

Liquid Asset has an excellent turn of speed for her size. This, combined with good seakeeping abilities, took us to the Barrier in good time.

Now you, too, can Ownaship

Don't you love it when a plan comes together?

Ownaship director Simon Barker was looking for a way to promote the benefits of shared-boat ownership, so the suggestion was made: "Why not meet someone involved and get their side of the story?" What better person than Auckland businessman Buzz Kronfield, and what better place than Great Barrier Island?

Buzz is one of those characters, we found out, who likes to make every second in life count. A keen angler and boatie, the retired builder is also into the great outdoors, with shooting clays in particular. It is fair to say he is a busy man, but it's not always business!

Buzz warmly greeted us at Westhaven, where he had his Ownaship share boat – *Liquid Asset*, a Rayglass 4000 Legend – warmed up and raring to go, despite the less-than-ideal weather forecast.

In the trailer boats Buzz had previously owned, twenty knots of south-

erly for the first day, swinging to 15 knots north-west the next morning, would most likely have seen him remain on terra firma, awaiting a better forecast. But a Rayglass 4000 is an entirely different proposition, and with the wind direction predicted to be up our exhaust for both gulf crossings, we headed out of Westhaven full of anticipation.

Once clear of Rangitoto Light and with the first coffee for the day under our belts, *Liquid Asset* was pointed for Miners Head, and 90 minutes and plenty of hunting and fishing stories later, we had arrived in comfort.

As well as Simon and Buzz, NZFN fisherman and sometimes sales rep (or have I got that the wrong way round?) Peter Francis was on board. Both Simon and Buzz had been introduced to soft-plastic fishing before, and were keen to advance their knowledge of the knots, rigs and techniques involved. They were not to be disappointed.

While the wind was still gusting

strongly, it blew us at a reasonable fishing pace adjacent to the rock faces between Miners Head and Arguilles Island, allowing us to fish the drop-offs and wash.

The first few fish were small, around the 30cm mark, so were returned. Slowly we upped the ante though, with some great table fish around the three-kilo mark coming aboard in a steady rather than spectacular fashion. Buzz, who had tended to fish his soft-plastic baits out of the rodholder as a 'back up' to natural baits, was intrigued.

Both Pete and I lost 'good' fish (don't say it if you don't weigh it!), although the body count in the ice-bin was still mounting nicely before the wind started to ease and we headed to the patches of foul off the Needles in pursuit of bigger prey.

Unfortunately, we were 'cut to bits' here by 'couta on both bait and lures, so the decision was made to return to Miners Head and set up a berley trail for a good, old-fashioned stray-line session.

With the boat strategically anchored, we had a good slick trailing back into and along the bricks at Miners Head, and it did not take long before the first customers arrived.

As day quickly turned to dusk, the pace and the size lifted, with Pete putting the best snapper – a 7.1kg specimen – in the ice.

It seemed all over before it started, and with the bite gone, it was time to seek a safe haven for the night where we could barbecue our dinner in peace.

Smokehouse Bay was our chosen destination, and as Pete and I sorted the fish in the ice bins, Simon prepared the meal on the barbecue built into the stern of the Rayglass.

After a good night's kip it was off to Shag Point, where I'd heard a whisper the fish had been on the bite. My informants proved reliable, resulting in more good snapper to 6kg in the bin caught drifting soft-baits over the foul that ranged from 35 to 17 metres in depth.

Then, when the wind gathered

strength, making the drift too fast, we had a quick tidy up and pointed the boat for home, well pleased with the results.

On the way home I quizzed Buzz on why he had forsaken private ownership to share a boat with nine other people, all strangers. It turned out Buzz had previously owned outright or shared boats with business partners for many years. One of his first boats was a Kona Cat, build by Tony Hembrow, who went on to create the Rayglass brand.

"I developed a good relationship with Tony and an affinity for the Rayglass boats, having owned or had a share in a 670 Sportsman and 730 Legend, as well as a 730 Hardtop and a 2800 Legend."

When the partner in the 2800's marriage split up, they had to sell the boat and Buzz was looking at his options, with one being a share in a Rayglass 4000.

"I couldn't afford to own one outright, and I didn't mind sharing, as I had been in that situation before, so Ownaship became a viable proposition. I could get into a boat I liked at a fraction of the price of sole ownership."

When we arrived early on the first day, the boat was spotless, despite having been used the day before. The beds were made, the fuel and water tanks full and we were ready to step on and go.

On our return, we stopped by the fuel berth and topped up the tanks, before parking the boat. Interestingly, we had done plenty of miles over the two days, yet the fuel cost was still a very reasonable \$150 each. Taking into account a share of the bait and food, we would have had a great two days for around \$200 running costs each.

When she was all tied up, we emptied the fridge, gathered our kit, tackle and catch, and were on the way home. Overnight the boat would be groomed, the linen and towels changed, and it would be ready the next morning for another partner to take her out, for a day, overnight or up to a week.

One of the things about shared ownership I would be concerned about was that if I wanted to go fishing 'now', the boat might not be available. Buzz says this is not an issue. He enjoys the right to the boat 33 days a year, and this is a mixture



Ownship partner Buzz Kronfield with a nice snapper caught soft-baiting the rock faces at the northern end of Great Barrier Island aboard Liquid Asset.

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Shag Point produced this six-kilo fish for Ownaship director Simon Barker. Right: a straylining session at Miners Point saw Peter Francis nail the biggest snapper of the trip on a big pilchard bait.

of prime and less popular times, which he says is plenty.

“We find that as a group of owners we all have different requirements. For example, I am happy to use the boat midweek, and I also have other commitments over the main Christmas-New Year break, so I don’t need it then. If I want to use it tomorrow, I check on-line to see if it is available, and if it is, I can take it as one of my days, so it can be relatively flexible. It is also possible to book eight months in advance.”

While driving a 12-metre craft around busy waterways and in and out of a marina berth might put some people off, it need not. When I had a chance to get Pete off the helm, I loved driving *Liquid Asset*. It handled like an oversized trailerboat. A bow-thruster makes entering and leaving a tight berth a piece of cake, and anyway, Ownaship spends as much as two to three days with new clients, familiarising them with their craft.

Buzz paid a one-off \$66,300 for his 10 percent share in *Liquid Asset*, and pays a management fee of \$7900 annually. This takes care of maintenance, grooming (the boat is cut and polished every two months), insurance and the like. His share is a tradable asset.


I had never imagined sedan-style boats as being particularly great fishing platforms, but I could not have been more wrong. There is a huge amount of cockpit and storage space,

both above and below decks. Most of the fishing is conducted from the duckboard, which incorporates a bait-station.

For the helmsman, there is a good array of quality Raymarine electronics, and the twin 350hp Cummins push the boat along at a lively clip. Tapped out, there would not be too many boats this size that would keep up with her!

Accommodation is courtesy of a double berth and a small single up forward, with two single berths amidships. There is a good-sized shower and head on the starboard side below. A fridge and small but functional galley shares the main saloon, along with the helm station and seating area.

Ownaship offers an array of craft. Its fleet currently consists of: two Rayglass 2500s; a Rayglass 4000; a Bavaria yacht; and a Mustang 32 launch. Two more Rayglass 4000s are due in October and December, along with two more Rayglass 2500’s – so there’s plenty of variety to cater for different needs and financial capabilities.

While an Ownaship proposition might not suit everyone, it does offer many advantages – and after listening to Buzz and experiencing what it’s like for myself, I couldn’t help but be impressed by what is obviously a very viable and practical proposition. For further details, check out the website: www.ownaship.co.nz. 



There was plenty of room in the cockpit for both fishing and relaxing.