



# WE MAKE **BOATS** **PERFORM** **BETTER.**

Elaine and Bill Ebsary

**POSITIONED FOR EASE - Fleming 55 "Le Billet"**





## Project

Elaine and Bill Ebsary

# FLEMING 55 “LE BILLET”

## Project Details

Products Supplied and Fitted

- Twin Disc MGX5075A Quickshift Transmissions
- BP300 Bow and Stern Thrusters
- 2 x EC300 Controls
- 4 x Express Joystick System (EJS) and Express Positioning System (EPS) stations

**Complete retrofit to Twin Disc MGX5075A Quickshift Transmissions, BP300 Bow and Stern Thrusters, 2 x EC300 Controls, 4 x Express Joystick System (EJS) and Express Positioning System (EPS) stations.**

Included specification and installation of hydraulic bow and stern thrusters replacing electric bow thruster, all being seamlessly integrated with the existing ABT Fin Stabilisers and the overall Fleming-specified/Fleming-supplied original mechanical, electronic, electrical and hydraulic onboard systems and controls.

Bill and Elaine Ebsary have been boating for many years, with Bill an avid offshore competitive ocean racing sailor and for more than 50 years a Member of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club on Pittwater - just north of Sydney. Their Fleming 55 named “Le Billet” translates from French to “The Ticket” in English, but according to Bill it is the ancient French military meaning of the word “Billet” that has the most relevance, that being “a temporary residence for displaced mariners”, a term that encapsulates Bill’s offshore racing background, along with his 10-12 ‘desperates’ (aka crew) who sailed together with him for many years.

***“I highly recommend the Twin Disc products and regularly speak to people about how good we have found both the products and the personal support Twin Disc Pacific has provided. The team were highly skilled and listened to my specific requirements. They left no stone unturned in finding solutions to the numerous challenges we faced with what was a fairly intricate and significant retrofit project.”***

**Bill Ebsary**



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In a previous life, Bill was also a competitive swimmer, representing Australia in the Commonwealth Games in the Individual Medley, before managing and later owning their successful family pump manufacturing business, Ebsray Pumps.

Bill, an Engineer by trade has a healthy appreciation for how and why equipment and systems perform, which assisted Bill with understanding the benefits that the intricacies of the Twin Disc retrofit project would offer on his and Elaine's 7-year-old Fleming 55.

Elaine and Bill delivered their Fleming 55 “Le Billet” the 425 nautical miles from Sydney to the Gold Coast so the retrofit works could be conducted by the highly skilled Twin Disc project team at The Boatworks' Coomera operation, one of the largest marine services facilities in the Southern Hemisphere and the home base for Twin Disc Pacific in Australia.

## HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN BOATING?

I've been boating since I was a very young child; learning to sail in skiffs and graduating into racing offshore initially on the yachts owned by my father - whilst dividing my time at school and training for the various competitive swimming events at the time.

For my 21st birthday my parents presented me with

membership to the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club and where I've remained an active member for more than 50 years.

My passion for sailing led me to owning and racing my own yachts - having competed successfully in numerous (30) annual 230 nautical mile Pittwater to Coffs Harbour ocean races, along with many offshore regattas from our home base at the RPYC off Pittwater and in Sydney.

It was this time spent boating in-and-around inshore and offshore waterways - especially the open ocean that I developed a solid understanding of the effects and demands of the ocean - at its best and at its worst; whether that's tide, wind, weather, currents or waves - basically anything it throws at you - because it can, and does! At the same time I was developing an indelible overriding respect for the ocean and all it presents.

During one race at sea we were hit with an unexpected 'micro-burst' offshore - a weather event culminating in 100+ knot winds that ultimately pinned our yacht uncontrollably on its beam-ends for more than 25 minutes. Fortunately, we all survived unscathed from that event, gaining however an even greater and deeper respect for the power of the mighty ocean.



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## WHY DID YOU BUY YOUR FLEMING 55?

Initially it was my decision to introduce (outside owning racing yachts) such a ‘radical’ concept for a new chapter in our boating life. I started looking at the quality semi-displacement trawler style power boats available on the market. It was the Fleming 55 that from the outset, continued to impress me.

