

30 minutes with...

Peter Jacops

If you are a regular reader of Leisure Boating then you will be familiar with the Whisper Boat Building Academy – a Section 21 non-profit organisation aimed at teaching deaf youth the art of boat building. Now almost a year old, the Academy has overcome much on its long road to success, and although there is still a way to go, the future is looking noticeably brighter for the initiative. I caught up with Academy founder Peter Jacops in his Cape Town office to learn a little more.

Leisure Boating has been following the progress of your Academy since it's inception, but we know little about its founder. How was it that you came to live in South Africa in the first place?

While living in Holland, my company, the European Certification Bureau (ECB), was approached by Robertson & Caine at the Marine Equipment Trade show in Amsterdam. They wanted to be CE certified, so I took the first plane to Cape Town and they became my first South African clients. While I was in the Cape, I visited many yards to find out if I could offer this service to any other companies in the industry. It turned out that there was a strong demand for CE certification, and I gradually built up a client base here. It became expensive to keep flying back and forth between Europe and here, and although I loved flying to South Africa, I decided that I didn't actually like

flying out again, so I decided to move and base myself here in Cape Town.

What was your first project in this country?

Well, the ISO TC 188 committee already existed here, but it seemed as if no one here was actually voting, and I understand South Africa

had abstained for a few years. I approached the SABS in Pretoria and asked if I could form a committee that would vote on international standards. South Africa has a voice, and I thought it was time that it was heard. I approached various people, and now we have a group of about ten members, each representing a faculty of the industry, from boat building to design to issues of safety. The representation is fair, and each member now gets sent a draft of ISO standards, which they vote on.

How did the Whisper Academy come about?

That was my second project. When I was still living in Holland, on one of my trips I visited the Manta Boat factory in Pretoria. The owner, Martin

