

Introducing the Etchells Fleet

Peter Stubbings, Melbourne Fleet executive committee
Etchells Men's Shirts Short Skirts AUS 1141

How did you get into sailing?

I started sailing when I was around 10 years of age. We had a small family holiday home in Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula. To this day I still remember when dad completed our new Mirror dinghy using the 'stitch and glue' method. What a majestic craft she was! We joined Rosebud Yacht Club and I sailed various 'off the beach' dinghy classes over the next 20+ years including the Mirror, Corsair, Tasar and OK dinghy classes. During this period, I also had the chance to sail on some keelboats at RBYC, as well as J24's and Etchells.

Why did you choose to sail Etchells?

To borrow a line from the Jerry McGuire movie; the flawless lines and beautiful hull shape had me at the first hello. What a stunning craft. Moving or stationary. In or out of the water. Magnificent. I sailed many years ago as a forward hand on one of the Etchells back in the days of triangular courses. Yikes those reaches were hard work on a windy day! Despite this 😊 I loved the closeness of the racing, the skill level of the fleet and the way the boat moved through the water. I remember seeing the huge fleet of white hulls and white sails at the Worlds at RBYC in 1995. So impressive I had to go and get one for myself. I have had two etchells over the years and hoping to get my 3rd sometime in the not too distant future.

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

A few things come to mind. I love the racing, pure and simple. I love the finesse of the Etchells and the multiple dimensions of the boat that you have to get just right, in order to get the best out of the boat. The combination of a fair bit of science, a lot of skill, a lot of experience, and a bit of luck ! Whether its 50 boats at a Nationals or 6 boats at a club race, it doesn't matter. I am very fortunate to have a very good and very regular crew and this makes the racing of the boat all the more interesting. All the more pleasurable.

What are you plans for the season?

The plan is to do the Nationals in Adelaide in January 2023. We have sailed in Adelaide a few times. It's a terrific venue and race course, plus a pretty easy drive with boat in tow. We will also do the states and compete in as many club races at RBYC that we can.