Elaine and I had discussed whether to keep ourselves on the water - with our sailing yacht or to look for something more comfortable that we could, either together or with say another couple, venture on longer-range cruising or simply taking out family and friends in a far more relaxing environment, so the Fleming really did tick all the boxes perfectly. I was particularly impressed with the quality of the layout, the fit and superb finish, and from an engineering perspective, I was extremely impressed with all the systems and onboard equipment - with emphasis on the common sense approach to the critical and practical redundancies.

The large aft cockpit and the protected/enclosed walk-around (grandchild-proof) decks are a great security feature for family and friends, together with a delightful internal and accommodation layout. After reading many reviews and talking to various Fleming owners, nobody

had a bad word to say about the Fleming brand or their boats, so I'd basically made up my mind....we purchased the Fleming 55 in 2010, and in-so-doing, switched loyalties (from sailing) and ‘went to the dark side’!

We’ve now been down to and around Tasmania in the Fleming and regularly travel up and down the East Coast of Australia as well as savouring delightful day trips, weekends and holidays cruising with our family and friends on the Pittwater.

## HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT TWIN DISC EJS/EPS AND QUICKSHIFT TRANSMISSIONS?

Basically, we’d had one quite challenging berthing experience on the Fleming at Port Stephens. It was an extremely windy day with a lot of current in the marina and we had a tight berth with a very new looking boat in the berth beside us. On entering the berth beam-on to the wind, and at the most crucial time, the electric bow thruster reached its thermal cut-off limit and ceased operation. We fortunately were able to extricate ourselves from what could have been a major accident. I realised we needed to look at what alternatives were available in order to overcome such a situation ever occurring again – a solution that may be available that would operate reliably and with confidence and would



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take the stress out of these types of situations. I had read about the Twin Disc EJS utilising hydraulics to control the gearboxes and thrusters and decided to visit the Twin Disc stand and demonstration boat at the Sydney Boat Show. Both Elaine and I were invited by Glenn to ‘have a go and play with the system.’ We were left in no doubt about the system’s performance capabilities – needless to say we were suitably impressed!

At that point I felt it was the system that I wanted to explore in more detail so we started the process with Twin Disc to determine what would be involved with retrofitting the EJS system to our Fleming 55 – it having not been previously ever installed to this the smallest model in the Fleming range.

## WHAT IMPRESSED YOU MOST ABOUT THE CONCEPTS?

One of the key requirements was the ability to manoeuvre our boat accurately and with confidence when in difficult conditions and whilst in close quarters, still maintaining exacting control. This removed the emphasis off concerns having to worry about the proximity of vessels moored close by and made it far more simple and less stressful for Elaine whilst securing mooring lines, fenders etc – hence taking more pressure off me at the helm.

Plus we’re not getting any younger, and still wanting to enjoy our time on the water, so a key consideration was ensuring that if something ever happened to me, Elaine was comfortable and confident to manoeuvre the boat in confined areas herself, which she now is when using the joystick control.

The Twin Disc EJS and EPS give us great confidence to do this.

The EPS however reveals a very different set of benefits and is especially good when we’re picking up a mooring. From the bow, Elaine will guide me when nearing a mooring and rather than her trying to reach over the bow and attempting to pick up the line, I can simply engage the position hold function, assess better with her the location of the mooring, the wind and current direction etc, then if necessary, be able to motor closer; once again removing all the hassles or the physical stress for Elaine to be reaching /leaning over bow rails.

Being an Engineer I was extremely impressed with how the entire Twin Disc Quickshift transmission system applies drive loads with a particular example being when we were sea-trialling and commissioning the system for an emergency crash-stop situation, and just how smoothly and accurately the system applied the loads from full throttle in forward to full throttle



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in reverse in such a smooth but responsive manner; stopping the 30+ tonne Fleming travelling at 20 knots in an incredibly short distance. It proportionally controls and ‘softens’ all the drive-chain loads: the gearboxes, the shaft splines, the couplings and the propellers whilst at the same time responding appropriately to the urgency of the situation. It’s the same in tight quarters when doing small manoeuvres, the EJS is so smooth, responsive and operates with micrometre accuracy – almost regardless of external wind or sea conditions.

## HAS THE SYSTEM PERFORMED TO YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND WHY?

Its performance....it does precisely what the Twin Disc team said it would do!

