

Basic Detail Report



Laurabada

Vessel number

HV000629

Date

1953

Primary Maker

Ivan "Skipper" Holm

Description

LAURABADA's construction began in 1947 on the banks of Cabbage Tree Creek at Sandgate, north of Brisbane. Ivan "Skipper" Holm had commanded a Fairmile patrol boat during the war, serving in Papua New Guinea and the south west Pacific areas. During the war he continually thought about building a yacht for himself, and was keen on the design of a 44 foot Alden schooner. However the cost of plans for this craft was more than he could afford, and although both Norman Wright and the Halvorsens offered plans of previous designs, he could not find something to fit his exact requirements. Instead, using a copy of Howard Chapelle's 'Yacht Designing and Planning' he went ahead and designed his own vessel. He then built a shed fitted with workbenches and equipment before beginning the hull, laying a backbone of grey ironbark in September 1947. The yacht was built in Holm's spare time from his work as a trade teacher at Brisbane's Central Technical College. The carvel planked hull was built with the best available regional timbers, supplied by a relative in Cairns. The hull is planked in ironbark at the two garboard strakes, spotted gum for the next four above, then finally Queensland maple for the remainder. Frames are yellow wood or silver ash, stringers and other longitudinals are spotted gum, and the deadwood and horn timbers are messmate. The deck was laid in Queensland white beech, and the cabin is Queensland maple. Knees were sourced locally by wading through the swamps for approximate tea tree crooks, with a picnic used as an excuse to go looking for another location for suitable melaleuca trees. The wreck of the pilot vessel LUCINDA gave up some red cedar, and some of its teak became LAURABADA's wheel. It is a powerful story of seeking out the best available and making do with what can be found. Portlights were cast from ones sourced off one of Holm's wartime ships which was being scrapped in Brisbane, along with thousands of Monel screws. The engine, passed on by a US comrade at the end of the war had come down from Port Moresby as boxes of engine parts, and subject to a duty of 9 pounds, a month's salary at that time. The original wooden masts were shaped from Oregon poles taken from Wacol where a US radio station had been in place during the war. Holm designed and made patterns for hardware which was cast by his friend Aub Amos. The lead keel was cast in the ground at the back of the family home, with the back bone, wood keel and keel bolts placed over the mould before the lead was poured in. When it came to launching a trench had to be dug in the creek to allow the yacht to be towed downstream to where the masts could be stepped. On 23rd January 1953 Holm's wife Thora christened the yacht LAURABADA, which means 'the big south wind' in PNG Motuan dialect, and refers to the south east trades which also blow along the

Queensland coastline. In April 1953, soon after launching it sailed in its first Brisbane to Gladstone race - it was described as a 'handsome yacht' and 'a new comer to Brisbane Gladstone racing, she will be watched with interest' The Central Coast Herald (Rockhampton) on 19 February 1953 described LAURABADA as 'a veritable showpiece, and is the last word in yacht construction'. At the end of 1953 it was the second Queensland yacht to race in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race, gaining a 7th placing. The Sunday Mail had hoped for better- reporting on the 26th of December 1953, it stated' LAURABADA may be the first Queensland entrant to win" and noted that experienced yachtsman Doug Drouyn was aboard as part of the crew. The Advocate in Burnie noted that they had sprayed tallow on the keel and polished it in the quest for more speed. In the 1955 Brisbane to Gladstone race, running before a strong breeze Holm instructed the crew to hold onto sail and 'drive the sticks out of her'- only to get caught minutes later, knocked down by a big following sea. The weight of the water in the spinnaker broke the mast, but with a jury rig in place they still set a reefed spinnaker and finished the event 3rd overall. In 1957 it was first home by 41 seconds from SYONARA, the closest finish recorded in the event. In 1971 and 1983 the yacht took the family on extensive South Pacific cruises. Ivan Holm passed away in 1997, 50 years after laying LAURABADA's keel, but his son Ivan (jnr) had grown up with the yacht and maintained the family commitment along with his wife and children, and continuing its involvement with the Brisbane to Gladstone race. After completing its 50th consecutive race in 2003, a feat unlikely to be equalled by any other yacht, LAURABADA retired from ocean racing. LAURABADA has probably sailed over 200,000 nautical miles, and three generations of the Holm family have now sailed on the yacht. In 1999 it was fitted with a new engine, spars and sails, and in 2014 it is currently being overhauled in preparation for another 50 years of sailing, including a round the world cruise.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 14.93 m x 11.89 m x 4.11 m x 1.8 m, 18.29 tonnes (49 ft x 39 ft x 13.5 ft x 5.9 ft, 18 tons)