

# Binks B25

A recipient of the "Good Design Award" by the Industrial Design Council of Australia, the South Australian Binks B25 trailer yacht is building up a strong following.

There is no doubt that when it comes to relaxed cruising/sailing/exploring on the waterways of this continent the trailer-sailer (or trailerable yacht as it is now fashionable to call them) has the most to offer. Most of these waterways can be reached either by sea or by road, but many by road only. In any case, a hard bash off the coast in offshore waters in a relatively small boat can never be construed as comfortable.

While there are problems with trailering a sizeable yacht, these are relatively insignificant providing you have done your homework in terms of preparing the rig for the road and checking ahead on the launching and other facilities at your waterway destination. Other factors in favour of the trailer yacht need hardly be mentioned as they are well known: savings in mooring and anti-fouling fees, cheap storage, ease of maintenance and so on.

It is small wonder, then, that the trailer yacht has flourished in recent years at the cost of the keel boat with its numerous limitations. Where trailer-sailers began tentatively not so many years ago as 5-6 metre centreboarders, trailer yachts have taken over with designs that all but simulate the deep keel yacht in craft up to almost 9 metres LOA. Design features have reduced the instability which was the humbug of the early trailer boats and interior luxury has reduced the cost of family holidays by providing comfortable accommodation either on wheels or on the water.

A relatively recent addition to the lists of stylish trailer yachts is the Binks 25 — commonly abbreviated to B25. This boat incorporates many of the latest features in trailer yacht design to the extent that you would probably be

unaware that you were on a trailerable boat, unless you saw her pulled out of the water. Indeed, that was exactly the situation when we stepped aboard our test boat at Quarterdeck Marina, The Spit, in Sydney, for the B25 was already launched and lying alongside a jetty looking for all the world like a sizeable and smart family keeler. From outward appearances there was nothing to indicate that she had only minutes earlier been rolled off a trailer towed behind a family car and the stylish hull which seemed to curve down into the water with all the indications of a deep keel, was in actual fact totally flat bottomed. Indeed, this boat requires only 250mm of water in which to float when her keel is retracted.

Only when you get down into the cabin does the trailer aspect come home with the usual centreboard casing, protruding into the cabin space. Like many good designs, in the B25 this is disguised as a table-cum galley fitting, but it runs most of the length of the main

saloon and cannot, therefore, be too concealed. That, plus the wide beam in the after-regions which, to the discerning eye, always spells "trailer yacht" were the only features to indicate that this was not a standard keeler, for in other respects she had the pleasing lines and excellent finish of a typical yacht.