Elaine commented further that “When shorthanded, it gives you time to get the boat prepared with lines and fenders for berthing or picking up a mooring and there’s no stress or such urgency anymore. It thus removes the chances of an injury if you’re in a hurry or experiencing conditions that are extreme or causing difficulties to get the boat safely and quickly secured”.

The EPS was actually an added bonus for us as we were initially primarily focussed on the EJS joystick control benefits - and then discovered the position hold function that the EPS brings, taking it to a completely different level; to be able to integrate the Quickshift gearbox benefits and control features with the proportional bow and stern thrusters to maintain a

GPS accurate position and heading is something else. The positional accuracy attained is certainly technology being applied at its very best!

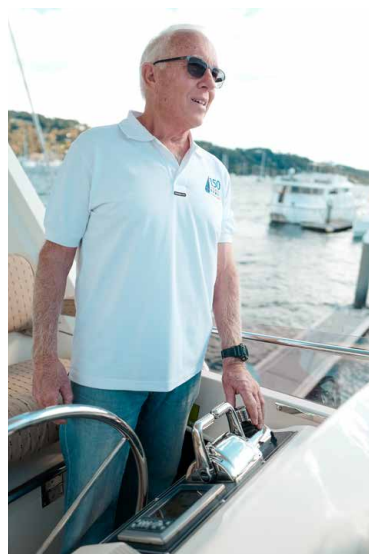
The Twin Disc EJS and EPS products are based on application with conventional shaft drive arrangements - which is what I wanted. In terms of both the shaft drive arrangement and the joystick control now fitted, I did not even consider the alternative ‘other drive system’ as I know from a service and engineering standpoint, they just don’t stack up against the Twin Disc ‘conventional’ offering.

I was also very impressed with the service ethos of both Fleming Yachts and Twin Disc during this entire 4-week retrofit exercise. These two companies tirelessly worked together to ensure the project was made possible. Both these organisations have similar values around exceptional service and customer support; both being a mirror image in this respect of the culture I fostered in my pump business....the right products, with the right people, working together to deliver the product the right way.

## WHAT SPECIFICALLY DO YOU APPRECIATE ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SYSTEM?

It simply works! The system takes the stress out for both Elaine and me, and makes our boating so much more relaxing and enjoyable; providing great peace-of-mind and confidence for both of us.

One of the other compelling reasons and desires we



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wanted the Twin Disc system was to allow us, as we become less agile (ie. get older!), to remain on the water longer without crew, skippers or deckhands.

The Twin Disc system is allowing us to better achieve this desire; it having changed our experience with our boat as at 55 feet being ‘up there’ in physical size and at times can be ‘testing’ for a husband and wife team only. The performance and responsiveness of the EJS makes manoeuvring in and out of our berth and in close quarters just so simple, and the EPS takes away any stress when setting up to moor regardless of conditions. We just don’t have to even think about whether leaving or coming back to the marina will be stressful as it just isn’t.

It’s so nice to not have that underlying stress on your mind, the whole process of berthing or picking up moorings is just so simple and hassle-free now.

## WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT THESE PRODUCTS?

Yes; I highly recommend the Twin Disc products and regularly speak to people about how good we have found both the products and the personal support Twin Disc Pacific has provided. The team were highly skilled and listened to my specific requirements. They left no stone unturned in finding solutions to the numerous challenges we faced with what was a fairly intricate and

significant retrofit project.

From the Managing Director to his technical team and through to the installation engineers and service technicians, they were always contactable, they always took my calls and if they couldn’t answer my questions they would work out who could and ensure I was followed up with the information I needed. In the end, it’s all about the people.

It is no coincidence that these were the identical traits that I insisted on and which continued as the pivotal feature in the success enjoyed with our local Australian pump manufacturing business. It is something that is unfortunately neither adequately taught nor actively practiced in these days and times. It may be an ‘old fashioned’ approach, but it brings the greatest success to all parties involved – especially the customers!

