

workshops. It's great – about 250 m² in size with all the tools. We are slowly adapting it into a proper boat-building yard. We moved in the beginning of December last year, and it has made the world of difference.

That sounds great.

Yes, although being out in Khayelitsha has its problems. For one thing, many people feel unsafe making deliveries out there. Also, we are struggling to find someone to insure us. On the other hand, being situated there has some solid benefits. We want to show people that they can create more than just ornamental tin cars and woven baskets. There is a lot of promise and possibility in Khayelitsha, and it's easier to illustrate that in the actual community.

On a different note, you have oft voiced your opinions of the boat building industry in this country.

Can you share some with us now?

I think it has a way to go, and improvements can be made. You always hear that we don't have enough harbours here, and that's true. You can hop from Saldahna to Cape Town to Hout Bay to Gordon's Bay, but then a problem comes in, as Mossel Bay is the next stop. I think the harbour in Hermanus is a pivotal one. At the moment it is purely industrial, but imagine what a great day sail or

overnight trip that would be? Things like that would extend our boating possibilities, and in turn boost the industry. Another big factor in this country is the fact that you can't get a mortgage on a boat. People here see Europeans with their shiny boats and often tend to make the assumption that most Europeans are rich. That's simply not the case. Over there, you can go to the bank and get a mortgage of up to about 80% over 20 odd years. Banks claim that they won't finance a boat, as it's a moving asset, but then what about the motor vehicle? Today's technology means that boats can be tracked and monitored worldwide. If South Africans were helped financially that would be an obvious boost to the industry. On a legal note, it is difficult for foreigners to buy a boat here, as there is no proper contract, and that is what the banks want.

What do you think the boating industry should be doing to improve?

The CTBI is doing good promotion work abroad, but I feel that the industry as a whole needs to be more cohesive – more of a unit – and start working together. Relying on government funds is not enough. I think that it would be great for the industry to get together and buy a communal space in the harbour that's

duty free, and invest in communal facilities, like engine repair, crane operation and the like, instead of each person going out and buying and using his or her own. Together much can be achieved, but working as one requires a change in mentality.

And what of the quality of locally built boats?

I think that this must be improved upon, and this can be done by adhering to international standards, which also helps to improve liability. And such international standards should not only apply to boats built for export. Craft built for local use are just as important, as many are used within the sphere of tourism. South Africa needs to give herself a quality mark based on international standards, including not only the building of the boat, but everything else – delivery, after sale, contracts – the whole package. We can't keep blaming the rand. Our boats should sell for their quality, not for their cheap prices.

Any last comments?

I don't want to sound like a wise guy from Europe and come in and criticise. Just looking at the Shosholozu is proof enough of this country's quality and ability. South Africa has so much potential, but I do believe that we have a way to go, and the only way to get there is by working as one. ●