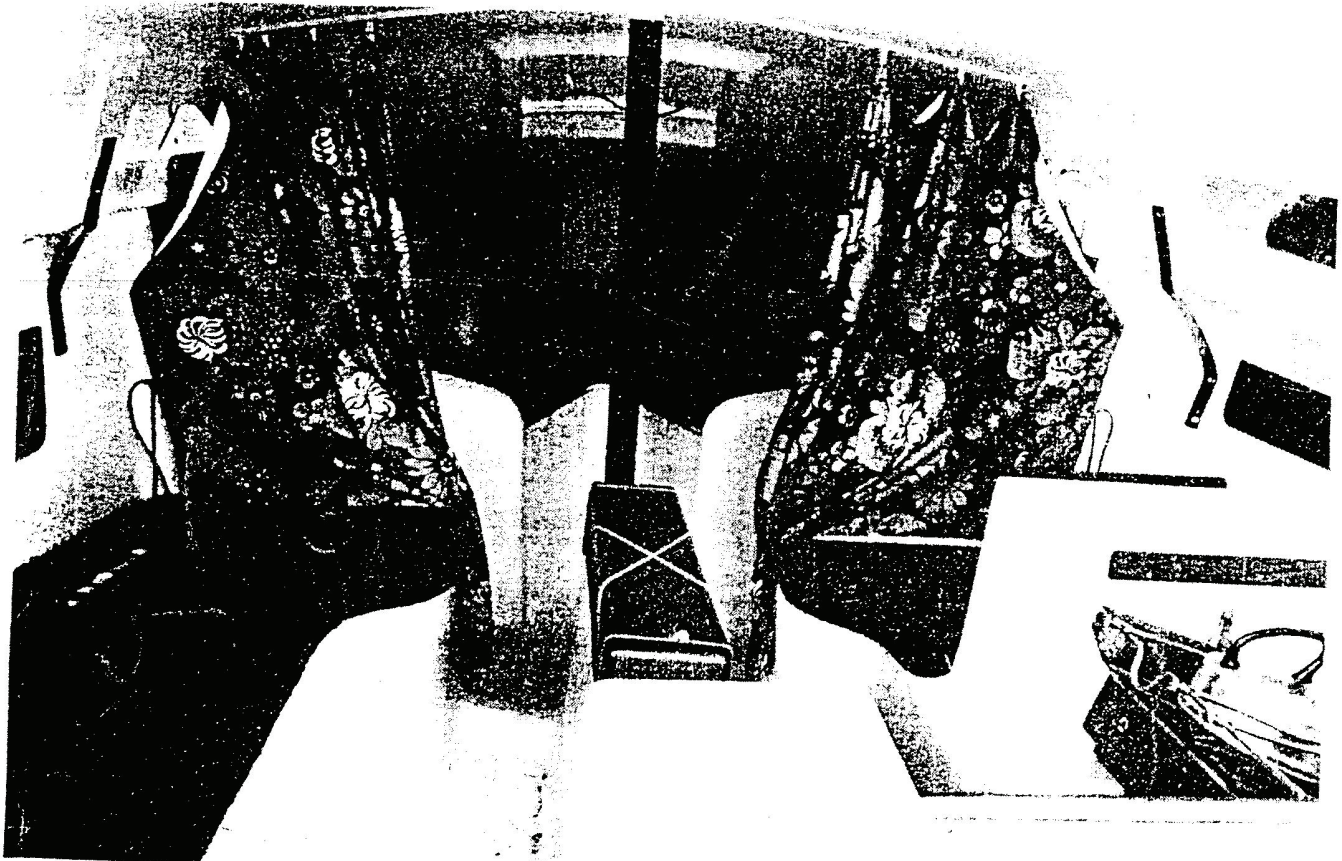
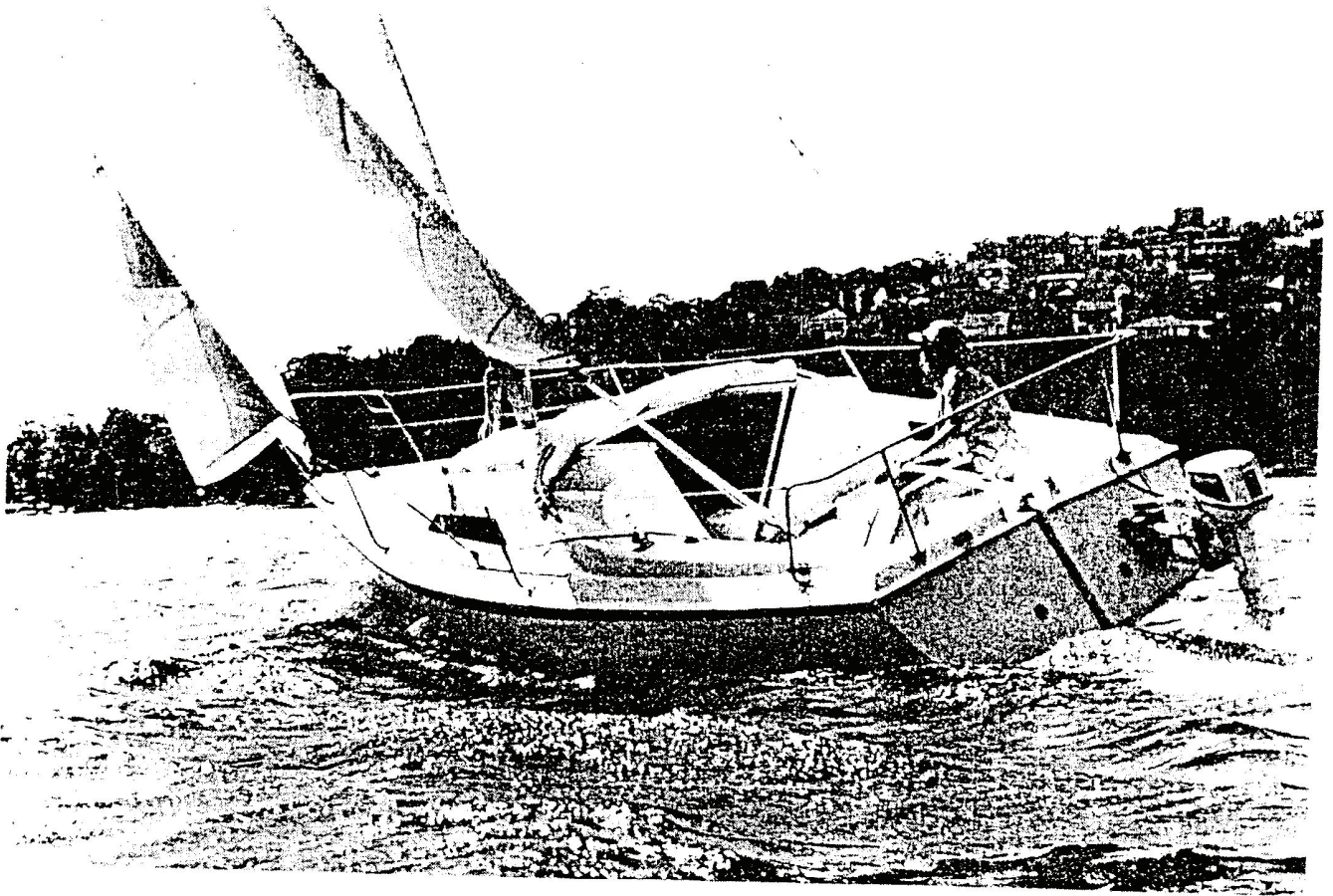
First impressions, of course, are induced by the boat's lines. In this case, already suggested, the sweeping modern, low-line of the B25 gives it the appearance of a larger, stylish yacht. The entry is fine and the rake moderate with a low conventional sheer sweeping aft to a standard flat transom. The cabin is also low in profile with the squared-off windows and swept back coaming that has been popular with Farr and similar leading designers in recent years. The cockpit, as mentioned, is wide and roomy as is usual in beamy trailer yachts and access to the cabin is through a very large companionway hatch which is unusually shaped to allow maximum access for crew with minimum access to water. This design also gives the cockpit a slightly offset lead into the cabin, making for more galley room hard up under the after bulkhead of the cabin. The volume of the cockpit complies with I.O.R. racing regulations and has a pleasantly curved profile with swept back coamings that we found in practice keep the crew nice and dry.

