Basic Detail Report

LOT 41

Vessel number

HV000316

Date

2007

Primary Maker

Rob Feloy

Description

LOT 41 was built using composite fibreglass construction. It was launched in November 2006, and after sea trials was made wider before the pair set out. The kayak is quite different in design concept to the modified, production-style sea kayak used by solo kayaker Andrew McAuley in his ultimately tragic 2006 /2007 Tasman crossing. The two contrasting attempts on the Tasman crossing were the focus of much media attention in Australia and New Zealand. During 2006 a race developed between the two campaigns as to who might be first to cross the Tasman. The pair's successful voyage was a major event at that time and the craft and its voyage represent the modern media-savvy approach taken by adventure enthusiasts to capitalise on their project. LOT 41 was named after the New Zealand-born race horse Phar Lap, which was sold at auction to an Australian buyer as 'Lot 41', before crossing the Tasman by ship to become Australia's most celebrated thoroughbred. LOT 41’s crew, Justin Jones and James Castrission , were school friends from Sydney who were keen mountaineers and adventurers. They also enjoyed sea kayaking and conceived the plan to cross the Tasman, inspired by Paul Caffyn's ground-breaking, long distance sea kayak voyages from the early 1980s. They decided on a rigorous, safety-first approach, and realized that a custom-designed craft would be needed to suit their requirements, and named their challenge 'Crossing the Ditch'. LOT 41's designer, Rob Feloy from the United Kingdom, had considerable experience as a sea kayak designer. He had designed a single kayak with a similar concept for a solo adventurer to use in the North Atlantic. His layout was based around twin cockpits at midships, ahead of an enclosed sleeping /stowage compartment incorporating sitting headroom, long enough for two crew to sleep. The forward section was largely unused and formed a watertight compartment with some stowage space. Feloy designed LOT 41 with rounded hull sections, a plumb stem and stern profile, and a small amount of keel rocker. He kept the craft relatively narrow throughout and it was launched with scallops at the cockpit sides to make the paddling width as narrow as possible. It still required wider paddle shafts than usual. They had less blade area than normal to reduce fatigue and proved very successful. Included amongst the support items carried was a desalinator, bilge pumps, GPS devices, charts and compasses, a two way radio and a satellite phone. The composite hull, decking and aft cabin are made of a synthetic core, with GRP reinforcement on the interior and exterior. The structure includes bulkheads and fore and aft girders either side of the cockpit, with carbon fibre as reinforcing laminate for additional stiffness. It was made strong enough to ensure the craft could weather extreme conditions and the lay-up used was comparable to that

specified on a typical 15 metre long yacht. It had a wooden centreboard and a composite construction rudder blade enclosing a stainless steel stock. The rudder was controlled by the aft paddler. At 8.2 m LOA and 1.2 m beam, the kayak displaced just under 1 tonne with two crew and all gear aboard. Initial trials toward the end of 2006 were disappointing because they showed that LOT 41 was unstable. At that point Jones and Castrission were aware of McAuley's plans to leave in early summer, and the simmering sporting rivalry between the two projects then became intense. However they realized their craft was not seaworthy enough for the attempt and reluctantly abandoned plans to leave at a similar time. They remained committed to the venture and set about correcting its problems. Although McAuley then crossed to the other side of the Tasman early in 2007, his tragic loss off the New Zealand coastline meant that the opportunity was still there to claim the official record. After trialing the hull with additional ballast they chose instead to make the craft wider. Additional volume was added on the sides and aft at the cabin. This proved successful and the vessel eventually crossed the Tasman in this configuration. Further sea trials were carried out over a number of months leading up to the departure, including a full three day rehearsal along the NSW coastline. The pair left on the 13th November 2007 from Forster NSW, planning to be at the west coast entrance to Auckland in New Zealand around New Year. The average speed of LOT 41 was four kilometers per hour, a relatively slow speed compared to a conventional, lighter sea kayak. They chose the northern and longer route because conditions were anticipated to be more favourable and less demanding than the shorter but colder route possible much further south used by McAuley the year before. However in the middle of the Tasman they were caught by contrary currents and pushed in a circle. Over a number of days they lost ground they had made to that point. Despite this, they persevered and on 13th January 2008 eventually landed at New Plymouth, NZ, further south than Auckland. Their planning had allowed for a longer trip and they carried extra supplies, which they had nearly used up by the time they arrived. Throughout the trip they kept a website updated daily with information about Castrission's and Jones' progress. Their journey aboard the kayak was broadcast live to millions of people around the world with daily updates of photos, commentary and GPS tracking. Castrission and Jones also spoke regularly to radio stations during their 62 days at sea. The media followed the project from the day they left Forster and looked on as its mid-Tasman dramas threatened the paddlers’ success. Media attention then soared to make it a leading news item in the final few days. Large crowds welcomed them at New Plymouth on a bright sunny morning, when the pair became the first to successfully paddle a kayak across the Tasman Sea from Australia to New Zealand. In 2010 the craft was acquired by the Australian National Maritime Museum, and is now part of the National Maritime Collection.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 8.23 m x 8.23 m x 1.2 m, 1 tonnes (27 ft x 27 ft x 3.94 ft, 1.02 tons)