKii is launched and is an instant success winning the SAIL Best Boats award at its Annapolis boat show debut.

2012

With production of the 1000XL2 and 1160 successfully running at the Corsair Marine Factory, 1250 production is relocated to join the other two Seawind Models in Vietnam.

2014

Seawind launches the new Seawind 1160 lite, incorporating successful systems of the popular entry level 1000 with the comfort and off shore capability of the 1160 design. Corsair launches its ultimate trailer sailor, the 32' 970 Cruze.

2015

Seawind undertakes an aggressive development program announcing the release of 52' Seawind 1600, 41' Seawind 1260, 39' Seawind 1190 Sport and 38' Seawind 1160 resort. Corsair launches its smallest ever entry level trimaran at 20' the Pulse 600.

2016

The first 1190 sport is launched and wins its first offshore regatta the Black Dog Dash, this is followed by another win in the Cruising world Boat of the Year competition. Seawind launches the all new 1160 Resort day charter boat sending three to new owners in the first few months of production. Seawind establishes a new service division with a strategic goal of delivering a pleasant and enjoyable journey for every new boat owner.

2017

Seawind launch both the new blue water 1260 and 1600 performance cruiser and open a European based sales and service office with the aim of opening up the European market for 2018. Corsair launches the 760 range of pocket cruisers and introduces a sport lineup for those looking for more performance than the average sailor.

An aerial photograph of a white and pink sailboat on the ocean. The boat has a large pink sail on the left and a white sail on the right. The white sail has the number '1021' and '1601' printed on it. The boat is moving through the water, leaving a white wake. The name 'Northstar' is visible on the side of the hull.

TODAY

The combined entity of Corsair Marine and Seawind Catamarans has successfully launched over 3000 boats worldwide and currently employs more than 200 skilled staff from all across the globe. With a production facility central to most global markets and a growing international sales team you can expect to find new Seawind and Corsair owners in even the most remote locations.