

# 5,000 Kilometres to go fishing



Liz Janney interviewed Chris Nisbet

In 1990 Chris Nisbet towed his boat from Melbourne to Broome to compete in the Broome's Billfish Classic which this year (2018) is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Would you travel 5,200kms to go fishing? Chris Nisbet did and here's his story.

"I worked in Melbourne as a graphic designer, so driving up the coast to Bermagui to go fishing was my escape. I had become hooked on game fishing, but in 1990 I was retrenched from my job".

"I asked my Mum to join me on a road trip to Broome, as she had plenty of spare time on her hands and liked a bit of adventure.. I towed my boat Gazelle, once owned by my mate Phil. Tragically he had disappeared at sea in a storm a couple of years before and now I felt I was taking him along for our next adventure, as I now had his boat."

"I'd been told by some good friends Jack and Pam Weiss of this sailfish tournament in Broome. I had the boat with me so all I needed was someone to make up a team. Mum wasn't real keen, so I called my mate Simmo back in Melbourne. He hopped on the next plane and within days we were fishing the Broome Billfish Classic. The weather was perfect, fishing fantastic and I remember the presentation night at Cable Beach Club and the magnificent smorgasbord. It was a great finish to a hard six days out on the water." said Chris.

That was back in 1990 and he has since competed in 29 Billfish Classic tournaments and operates his own charter fishing business out of Broome

"Over the next three years I travelled back and forth between Melbourne and Broome for the fishing tournament. In those days, the road from Katherine to Kununurra was still dirt, so it was an epic journey of three days hard driving. I would arrive in Broome, fish, have a

day or two rest and then drive back to Melbourne. I was hooked."

"In 1994, I packed up my Land Cruiser and boat, said goodbye to my girlfriend and drove to Broome. I am still here today. For the first year I lived in a tent at the Roebuck Bay Caravan Park. During the wet season I got a graphic design job at the local printers and dreamed of owning my own charter boat. I studied for my Coxswains ticket and began looking for a boat. My search took me to Melbourne but just as I arrived I got a message from Broome that Rocka was selling his boat Simara so I jumped on the next plane back to Broome. I had already started taking bookings for the next tourist season."

"My friend Andy Taylor helped give the boat a great paint job and I renamed her Southern Comfort and the tinnie, Coke."

"My first few years of charter fishing were so different from now. The internet had not reached Broome so my brother in Queensland made me a website and took all the bookings. He would then ring me to let me know what was happening. I still lived in a caravan park but had upgraded to an on-site van."

"There was always heaps of maintenance on the boat. Southern Comfort was replaced in 2003 with Billistic. I said goodbye to her on the Broome Jetty as she was lifted onto a ship to have a new life down in Perth. I designed the new boat and a local boat builder built the boat of my dreams. She is a real fishing boat; walk-around, shady, flushing loo and all mine! Yes, a real boy's toy."

I have competed in the Billfish Classic in both boats, and have had some great teams. My first team was from Singapore. They had a strange habit of putting a rock in their undies near their groin so they would not have to go

to the toilet. Every year I think will be my last and then I can't help myself, I look forward to the next.:

"In 2017, we had the most perfect weather, it was like it was dialled up from the gods. I had a very inexperienced team but they came through. We had a memorable time and were placed third place in the tournament.

Competing in a fishing tournament is something that people should put on their bucket list. Sign up for six

crazy days on the water. The weather can be kind or nasty but at the end of the competition, you really know you have lived." said Chris

*To find out more about the Broome Billfish Classic visit [broomefishingclub.com.au](http://broomefishingclub.com.au) or check out Chris's website [www.broomebillfish.com](http://www.broomebillfish.com)*

