

MAKING WAVES...

Jack seizes his opportunity in Port Kennedy

BARRY WISEMAN catches up with a young enterprising marine technician who, little did he know at the time, served his time working on Bazza's 6m plate boat, *Undine*, 16 years ago.

BUSTING his guts to work around boats or anything to do with fishing, 15-year-old Jack Barone secured himself a part-time job sweeping the workshop floor at a Bibra Lake marine dealership.

During the school summer holidays Jack worked for the full seven-week break, soaking up as much knowledge as he could helping the team of marine technicians.

When it came time to return to the school classroom, his dream came true.

"You can stay as long as you like Jack; there's a full-time job here if you like. Studying marine mechanics as one of our apprentices," said Luke Chivers.

Securing a job with Chivers Marine, one of WA's top recreational boat builders and motor service centres, was "top of the wozza".

At the time, the late Laurie Chivers and his son Luke were OMC dealers and one of the leading distributors of Johnson/Evinrude outboard engines in Australia.

I had just purchased an Evinrude E-Tec 150hp motor and Chivers Marine did the fit-out.

Now, years later and sitting opposite Jack at his office desk in his own hugely successful marine business, we discussed the distinct likelihood that he served his time working on my E-Tec during its regular

service routine.

Jack Barone is the director/technician of Port Kennedy Boat Services south of Rockingham, an enterprise he launched seven years ago.

With Safety Bay to the north and Mandurah to the south, the area lacked an established marine workshop.

Since then, the business has gone from strength to strength and Jack now employs nine people, made up of engine technicians, metal and fibreglass fabricators and electronic specialists, plus apprentices.

Originally occupying one unit, he has acquired the adjoining premises in Jacquard Way, Port Kennedy, and at the time of writing was about to take over another unit to expand into a showroom/reception centre.

The company specialises in comprehensive marine mechanical servicing and repairs, engine upgrades, preventative maintenance on vessels and trailers, and is a qualified appointed agency for Furuno navigational electronics, Minn Kota electric motors, and Rockford Fosgate marine audio equipment.

"With the vast range of Furuno navigational aids now available, we specialise in re-modelling vessel instrument dashboards to accommodate the latest



■ Electronics technician Sam Garton discusses another install with Jack Barone at Port Kennedy Boat Services.

technology," said Jack.

"In both fibreglass and aluminium, we can custom build the entire dash, if required.

"Many recreational fishers are also wanting to travel to deeper waters, opting for larger transducers to match their latest Furuno.

"To obtain optimum performance, we are increasingly installing the transducers through the bottom of the hull rather than on the transom to avoid prop wash.

"Air bubbles and turbulence created by the turning propeller can interfere with the sonar

signals picked up by the transducer when fitted on the transom.

"The through-hull option is far superior as the transducer is located forward of the transom in clean water."

The fairing block which houses the transducer is custom built in either fibreglass or aluminium to suit the vessel.

Some avid fishers are ordering twin transducers, with others opting for the large 3kW models to suit the depth of water in which they are operating.

Fitting and customising vessels to take the latest

JACK BARONE



Furuno equipment now takes up half the company's workload.

As a youngster growing up in the Perth suburb of Leeming, Jack gave up footy and cricket at weekends to go fishing with his dad John, who was a member of the Cockburn Power Boat Club.

They would fish the metropolitan coast and in later years tow their 7m Fraser fibreglass vessel to Kalbarri.

Jack learned to drive the boat and set rock lobster pots and when his dad updated their GPS/sonar they would head farther

offshore, often coming home with prized dhufish and other species.

Having secured his apprenticeship, Jack would head to northern waters during his annual leave where he met Matt and Michelle Howard, owners of Apache Fishing Charters.

When not on the tools at Chivers Marine, Jack worked as a deckhand on charter fishing trips to the Abrolhos, Monte Bello Islands and Shark Bay.

The boat would head south for the summer season, and he worked the Swan River cruises and offshore charters to Rottneest.



■ Business is expanding into a third factory unit at Port Kennedy.

Graduating as a marine mechanic, Jack decided to work full time in the charter boat industry and later gained his Master Five skipper and engineer qualifications.

When not at sea, Jack ran a mobile marine mechanic service covering much of the Perth metropolitan area.

With his work order book rapidly filling each week, plus recognising the void between Rockingham and Mandurah, he decided to open the Port Kennedy Boat Services centre in 2019.

Now aged 31, his mechanical skills and

work ethics have been rewarding, and he is well respected by his peers in the marine industry.

Many customers are the result of word of mouth from fellow boaters and fishing club members.

Others come from recommendations posted on Facebook.

The through-hull customisation to fit fairing blocks and transducers to a vessel may result in alterations to the design of some boat trailers, affecting the rear cross beam.

"We made up our own die that fits the bending



■ A keen offshore angler, Jack Barone often targets the prized blue-eye trevalla.

machine so we can custom make a new rear cross beam on the trailer if necessary," Jack said.

"Because we fit the fairing on the keel line so the sonar beam is directly below the vessel, the block may protrude slightly below the keel towards the stern.

"So, we make sure there is no interference with the trailer framework during the launching process.

"The through-hull transducers are giving fishers excellent readings of the bottom structure and water column while travelling at speed.

"They can get out to their favourite areas fast and still get crystal-clear sonar readings.

"The latest Furuno instrumentation is very sophisticated, and recreational fishers can now run with units normally used by professionals in the past.

"Plus, we can customise the dashboard to suit."

Working as a charter boat skipper provided Jack with the valuable skills to locate fish using Furuno electronics and Port



■ Deepwater species like hapuka are targeted off Perth using the latest electronics and through-hull transducers.

Kennedy Boat Services has been awarded the Install Dealer of the Year by Furuno Australia for the past two years in succession.

"People are paying good money for this top-quality equipment, and we need to make sure they are getting the full potential from their

investment," Jack added.

The company is also a certified dealer for ZipWake Dynamic Trim Control, an automatic trim-tab system on the transom to give the vessel a safer and more efficient ride in smooth and rough water, while saving on fuel.

Audio fit outs are also a common request, with Jack recommending the American-built Rockford Fosgate marine sound systems.

When possible, Jack likes to escape the workshop and head offshore, often with fishing mates Matt and Justin to give the Furuno electronics a workout in deep water off Rockingham, returning with blue-eye trevella, hapuka and dhufish.

His wife Katie also has a maritime background and loves the ocean.

Like sand through the hourglass, Jack is looking forward to the time he can introduce his two daughters – Zoe, aged three, and two-year-old Ella – to the thrills of fishing as John his father did for him.

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