

WESMAR Sonar Brought 7 Boats Back Safely

Everything on the custom built, richly equipped and luxuriously appointed Australian Game Fishing charter vessel Reel Chase is designed for the comfort and success of its jet setter clientele intent on landing trophy marlin, tuna and mackerel around Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

Jim Dalling, one of Australia's most successful charter game fishing skippers, is also intent on their success, and he relies heavily on all the tools of the trade to ensure a successful trip. But he would probably say one of the things he relies on most is his WESMAR sonar.

It is the equipment that ensures the Reel Chase's safe navigation through the pinnacle infested waters around the Great Barrier Reef. Among other things, he credits his WESMAR with the safe return of seven other charter boats 200 miles off shore one night. By using the scanning sonar he picked his way safely through the pinnacles at midnight, followed by seven non-sonar equipped boats. No one believes they would have made it back without the escort.

The charter fishing fleet in Australia is about 50 boats between 30 and 63 feet, and fewer than 5 have sonar, says Dalling. The Reel Chase has a WESMAR HD800-160-6 and he relies heavily on it for navigation. "It's a navigation nightmare where we fish. In the old days (before the sonar) at 5 p.m. you would cut and run regardless of the potential success if you stayed, knowing after dark you would never make it back through the pinnacles, which can be treacherous even in deep water. "I've seen up to 100 behind one reef. With the GPS and the sonar we can stay out until midnight and safely navigate through the pinnacles."

The Reel Chase is a 55-foot custom built game fishing boat. Skipper Dalling previously owned and skippered the Charter vessel Orca, and has many tournament wins and world record fish captures. Typically trips are with 1 to 4 passengers for up to 5 days. Sometimes they are individuals, other times corporate charters. He says he uses the sonar for profiling and since he fishes in reef country, he uses the sonar to



The premier Australian game fishing boat, Reel Chase, relies on its WESMAR sonar to navigate through the reefinfested waters around the Great Barrier Reef.

pick his way out.

Dalling has some wonderful stories to tell. The biggest fish he's caught personally is 1,289 pounds — 5 meters long, in 1997. Last year the boat caught a 1,340 pound giant black Marlin. He says the time he appreciated the sonar the most was when he had a group 200 miles out to sea and a neighboring boat was having a party. When it came time to return, they were concerned about safely navigating the pinnacles. When Jim headed in, he was followed by a row of 7 boats. "The WESMAR brought them all back safely."

The Reel Chase is powered by twin V12 D Detroit diesels providing travel speeds up to 35 knots. She has two wheelhouses, one on the fly bridge and another on top of the tuna tower for better visibility. Both spots are equipped with the latest in electronics, including computer navigation and GPS, radios, sounder and the WESMAR sonar.

Dalling brings a lot to the fishery: 25 years as a captain and countless tournaments to his credit including the prestigious Australian International Billfish Tournament, Tangalooma Classic, and Cairns Light Tackle Tournament. Two years ago he sold his own boat of 25 years to captain the beautiful new Reel Chase, a premier 55-foot custom built game fishing boat.

