

Brendon Jukes
Jukes of Hazzard AUS 882

How did you get into sailing?

I commenced sailing as a seven-year-old in Sabots. My father was doing some work at the time with Peter Gillon (a past Etchells World Champion & RBYC member) and he handed over an unloved, deteriorating old Sabot in need of much repair to a family who had no background in sailing. We spent many long hours in the garage over winter repairing that Sabot and getting her seaworthy.

I developed a lifelong passion for sailing the moment I first hit the water in that old timber sabot which had not much more than a cotton cloth for a sail and a lamp post for a mast.

I was to progress through Sabots captaining and being part of numerous state teams, competing in National Championships whilst having great fun “mucking around in boats”. I formed many childhood sailing friendships which endure to this day.

In my sabot years I was fortunate enough from an early age to be able to compete against some future champions of the sport in Mark Turnbull who won and Olympic Gold in Sydney and Jason Muir who won the Etchells Worlds Championships held at RBYC in 2009 which I also competed in.

My father also owned a Boomerang 20 Tailer Sailor and we would sail it most weekends with my family and a bunch of Sabot kids. Great times indeed.

Why did you choose to sail Etchells?

I had a long break from sailing from the age of 18 to 30 living and working in London and Europe. When I returned to Australia, I yearned to get back out on the water to sail.

I decided on the Etchells as I have always loved the concept and the challenge of One Design sailing and the size of the Etchells also allowed me to form a crew made up of my Father and many of my old Sabot sailing buddies from my childhood days. I wanted a class where I could have fun with my friends whilst also developing and testing our skills against relatively evenly matched yachts.

The One Design concept of Etchells dictates that the outcomes are determined largely through sailor against sailor as opposed to differing boats determining the results. You come in from a day of Etchells racing and look in the mirror and know exactly where you stand as a sailor in the Etchells Class. You and your crew are forced to take full responsibility for your performance and are under no illusions that the boat and sails have impacted the result as they are nearly identical.

One of the other reasons I decided to sail Etchells is because it attracts the best sailors in the World. It is amazing that in my time in the Etchells class I have been able to have lined up on the start line against world famous sailors like John Bertrand, Colin Beashel, Ian Murray, Ben Ainslie, Tom Slingsby, Tom King, Malcolm Page and Glenn Ashby to name a few as the list goes on. There are not many classes of sailing or other sports where you can do this. What an attraction; imagine as a club golfer going out and playing golf with or against Tiger Woods and Greg Norman: it just wouldn't happen.

What is a highlight of you time in Etchells so far?

One of my highlights has been competing over the years in three Etchells World Championships with my father forming part of the crew and a group of buddies I grew up sailing with in my younger years.

Not long after I joined the class, we sailed in the Etchells Worlds in 2009 at RBYC. It was an amazing experience with a fleet close to 100 identical boats.

In one of the races in the Hong Kong World Championships in 2015 we were leading the race for the first three legs of the race in a 40-year-old loaner boat; however unfortunately were not good enough to maintain the lead to the finish. An amazing feeling in any case.

Finishing on the Podium at the recent 2022 Etchells State Championships was pretty special, as well as winning the first race of the regatta.

What are your plans for the season?

I am looking forward to building and developing a four-person crew to have some fun in the RBYC club races and do the best we can in the State Championships which will be held at RBYC next year.

I'm in the early stages of forming and building a team to sail with me in the 2025 World Championships which will be held at RBYC. It is going to be an exciting time to be part of the Etchells Class at RBYC with this regatta not too far away. Now is definitely the time to get into Etchells at RBYC with the Worlds coming to the club.