

# KELSALL CATAMARANS LIMITED

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## NZ Catamaran Design Company Spreads its Message Around the World

Returning from two months in N. and S. America, designer Derek Kelsall and his partner Paula report an ever expanding interest in the Kelsall catamaran designs and in using the unique KSS method of custom boat building. The designs range across all types and sizes. The sailing models are the most numerous but an expanding range of power catamarans, leisure and commercial, are also on offer to the boat builder – as well as the custom design service.

Where KSS has been well received in the owner build market for some time, it has been slower to become accepted by the professional boat builders. However, this is changing. Much of the current interest is from established builders seeking to move into the catamaran market, who appreciate the time saving, the improved workshop environment and the better quality control.

One of the highlights of Paula and Derek's trip was the visit to a KSS boat builder in Lima, Peru. Giorgio Ballotta has taken what he learnt at a KSS workshop held in Texas four years ago and built his long standing family business into a vigorous, forward looking company. We were given a very warm welcome on arrival at the Ballotta boat yard. All 40+ staff were gathered together to welcome us. It is impressive with a 39 footer and three 58 footers lined up, as well as three 46 footers on the water. The prices are exceptionally competitive, the quality second to none and the reliability 100%.



Customised KSS 46, owner build in N. Ireland, setting off across the Atlantic

Giorgio describes KSS as a "revolutionary approach to boat building, in terms of quality, build time and tooling requirements. KSS has transformed our business. We have a table and the resin infusion system set up. We can offer the whole of the Kelsall range of power and sailing craft and have access to the Kelsall custom design services". Projects in negotiation range up to 120ft.



Giorgio Ballotta and Derek Kelsall

KSS is based on the materials, PVC foam and fiberglass, and the use of the resin infusion process for almost all of the laminating involved. As THE pioneer of the use of foam starting in 1965, the refinement of the handling methods associated with foam, has been a career long effort by Derek. Over the 40+ years, foam has gone from Kelsall only, to universal acceptance. KSS is still the World leader in efficiency.



Ballotta Boats Workshop, Peru. KSS 39 with two of three KSS 58's in background



KSS 58's Saloon top (7m x 6.5m) being resin infused, in one shot, in Peru

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KSS offers the boat builder a much more efficient way of making a single craft or a small run of the same design. This is particularly true for the larger models. The builders can compete in the market place, without the usual very high labour content of traditional custom build methods and without the very high investment in tooling needed for the typical series production models. Where more than one boat is to be built, part moulds can be made for the more complex shapes. A mould table, the length of the boat and the vacuum resin infusion set up is the main investment.

The Kelsall tour began with family and friends in Colorado, then moved on to Florida for a KSS workshop in Pensacola, and to family in Naples, before flying S. The workshop was threatened by Hurricane Ike that fortunately swung away, but not before bringing high water to literally one inch away from flooding the workshop. The KSS workshop is a regular feature in US, NZ and Australia. It takes those attending through the whole KSS process in an informal, hands-on approach. Typically, a catamaran hull is produced in four days.



The crew attending KSS workshop in Florida

Next stop was in Peru. After visiting the boats, Giorgio and friends provided a guided tour, which included driving over the Andies and down into the jungle on the other side. Lima is an interesting place. A considerable amount of fog and wet, cold mist, but it never rains. Like the other S. American countries Paula and Derek found lots of contrast, lots of colour and very helpful people. From Peru, Quito was next stop. The attractive capital is well worth a visit. Bus travel on to meet new family in Santo Domingo was a hair raising, 2 US dollar, 2 hour bus ride, experience not to be missed. Quayaquil, near the coast of Ecuador, was another venue to meet Giorgio and potential clients, followed by another tour along the coast of this unique country.

Due to visa and vaccination misinformation from travel agent, a planned visit to friends and potential clients in Brazil was cancelled. Disappointing but we made the most of the time remaining exploring Chile. Another fascinating country, which for us included a night at the Ballet in Santiago, the second city of Valporaiso and a drive along Costa Norte. Derek and Paula say it was the people who made this trip so memorable. Before arriving in Chile for the last week of the two months, they had stayed five nights only in Hotels and two of those were a side trip in Colorado. The rest of the time was staying with old friends or with new friends.

Recent Kelsall design projects are building in Australia, the Philippines, Korea, China, US, Canada, UK and Peru. Boat builders in Russia (a 60 footer), S. Africa, Germany and Turkey are arranging to be able to offer our KSS catamarans. Two aluminium build and an 11m mono are included in the in-build list. A new 12m Catamaran Kit in a Container is about to start. A number of the newer designs are arranged for modular assembly, to further increase the build time efficiency. The catamaran is produced as three separate units, which can be taken to a near complete stage while all parts are readily accessible from the shop floor, before the final assembly.



Aluminium – built in Korea – highest quality throughout.

We look forward to a busy 2009.

Derek Kelsall  
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KSS 42 - One of three projects in China