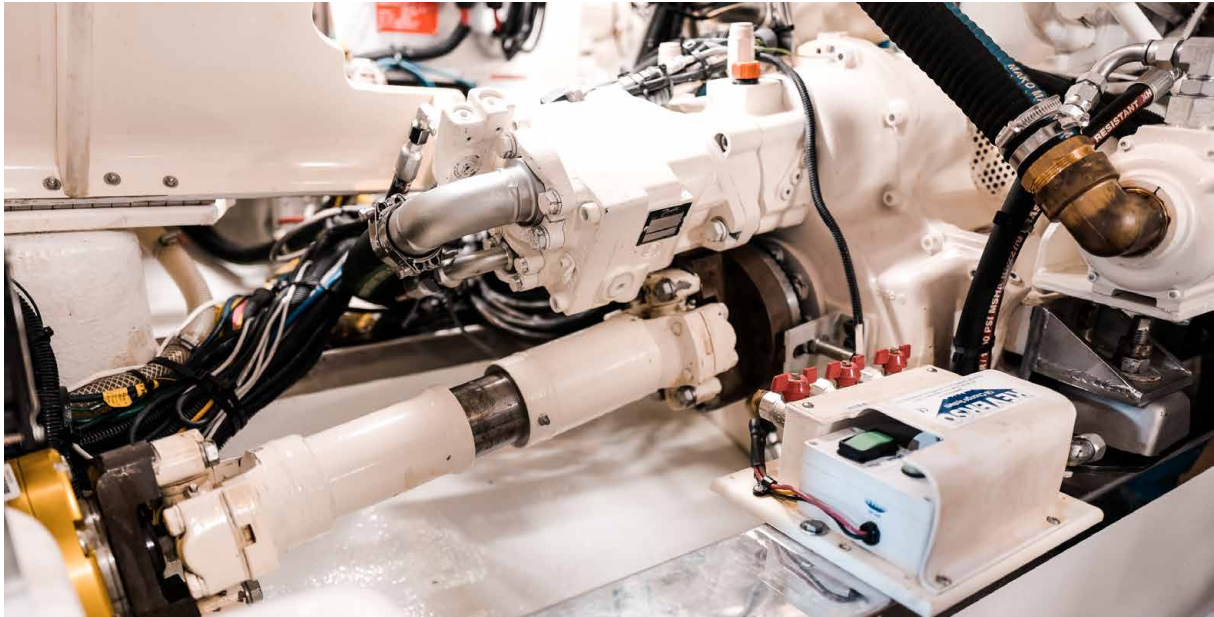
I have the upmost respect and appreciation for Glenn and his whole TD team. One prime example of this excellence was the requirement for a larger hydraulic oil tank to cater for the two hydraulic thrusters (plus the stabilisers) versus the one electric bow thrusters we were replacing. The Twin Disc engineer who scoped out what was required for the retrofit project worked on how and where we could replace the smaller hydraulic oil tank with the larger tank and it wasn’t as simple as just placing it where the other tank was located in the engine room.



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He came up with a solution that allowed the new tank to fit in securely but went further and manufactured a custom stainless steel fastening frame system with flexible rubber machine mounts to ensure the tank would handle the sometimes harsh forces of the ocean and the resultant loads imparted on the mechanical and structural integrity of the vessel.

## WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHER PEOPLE ABOUT TWIN DISC?

It was a very big decision to take-on such a large and complex project but from the day I met the team at Twin Disc I knew I was dealing with people who could deliver the project and that gave me an inner feeling of great confidence. The fact they could deliver virtually the entire project from ‘in-house’ Twin Disc products and likewise, the skilled TD engineering labour gave me added confidence too; they basically looked after every little detail, including engaging (where necessary) external trades who delivered to the highest standards. Whilst we had to take the boat from Sydney to the Gold Coast to have the works completed at the Twin Disc facility, it was so worthwhile. We had all of the key Twin Disc engineering and installation technicians on hand and they engaged and oversaw quality contractors as they were required to ensure the entire job was turnkey project. A great example of the commitment to service

and complete customer satisfaction.

To determine the effectiveness of the system for our boat, the Engineers and Technicians at Twin Disc worked closely with Fleming Management and Engineers to understand what impact elements of the boat would have on the performance of the system, and likewise, what impact the Twin Disc system would have on the elements of the boat. Again, no stone was left unturned to ensure all of this knowledge was gained prior to commencing the project.

Both Twin Disc and Fleming don't just sell a system or a product and move on; they have a vested interest in ensuring what they specify, and build, will work and work to the complete satisfaction of the customer. A lot of companies will say they do this, but very few can offer and achieve it. Twin Disc certainly can!

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