

Basic Detail Report



Eva

Vessel number

HV000811

Date

1910

Primary Maker

Frederick Blunt

Description

EVA is a Couta boat built in 1910 by Frederick Blunt Boatbuilders in Williamstown Victoria. It was built to order for a professional fisherman in the Hegarty family, and was owned by various members of this family until the 1970s, and later restored and competitively raced in Port Phillip. The vessel is built with New Zealand kauri planking with a keel and stern of Western Australian jarrah. Its hull planking, keel, and stern are original with the decking and ribs substantially restored. It has a classic carvel planked couta boat hull, half-decked with an oval cockpit and a gaff sloop rig. A brief history of the Blunt family is detailed by Ian Bakos: Frederick Blunt, born at Sandridge, now Port Melbourne, and known to all as Fred, was the ninth child of Clement Blunt [1824-1899] and Sarah Blunt. Fred worked with his older brother Clem Blunt (II) in the yard Clem established in 1898 at Clark's Slip, now the site of Williamstown's police station. The yard occupied the site until 1922 and it was here that Fred built EVA GS858 in 1910. Greg Blunt, the current owner of C. Blunt Boatbuilders, Nelson Place, Williamstown, explains the history of EVA and some of her colourful connections: "Frederick Blunt built her in 1910 for old man Hegarty a pro fisherman who left it to his son Nugget Hegarty then to his kids who sold it to a chap at Mordialloc who Paul [Blunt, brother of Greg] bought it from under an assumed name to keep the price down then the two of us towed it back home where Paul did a full slow restoration. Old man Hegarty was found dead on our pier one morning, the pier was under repairs at the time, Joanne's [Greg's wife] father Bill fished with Nugget and reputedly took the Collingwood mob [Melbourne underworld gang from the 1920's] out on fishing trips, on one trip I believe Squizzy Taylor went out with this mob, one always remained sober and packed heat, I have that from Nugget and Bill, Shackles can vouch for that also, Fred's grave is in Williamstown cemetery" Couta boats such as EVA were used as working boats for fishing in the waters off the southern Victorian coast. The primary catch was barracouta, and the design of the vessel acted as a stable platform to catch and land fish, and also safely navigate the often rough seas of Bass Strait with speed in order to make a quick sell on return to port. During the off season many Couta boats were raced in local regattas along the Victorian coast. Many of these events were formalised into sailing races with sponsors and annual cups awarded to winners. On return to the Blunt family in 2000 Paul Blunt began a six year process of restoring the vessel for participation in racing events in the northern parts of Port Phillip. The ribs, fasteners and caulking was the main focus in the hull restoration process. The deck was replaced by Queensland white beech, in addition to the inner floor panels and engine mouths. New sails and rigging was installed for

racing. EVA has a unique transom shape, non-symmetrical left to right with the left side curving up gradually following an elegant line and the right curving up more sharply. Paul Blunt recalls that either his uncle used the best piece of timber on hand and hoped nobody would notice, or it was a mistake in construction never picked up. EVA has holds an impressive couta boat racing record. During the Beazley Working Boat Trophy EVA claimed first place in 2007, 2008, and 2009. In the Classic Yacht Association of Australia Cup Regatta 2008 EVA took first in Couta Boats Division 2. Furthermore, in the Classic Cup Regatta of 2008 Lucy took second place, and in 2009 first place. EVA is a significant example of a couta boat with strong connections to the maritime heritage of Williamstown, perhaps most evident through the intergenerational connection between Frederick and Paul Blunt. In excellent condition and operational, EVA is a further a pre-eminent example of couta design boat restoration. It has similarities to ROYAL (HV000569), built by Mitchie Lacco.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 7.44 m × 7.31 m × 0.61 m, 3.5 tonnes (24.4 ft × 24 ft × 2 ft, 3.44 tons)