



Jo Wooler of

Fiona Harper caught up with Jo Wooler, a fine artist in stainless steel after a successful venture into Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Paris, showcasing her work to international designers and galleries.



Jo hard at work cutting the design out with her grinder

Sitting aboard Lickity Split Take2 with Jo and Drew Wooler it's apparent that this creative husband and wife duo are passionately devoted not only to each other, but also to their respective crafts that reflect an affinity with the ocean. The deep blue and ochre tones of the saloon create the perfect environment to showcase their extraordinary skills, with its intriguing lighting and textured surfaces a little like stepping into an Aladdin's Cave filled with treasure.

Drew Wooler is a boat builder who co-designed and built the lightning fast catamaran Lickity Split Take2, a 13.6m Mark Pestcott design, from strip planked western red cedar. Launched in 2008 in time for the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show, Lickity Split Take2 is not only Jo and Drew's home for most of the year, it is also the

Mojo Creations



home of Mojo Creations Floating Gallery, a travelling exhibition space for Jo's work as a fine artist in stainless steel. Dominating the expansive saloon, the main bulkhead evokes the sensation of immersion in an underwater seascape with mounted sculptures of angelfish, turtles and sea horses seemingly suspended in the current. Jo creates astonishingly beautiful marine themed sculptures, brought to three-dimensional life in colours and textures rarely seen in stainless steel, these works are being installed in some of the most glamorous yachts and prestigious galleries worldwide.

It was in Drew's boat building workshop that Jo was exposed to the possibilities of transforming her designs into stunning sculptures. Playing around with marine grade stainless steel off cuts on the

workshop floor, and wielding an angle grinder as her paintbrush, Jo discovered the perfect medium to satisfy the creative side that had been evolving through artist workshops and training ever since she was a teenager. Initially undertaking a mentorship at an engineering firm to learn the techniques of welding and cutting rigid steel, Jo now works from her own workshop in Brisbane's bayside suburb of Redcliffe, when she's not onboard her floating gallery home.

Using heat to curve or bend her designs, some of which also require Tig welding, fire, oxygen and natural gas brings out blue, purple, scarlet and honey tones that breathe life into the creatures.

Some of the pearly hues created using this method resemble the rainbow-like New Zealand paua shell. The >>



Mojo Creations Floating Gallery





stainless steel is then polished to an almost mirror finish, creating stunning results that twinkle in the sunlight. Much of her work is evocative of the marine playground home that inspires her, with striking marlin, tranquil turtles and elegant lionfish all brought to life with



her enigmatic creations.

These sculptures have caught the eye of discerning yacht designers and gallery owners, who are inspired by Jo's creativity in working with such an unusual artist's medium. On a recent international trip showcasing her work, Jo met with yacht interior designers in Abu Dhabi seeking unique artworks to complement the elegant interior of a 141 metre gigayacht currently under construction. Also while in the United Arab Emirates, Jo formed a relationship with the Majilis Gallery in Dubai, which exhibits artists of international standing. She is currently working on a substantial piece to be hung in the gallery depicting the elegant Dhows that ply the nearby Dubai Creek.

After a successful foray into the Middle East Jo travelled on to Paris where she was invited to submit a large lion fish to exhibit in the prestigious 'Salon de la Marine', an annual exhibition of marine artworks at the Musee de la Marine in Paris in November. Assistant to the Museum Director, Fatima Dahmani is very enthusiastic to be exhibiting Jo's work, believing it to be refreshingly unique and sure to be well received by discerning Parisians.

Also while in Paris, Jo met with acclaimed design house Christofle, considered by many to be the custodians of taste and tradition. A symbol of luxury and elegance dating back to the mid 19th century, Christofle has always been



View of Paris from the Arc de Triomphe

associated with major creative trends and renowned artists, its pieces gracing the tables of emperors, princes or maharajahs, onboard transatlantic ocean liners and in contemporary restaurants. Christofle's Directors are looking for ways to incorporate Jo's work into their exclusive pieces, while also discussing the prospect of creating large scale sculptures for exclusive corporate and private clients. Aspiring to create large works that captivate and excite her audience, Jo says this opportunity would be the "ultimate facilitation to realise this dream".

Before getting back onboard Lickity Split Take2 as her and Drew set sail from Yeppoon to Brisbane, Jo says that 2009 is shaping up to be a landmark year. The hard work is paying off so successfully now that she barely finds the time to relax with Drew and dog Mojo onboard their gorgeous yacht. "My trip to the Middle East and Paris resulted in such positive and enthusiastic responses. It's crucial in the ongoing expansion for my art on an international scale, to follow up on my debut solo exhibition at last years World Trade Centre exhibition in Amsterdam," Jo says from her workshop, in between

welding and polishing. "It's a big pond out there for a little fish and it looks like I will be diving in again to expand my horizons as an artist. Travel is the secret recipe. I'm inspired by so many cultural experiences that take me beyond what I feel and see," Jo enthuses. When I ask her how much time she spends kicking back in the catamaran's trampoline she shakes her head and laughs, wondering what it means to relax when she has so many artworks on the go.

In the meantime, Mojo Creations Floating Gallery is travelling locally in Queensland waters. The gallery will showcase group and solo exhibitions at Redcliffe in Brisbane before departing in July on an exhibition schedule for Queensland coastal destinations. There's also an entry planned for the Swell Currumbin Sculpture Festival in September, plus in between, there's



Jo riding on one of the transport dhows from one side of the 'Creek' to the other (in the old part of Dubai)

some well deserved relaxed yachting pencilled in for Jo and Drew to enjoy their favourite cruising grounds of the Keppel Islands. 

Contact Jo Wooler at:
www.mojocreations.com.au
 to find out her exhibition
 schedule.