## SPECIFICATIONS

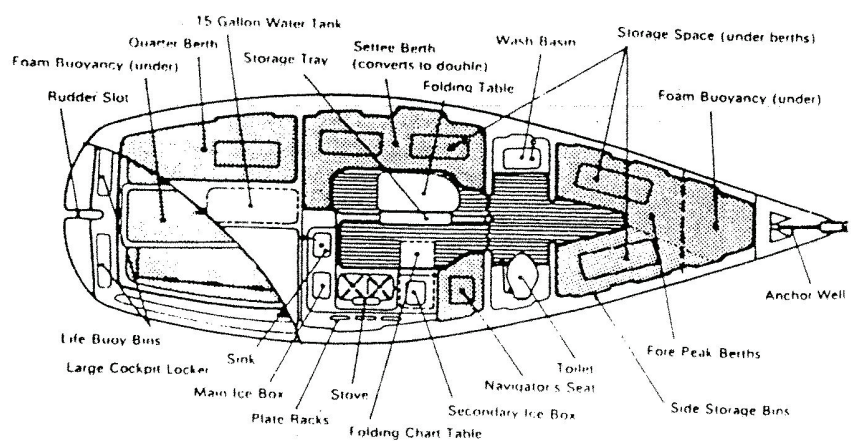
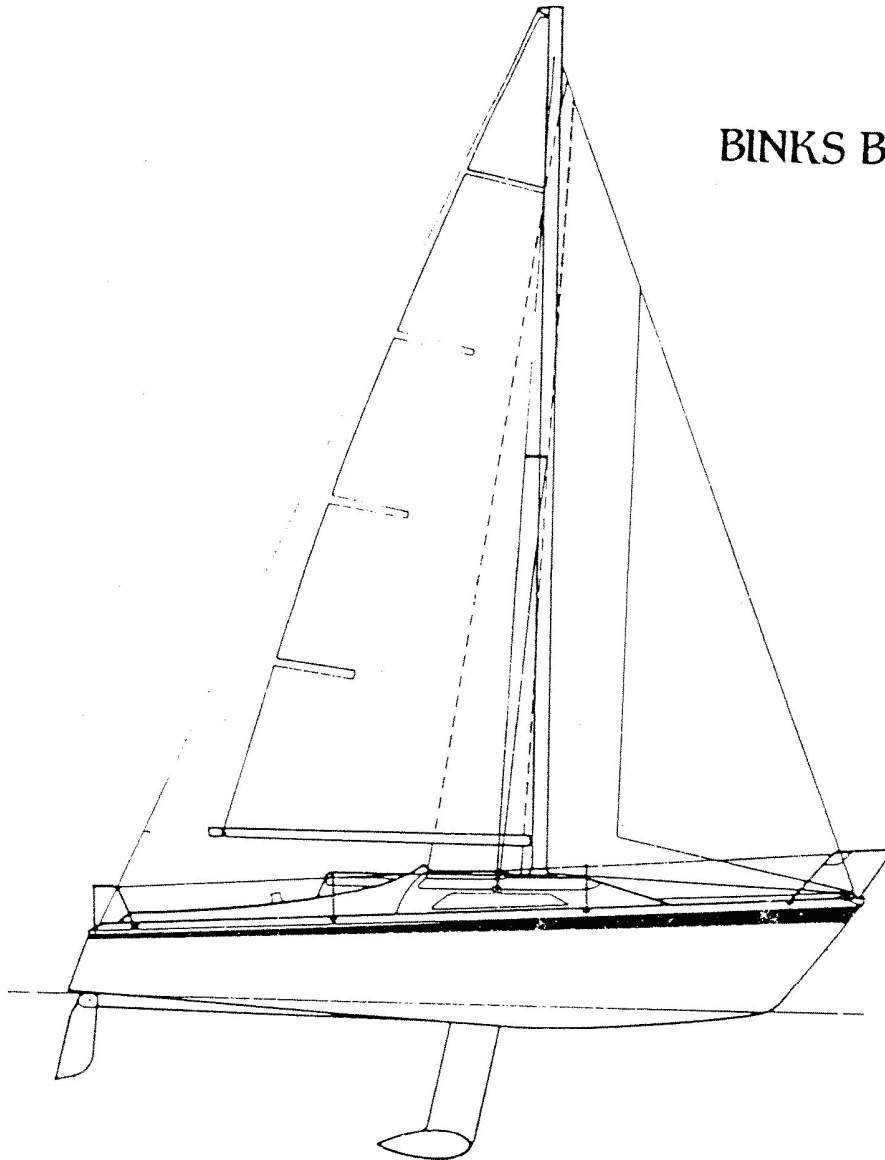
LOA .....	7.82m
LWL .....	7.01m
Beam .....	2.49m
Displacement .....	1168.4kg
Draft (keel up) .....	25.39cm
Draft (keel down) .....	1.42m
Mast .....	8.53m
Sail Areas	
Main .....	13sq.m
Headsail .....	16.9sq.m
Spinnaker .....	48.3sq.m

