



# FAMILY PLANNING

**TONY MACKAY** spends a night with a bunch of Fleming owners and finds they're a chummy mob rearing to go

**W**e are awash with a large range of cruisers, which are now dubbed "passagemakers", allegedly ready to take you on wonderful adventures across the seven seas. Some of these craft are a little more competent than others, to say the least, and yet many owners still blanch at the prospect of setting forth on the wide blue yonder in search of adventure, despite being equipped with gear that would make Captain Cook dizzy with excitement. Perhaps it stems from a lack of confidence and the prospect of being alone? A crucial ingredient must be missing.

Meanwhile, the superbly designed and constructed Fleming range of cruisers not only provide an owner with engineering and oceangoing confidence, they embrace their owners as friends, linking them all together and under the umbrella of a service and repair network second to none. Once you join the Fleming family, the next steps toward your adventure of a lifetime are quite easy. Just press the play button and enjoy a new life, on tap.

**FLEMING DIFFERENCE**  
As a very beady-eyed critic, and having tested or been aboard most boats, I have been impressed with the quite extraordinary level of quality and attention to detail which really does set the Fleming's apart from their competition.

Some boats may offer more glitzy gadgets and gimmicks. Some have layouts and features better suited to marina living than long passages at sea. One has to be very astute to filter out novelties and focus on safety, performance and comfort, all of which can only be delivered when there is an uncompromised attention to detail. You need to get onboard and see the difference. All of it has been carefully tested in long passages, in all weathers and over the years. A thousand subtle modifications have refined and added to the competence of the Flemings.

Now I know all this because I have recently performed a subtle interrogation of owners during a well-fueled dinner for Fleming owners. "In vino, veritas" as they say; with the wine, the truth. So I topped up the drinks and had a chat.



“ NO SALES PITCH FROM ANY OTHER BUILDER WOULD EVER TAKE HIM AWAY FROM HIS BELOVED FLEMING

The original and best selling Fleming 55 (above) is now the smallest in the fleet. Deep bulwarks and a Portuguese bridge are noted safety features on all Fleming models, including the 65 (right).

Once you get past the first conversations, where no one has ever made a bad choice and the world is filtered through rose-coloured glasses, we move to the actual adventures; what happened in terrible weather, how did we fix this or that, who was there to help, so on and so forth. It was rather inspiring actually.

Even the wives, normally slightly reticent in the face of the open sea, have found new confidence aboard their Flemings. Everyone chats in such glowing terms and often they highlight some little design feature which, until lived with, remains unknown and unappreciated.

Features such as a dedicated pilothouse separated from the galley and saloon for perfect night vision, while normal life

carries on unimpeded. Centralised companionways that reduce the number of stairs and dramatically increase oceangoing safety. Handrails — internally and externally — at every possible opportunity. A thousand details, which proves the old adage that the whole is more than just the sum of the parts.

Boatbuilding comes down to one word, instructions. A builder properly instructed in design detail, quality parts correctly installed, someone carefully scrutinising every little device and function; it all adds up to a finished product of quite amazing quality, instilling confidence and getting you out on the world's oceans. That is the whole purpose of doing all this, isn't it?

**FLEET SATISFACTION**

One couple has covered about 20,000nm in their Fleming 55; normally from South Australia to Hamilton Island, the fearsome Bass Strait dealt with in occasionally grim circumstances. He is pondering a circumnavigation of Tasmania, she is wondering whether they should buy a new 55 or order a 65. They even keep a Riviera 42 at Hamilton for fishing but have never stayed a night on it; it's just not the same as onboard the beloved Fleming.

Another owner is on his second Fleming, a new 65 previously featured in *Trade-a-Boat*, and the logical choice after eight years with a 55. At 80 years-young, why waste time not having the best? He is simply thrilled at the level of support all just a phone call away. No sales



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Fast or slow, Flemings are unstoppable (above) and the stately staterooms (above inset) are much loved by owners. Heavy-duty anchoring (below) means you can rest easy with family and friends onboard in exotic locations.



Author Tony Mackay (above) enjoys the clear views from the pilothouse of the Fleming 65 Redmond Ross (left).

pitch from any other builder would ever take him away from his beloved Fleming.

It all gets quite heady and intoxicating; however, these are intelligent and critical customers who have moved over to Fleming because they are really fussy and expect nothing less than the best.

So too are the Fleming management, who go to somewhat extraordinary lengths to get it right and look after their owners. They know that a happy owner is one of the best advertising tools in the business.

**LEAD BY EXAMPLE**

Meanwhile, Tony Fleming himself has covered more than 25,000nm in his own boat, testing and trialing, making improvements and modifications, and treating his family to unparalleled adventures, which just don't happen for the average tourist. You can follow some of his adventures on the Fleming website (see [www.flemingyachts.com](http://www.flemingyachts.com)).

But be warned: you may catch the bug, be instilled with confidence and inspired to have an adventure on the high seas.