



Vietnam's first catamaran sails with help from Diab

Indochine Yachts Ltd. is a young and dynamic company located in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City. Diab has been instrumental in helping the company set up its operations, which are centered on motor and sail catamarans – a boat type previously unknown in Vietnam.

Just two years ago, Indochine Yachts Ltd. was a company with little experience but a big dream. The dream was to build not only Vietnam's very first catamaran, but also a full-fledged catamaran business based in Ho Chi Minh City.

The first step in making that dream come true was a meeting with Kelsall Catamarans, a New Zealand company with over 40 years in the industry. A pioneer in composite construction techniques, Kelsall Catamarans had developed a custom build process suitable for one-off projects, known by the name of KSS (Kelsall Swiftsure Sandwich). Kelsall Catamarans was extremely open with Indochine Yachts, providing the startup with detailed documentation of the KSS method and many hours of consultation.

With KSS knowledge in hand, Indochine Yachts was able to decide on a design and begin researching the materials market. The latter turned out to be a complex and time-consuming process, due to the huge variety in marine-grade resins, vacuum foils, gels, peroxides, shade cloths and more. Often, a range of materials had to be ordered and tested on-site for suitability and cost effectiveness.

When it came to PVC foam, however, the selection was relatively easy. There were fewer quality manufacturers, and the Diab office in Thailand was proactive in helping Indochine Yachts make the right choice. Booklets and case study manuals were made available, and

Diab employees made frequent visits to the company's 1000 m2 site on the Saigon River. In time, it became clear that *Divinycell H* was the best choice for the catamaran in development.

Using *Divinycell H*, Indochine Yachts was able to achieve the necessary strength while saving a significant amount of weight. Diab and Kelsall Catamarans provided assistance during the manufacturing process, offering valuable guidance in the creation of Vietnam's very first catamaran:

a 42-foot catamaran ferry.

Surprisingly, putting the finished catamaran into service proved almost more difficult than building it. The Vietnamese authorities spent a great deal of time examining the vessel, from its design and strength calculations to its engineering details. Apparently, they found it difficult to believe that the structure was rigid enough – despite their inability to break hull samples during laboratory tests of tensile strength.

Obviously there are still things to perfect as Indochine Yachts begins moving into full-scale production. But with a first catamaran delivered and a second already on the way, the company is making quick strides in applying what it has learned from Diab and others.