ABOVE: Binks 25 has rather nice lines we thought, spoiled somewhat by the unusual side deck mouldings and stanchion positioning. Observe soft top over hatchway. BELOW: Original plug for the furniture moulding was an extraordinary piece of work as evidenced by the complexity of the moulding's shape.

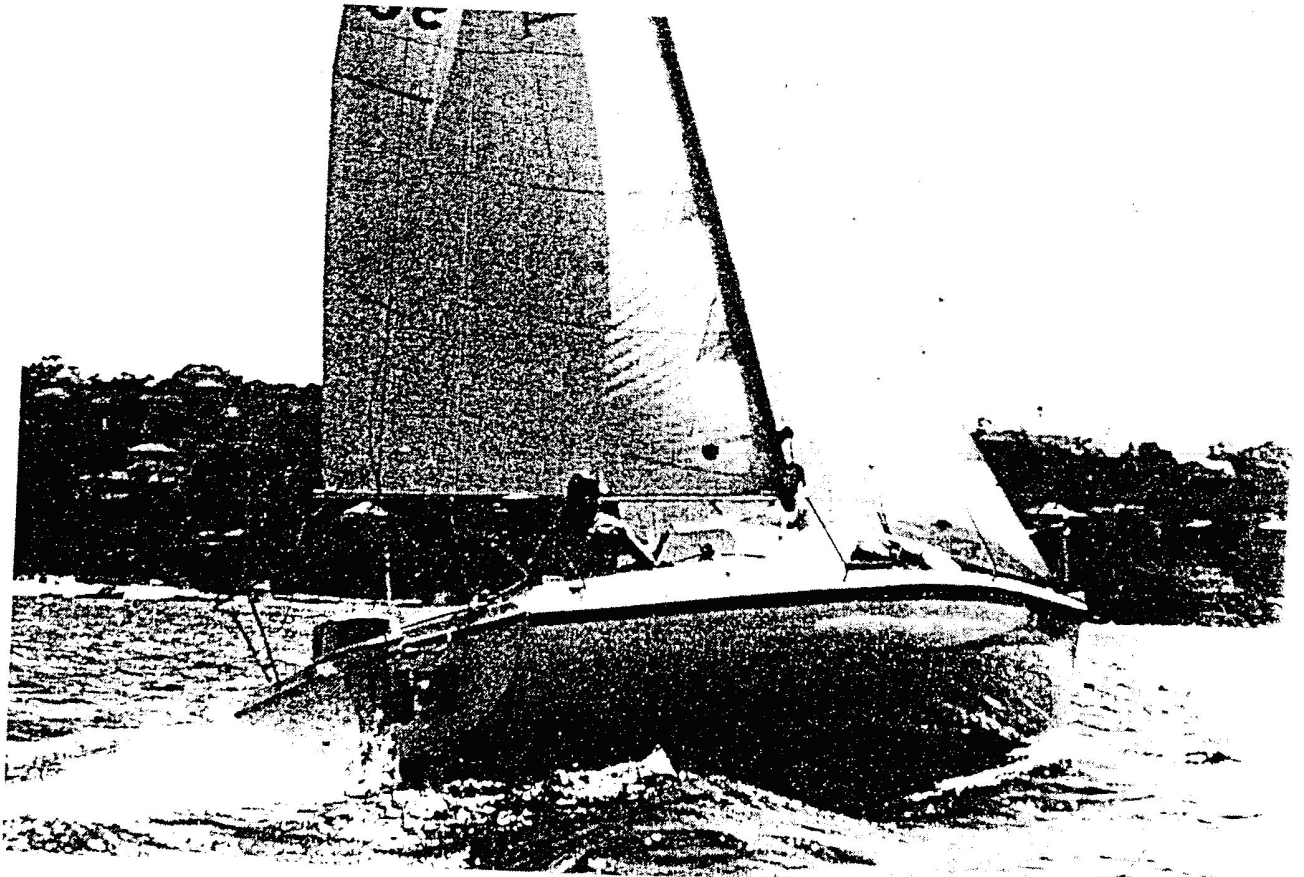
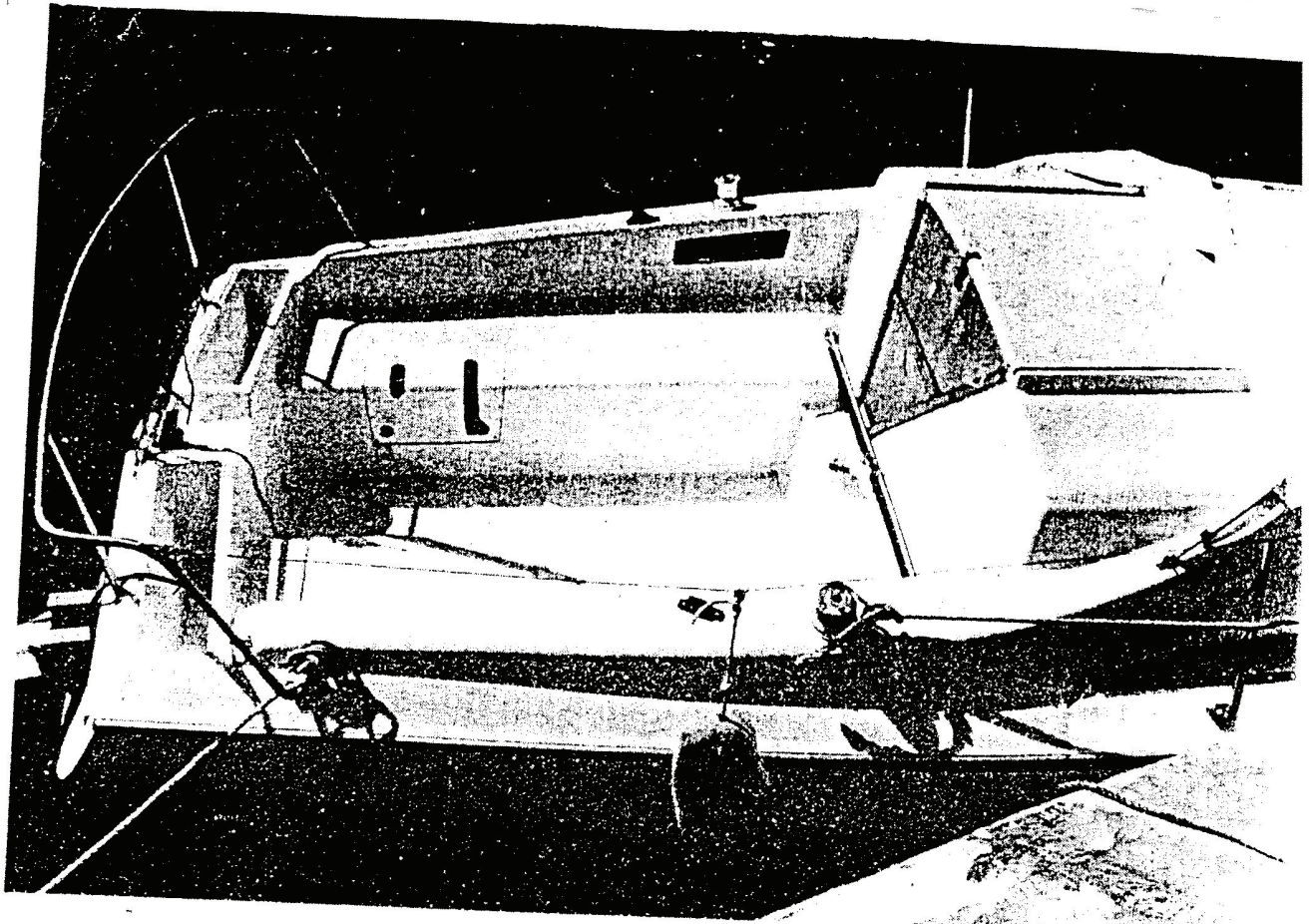




