



Captain At du Plooy

With over 40 years of experience at sea, he is definitely the right person to teach others about the sea. We met up with him just after a skipper course to have a casual chat.

I attended a skipper's course at the Bavaria Sea School recently. The tutor was Captain At du Plooy. He proved to be the ideal person to facilitate this course. With his vast experience of more than 40 years at sea, he could boast credentials that could not be easily matched. I needed some insight into the industry, and as it happened he proved to be the perfect source. It was an added bonus to get to know such a great guy.

We managed to twist his arm a bit to share some of his history. Capt. At was born in Harrismith on the 16th June 1941. "I'm sure there is at least another half a century left for him to do everything that he still wants to". He is happily married to Mariette (42 years) and they have two daughters - one residing in New Zealand and the other in Australia. They have five grandchildren. We now know why Capt. At spends more time in Australasia than in South Africa.

He matriculated at Port Natal High School, after which he served in the South African Air Force for nearly 7 years,

where he learnt his profession as a navigator. He then obtained a National Diploma, a National Higher Diploma and B-Tech at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. He embarked on an academic career and retired for the first time in 1992, as Academic Registrar.

Still Capt. At was not satisfied. He then went back to university and, his first love, the sea. He obtained his Masters Certificate in 2001 in New Zealand. There he served with the Royal New Zealand Navy as their Navigation Training Officer. Now the picture is getting clearer. We can see why Capt. At is such a good tutor and why he has such a professional approach to what he does. When asked if it was merely a job for him to be a Training Officer, he was quick to respond, "I always had a passion for the sea, since early childhood, having grown up in Durban".

Captain At du Plooy was one of the forefathers of the South African Institute for

Skippers (SIAS) when it was launched in 1999. The institute has since grown to a membership of close to seven thousand. He personally has trained more than six thousand skippers so far.

I wanted to know if legislation in South Africa is on par with other countries, and we are on the right track. We also needed to know if the South African skipper's license is recognized internationally, and how it compares with the RYA skippers license. He is currently one of the most knowledgeable people regarding leisure skipper's tickets. I asked him if we are on the right track here, or if we are lagging behind compared to the rest of the world, and is the current legislation sufficient to ensure safety at sea? His answer to this was that 'through the hard work done by SAMSA

(South African Maritime Safety Authority), South Africa is on par with the rest of the world as far as safety at sea is concerned, but one must realize that wisdom comes with time, and for South Africa to maintain its position, and the respect it enjoys from the rest of the maritime world, the authorities must be very careful not to compromise standards'.

not be a problem in the foreseeable future'. He also mentioned that South Africans in general are not really so keen on boating. Considering our population in comparison with other countries, on average, we have very few boats in our country. Although

Only after a short while did he come up with this answer, "Yes I plan to retire at the turn of the century, or when I pass away - which ever comes first".

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We also inquired about the situation with regards to inland skipper's licenses, and if there still is controversy regarding its criteria, and when implementation will take place. In a cool and calm voice he said that 'the regulations regarding inland waters are still being worked on. It is not an easy task and patience must be exercised'.

The number of recreational boats and yachts are increasing, and it should pose some problems with the sea traffic in general around our coasts. However, in the opinion of Capt. At, 'sea traffic should

the uptake has been great over the past few years, our "consumption" is relatively low in comparison with the rest of the world.

When asked if he owns his own boat or yacht his answer was an emphatic YES! Capt. At owns a Magnum 23 and he uses it mainly for training skippers.

Where to from here? We've heard that he has retired a couple of times in his life already, yet he could not resist the call of the sea. Was there another retirement in the pipeline, and what was he planning on doing after that?

Well, we did intimate that he has at least another half a century left inside. Maybe then he will think of retirement. Until then he may still go on doing what he loves, and to enjoy his passion, the sea.

Thank you Captain At du Plooy, may you live to be a hundred plus years old. Enjoy what's left of it with your wife Mariette, and the rest of your loved ones. We at PRESTIGE Boating & Yachting will follow your progress, and will meet up with you in the next year or five to find out about your future endeavors. ◆

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Moteur standard	Standard engine	2 x 75 CV	hp
Poids légal	Displacement unloaded		5 T
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Cabine tribord		1 cabine double, et 1 cabinet de toilette	
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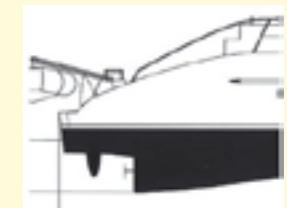
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