

Rayvin 30 Catamaran Lunatic with a Parasailor. By Meme Grant



We left Durban on the 25th of Oct. Loaded to the gunwales with 6 of us on board plus all our household goods and a gale force NE forecast for a limited period before the next SW. We motored out to just beyond the 200m line and started picking up current. The sea temperature went from 18 to 28 degrees. 2 knots initially but it steadily increased as the wind increased. By the time we got to Port Shepstone the current was 4-5 knots.

The wind was 10 to 15 initially, but with a new boat, untrained rather seasick crew and a 40kn forecast with a small weather window, we kept the motor on for the extra speed. In hindsight if I had realised how easily the parasailor handled I would have had it up. We made it to East London in 30 hours without stressing the boat.

Four days in East London waiting for the next weather window. We got one big enough to get to Port Elizabeth comfortably, but not much further, and the predicted Easterly gale would close St. Francis. We took a comfortable run under genoa alone.

Ten days waiting in PE. Fortunately friends made it pleasant and lent us transport. The most expensive stop on mooring costs. I was very happy to have a boat our size as any bigger and we would have had to go to the wall and not the marina, which is not pleasant with the surge, it is bad enough in the marina.

We had no wind to Knysna. Mossel Bay was not an option as the surge in there is worse than PE. So we motored, got there at slack low and had to wait for a while for the tide to turn and flatten the heads. We entered 2 hours after slack on the rising tide.

Knysna was beautiful as always. The yacht club very friendly and was the cheapest stay on the trip down. Again friends made our stay. We went to friends on the guest farm Bonniedale near mosselbay to see our friends and our cat that we named the boat after and my old 22 year old cat who now live in puddy luxury, spoilt by Nico and Danette and all the guests. It has to be one of the most beautiful and peaceful places on earth.

We then had a good gap forecast for the trip to Cape town. Up went the Parasailor spinnaker on leaving Knysna. The crew were impressed as the boat surged forward doing half the wind speed up to the hull speed and then starting to surf. We dropped the Parasailor in the early hours of the morning in a gust and hoisted it at lunch time as the weather forecast changed, (so what's new), to a SW and we wanted to round Cape Aghulas before it hit. The wind slowly dropped and we ghosted round Aghulas and had whales hound us. Giving us heart attacks by surfacing

Just next to or in front of the boat. We ran the spinnaker 30 degrees by the lee in one of our avoidance manoeuvres and it did not collapse. My admiration of the sail increased as the ease of handing and the light wind capabilities became apparent.

No wind past Aghulas so the motor came on again. We spent the night with the dolphins visiting and the phosphorescent meteor like trails blew the crew away, we had them making a bait ball near the boat, sailed into a schools of fish, sometimes with the dolphins chasing the fish. Shooting stars with meteorites chasing them.

We motored round Cape Point where the SW came through and helped us on our way the parasailor went up but we had to drop it off Llandudno as the wind had swung SE and the gusts were coming down the mountains, I am perhaps a bit too cautious.

47 hours Knysna to CT. Not bad for a 9m yacht.

Taking the family for a sail in virtually no wind on a Saturday we were doing 1.6 kn to windward in 4 kn apparent holding 40-45 degrees to the wind. (Our baby never ceases to amaze us with her sailing ability, the reason we fell in love with her in the first place, along with the fantastic accommodation for a 9m boat.) Still loaded to the gunwales. We turned round and put the parasailor up and did half the wind speed and have flown it in 5 kn of wind doing 2.5 kn and waves and tug wakes not managing to collapse it. On one demo sail we were at 55 degrees to the wind, in 6kn of true wind, before she showed signs of collapsing in a 2m swell. If I had got the parasailor and realised its potential before I got a screecher and gennaker I would have got only a Parasailor and actually saved money, (screecher prods and furlers). The Parasailor is much easier to handle and safer as you do not need to crawl out to the end of a prod whilst at sea.



Boat speed greater than wind speed



Parasailor at time of previous picture

We are setting off across the Atlantic and by the time this goes to print will hopefully be half way across and I look forward to flying the Parasailor all the way and at night, not worrying about gusts as we have flown the sail on a sister boat in 30 – 40 kn without a problem, going faster than an old cruiser like me is comfortable with, but very comforting to know the squall danger is now a thing of the past and the fuel saving for light winds is going to be phenomenal.