## BINKS B25







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The construction of the hull is fibreglass using balsa sandwich techniques to obtain maximum stiffness and strength with light-weight. As a result, this yacht is lighter for its size than most comparable craft — an important factor when trailering and launching are involved.

While on the subject of launching, the B25 has a virtually flat bottom with the keel retracted flush to prevent the need for a special trailer or any hang-up when rolling back into the water. The buoyancy of the stern areas floats the boat quickly as she runs back, and there should be no need to immerse the trailer wheels any more than for a comparable power boat.

One feature of the exterior which did not appeal was the angled deck at the gunwhale. This tended to reduce deck space and make walking more difficult than necessary, particularly along the side decks. It also produced a strange angle in the liferail stanchions which, although they were strong in use, looked fragile to say the least. I see no good reason for this type of design which reduces deck space, something which is always at a premium on small boats.

Very much on the credit side, in terms of external appearance, however, was the finish of the deck and cockpit surfaces. The general non-skid pattern

around the decks is of a pleasant vinyl-type texture while the cockpit seats had a sort of miniature pegboard surface. Both gave the boat a luxury appearance, were most effective under foot and, in terms of the cockpit seats, reduce that bottom-chilling coldness which is an unfortunate feature of fibreglass whenever it is used for seats. The feeling of the texture is almost that of timber or some synthetic material which, on a cold day, will make a great deal of difference to the comfort of crew and passengers. It also adds greatly to the appearance of the boat and I would go so far as to say that the surface finish of the fibreglass on this boat is as good as I have encountered on any craft.

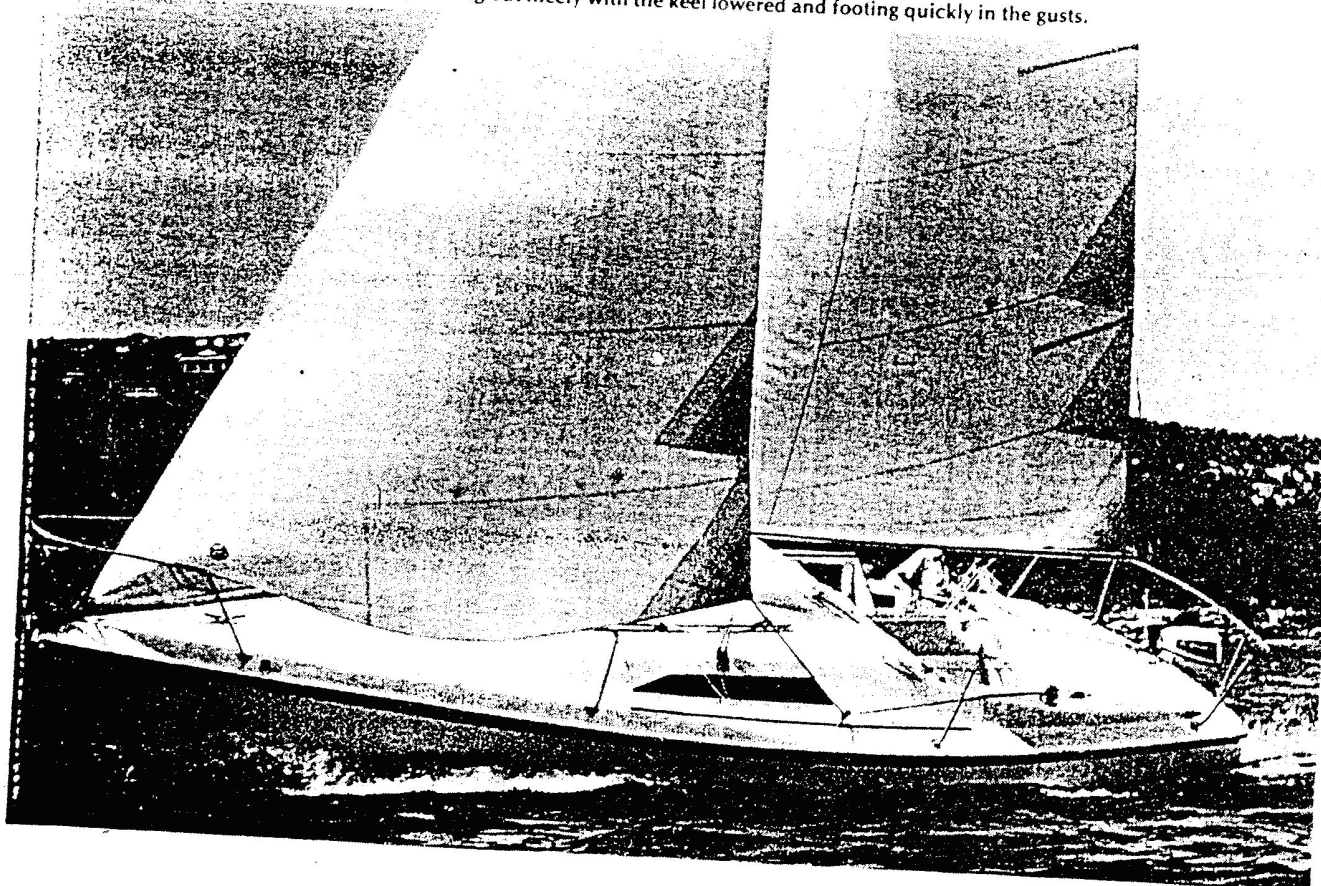
The interior accommodation of trailer yachts can never quite compare with that of keel yachts since they lack the depth of hull which offers greater headroom. However, trailer yachts are often beamier and by careful planning the interior can be made extremely comfortable and livable for an average family. This is the case with the B25. While I have seen more room in a boat of comparable length it has only been in a deep keeler and as trailer yachts go, the interior of this boat has been very well designed and planned to maximise the space available. The galley area, for example, will gladden the hearts of any mums who may come in contact with it.

It is spacious and well equipped with everything from the galley stove and sink through iceboxes, plate racks and the like.

The galley takes up almost the entire port side of the saloon and sweeps around the after bulkhead to the companionway. Neat innovations such as a navigators' area which doubles as a second icebox are the sort of things that make for comfortable interior design in small spaces, and the way in which the folding table hinges off the centreboard casing yet does not interfere with working room in the galley is another example of good thinking. While the centreboard casing is an intrusion, it must be lived with in a trailer yacht and in this case its intrusion has been minimised by using it both to support the table, provide a convertible settee berth and also a seat for the mast support.

A small compartment, closed off in the test boat only by curtains, provides the bathroom area with toilet and wash basin on opposite sides of the boat, leading through another half bulkhead to the forward cabin. I am greatly in favour of totally enclosed bathrooms and it would not be difficult to fit the remaining half bulkhead to this boat which together with a door, would totally close off the forward area. Two forward bunks over stowage space give total sleeping accommodation below

Performance of the B25 was very good, pointing out nicely with the keel lowered and footing quickly in the gusts.





decks for four adults. As mentioned, the saloon berth converts to a double, but I would think that this would provide a pretty clumsy arrangement since it will close off access throughout the main part of the boat. In any case, four sleeping berths — two forward, one in the main saloon and a quarter berth — are sufficient for a boat of this size. The anchor locker is totally sealed off from the accommodation and access via a deck hatch ensures that no muddy water gets below.

The keel is of the swing variety with a lead bulb carrying 272.2kg aerodynamically shaped and fitted to the very bottom. With the keel down the draft is 1.42m and with it totally raised 250mm. The raising mechanism is hydraulic and simple to use with a smaller lever fitted through a slot in the cockpit seats on the aft of the port side. The hydraulic pump is unfortunately, of mild steel and was showing signs of rust even on our relatively new test boat. I would have thought it worth the extra effort of having the hydraulic raising gear made of stainless steel since it is exposed to sea, atmosphere and water and no amount of painting or treatment will ever keep rust entirely away. However, it is a simple mechanism and is easy to operate even with the kids at the end of the pumping handle.

The rudder has a design weakness in that while it is fully retractable there is no way to pull it up when sailing. This may well be intentional, since the rudder kicks up when the boat is run up on the beach or a trailer but when moored in the water means that the rudder must be left down all the time. However, the design of the rudder is good since it is totally enclosed in the transom and not hung over the stern as is the case with most trailer craft, thus leaving the transom area neat and flush.

The weather was ideal for testing a trailer yacht. The northerly was gusting to 25 or 30 knots and bringing up a nice chop with it. Since instability has always been a feature of this type of craft, what better way to find out if the modern designs had overcome this problem than a breeze of this calibre. Rigging the B25 was simplicity itself and took but a minute to bend on the the small No. 3 jib and the main. Initially, we thought of throwing a reef into the main, but decid-

ed to give the boat a good stretch and see how she stood up before using the reefing gear. The mainsheet clipped onto a track at the companionway but, because of the angled doorway, did not intrude on the cabin entrance and access was easy at all times, even when the boat was sailing.

A 3kW Chrysler "Sailor" was mounted on a bracket and gave adequate power to get us away from the jetty and the congestion of the moorings. On a couple of occasions we tried this motor in the stiff breeze to ensure that it would bring her under control despite the strong gusts, and at no time did it let us down. Considering the windage and the strength of the breeze, this was a good indication of the suitability of this little motor as a yacht auxiliary.

Once out into the breeze we gave the B25 her head and reached away down to the open water near Sydney Heads. She flew along at a great turn of speed, accepting the reach as an ideal sailing position. Lowering the centreboard keel was easy, since a bleed valve released the hydraulic pressure at the flick of a small lever, and except for a slight thump as it reached maximum depth you would not have known it was moving. We were impressed with the ease of handling this keel since many trailer yachts suffer from difficult raising and lowering of the keel, particularly when it has ballast attached. Needless to say, the keel made a big difference to her sailing performance across and into the wind as one would have expected, but we raised and lowered it a few times just to check. Without the keel she drifted across the water at a rate of knots. With the keel fully lowered she pointed up nicely and footed quickly in the gusts.

Once out into the open we really put her to the test. Bringing the sheets hard on we wound her tight up to the wind which, as mentioned, was gusting up to 25 knots at a time. There was some weather helm, but nothing more than might be expected under these conditions, bearing in mind the fact that we were still carrying a full main. The idea was to push her as hard as possible and then gradually reef down or ease sheets to see how she performed. Many yachtsmen push their boats beyond the ultimate performance position because

it feels as though they are going faster, so we intended to prove under these circumstances the boat would handle well and be in no danger. She heeled quickly to the breeze tending, like all trailer designs, to be initially tender but stiffened up as she got her gunwhale down. We clamped the main on hard and tried to put her over further, but she resisted firmly, the full buoyancy of the bilge coming into effect at this point. There were times when we had to ease the main to prevent water coming over the coamings but here again we were pushing the boat deliberately beyond her limit to get her reaction, and a quick flick of the mainsheet brought her immediately back upright. By working her this way we found that there was no need to reef the main, she handled well with just a little easing through the squalls and pointed up nicely with only occasional pressure on the helm as she caught a gust.

We threw her through a variety of manoeuvres under these conditions and came up satisfied with the fact that the B25, if handled correctly, could take care of herself under the most rugged conditions. We later took her back into quieter water to feel her under easier conditions and came up with exactly the same result. In short, the boat performed as we had hoped and never at any time gave us a bad moment. All handling facilities are nicely placed and easy to use and this boat would be a breeze to sail single handed. While we had no opportunity to race her against another boat, there was no doubt in our minds that she was producing a very good turn of speed as we fairly flew around our test course both in the rough water and the smooth.

Summing it all up, then, David Binks' new trailer yacht has a lot going for it. As a family boat she is roomy, comfortable and easy to handle. There is no doubt that she would give a good performance in racing with comparable craft, and appearance wise she must rate as one of the nattiest trailer yachts on the market at present. All of which adds up to the fact that if cruising is your forte, and you particularly like cruising in the inland waterways and estuaries, then the B25 should be well up on your list of craft to fill your needs.

