

Bonito 22 is a rising star ...

TESTED BY PETER DABBS

TO SUGGEST that the Australian trailer-sailer market is getting a little crowded would be an understatement.

Already there are upward of 70 trailerable yachts on the market — which to some extent mirrors the demand which has developed for this type of boat in recent years.

At 22ft, the Bonito is about the mid-range of trailer sailers but it gave the impression of being a much bigger boat as it sat on its trailer.

The boat slid easily into the water to float well above her boot topping. This made me think that perhaps she would prove to be tender.

We were on a lee shore and, with some craft, could have been in trouble getting clear. However, the Bonito has a shoal draft long keel that makes her easy to sail without her board down.

As a matter of fact, we found ourselves sailing her with centreboard fully raised and not knowing it at one time.

We tried to find out just how much difference the board really made and, apart from a slight difference in balance, there was not much effect. The boat points just as well, board or no board.

But, as usual, I am getting ahead of myself.

There is a well-designed stern boarding ladder that is incorporated in a solid pushpit. It is in two hinged sections so that, when lowered, it extends below waterline and is well clear when raised.

The rudder is a swing-blade type with lower support pin as well as the usual gudgeon and pintal. The blade itself is held down by a line that can be made fast in a jam cleat.

The cockpit comes aft to the transom and has a mainsheet traveller mounted on a bridgedeck that runs athwartships at the cabin bulkhead. There is plenty of room for a full crew and we proved this by having five adults aboard without anyone complaining that he was cramped.

An outboard well is fitted at the after end and has an easily-fitted plate to seal it off when not in use. It is of a shape that allows the motor to be tilted up and lie inside out of the way without having to remove it from its mounting.



The decks were extremely solid and with an aggregate 30 stone on the foredeck, there was no tendency to spring. This was due to a sandwich construction incorporating a balsa core on all bearing areas.

The non slip treatment was as good as you would expect in glass and this, together with wide sidedecks and two wire safety rails, made going forward safe and easy.

The foredeck is uncluttered with cleat

mounted aft of an anchor hatch. This well holds a 13S anchor and the necessary line for inland cruising. A strong hatch cover means the forecabin is not deprived of space.

The rig is simple — a little too simple for my liking. The mast is tapered for the top section and is held up by 3/4 forestay and swept back lowers.

Ron Smith of Arani Marine, who is marketing the yacht in N.S.W. was inclined to agree that there could well be a backstay which can be easily rigged, for

peace of mind when carrying spinnaker in heavy weather.

Below, the Bonito is really something. It would have to be one of the best laid out yachts of its size available.

I was pleased to see that no attempt had been made to put bunks forward. Instead, there is a bulkhead with louvre door opening to a very spacious area for toilet and sail stowage. A further open bulkhead gives into an area for stowage of lines and smaller gear that is so often lost under piles of sailbags.

The proportion and layout of the main cabin reflect the amount of thought that must have been put into it.

It hasn't got a luxury finish spelled with a capital but some of the fittings give that impression.

The dining table is set between two bunks amidships and has drop sides to

leave full access forward on the starboard side, and on port to make way for optional insert bunk cushions which form a $\frac{3}{4}$ width bunk on the port side.

The centreboard case is built beneath and is well out of the way. In fact, it would make a good foot rest when heeled.

There are two full length quarter berths and they are separated from the other two bunks by a chest of drawers to starboard and the galley to port.

The chest of drawers has four drawers and they are slotted to keep them in place. The galley has a platform with a stainless steel 2-burner spirit stove in place and there is a sink and draining board with water supplied via a pump from a tank beneath.

A wide step at the entrance forms the

companionway, and has a lift top that gives access to a huge storage area that runs aft, under the cockpit.

Storage is good throughout with bins under all bunks and a wide tray that runs the full length of both forward bunks. These trays are upholstered to serve as comfortable backrests.

An attractive vinyl floor covering is easy to clean and has a first class non slip surface.

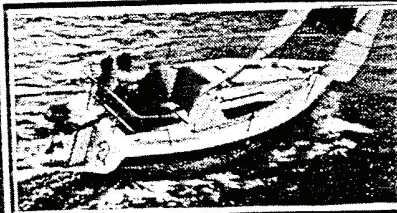
Wiring is built into the fibreglass and leads aft to a battery storage area. Light comes from four big windows, two either side and a hatch leads into the forward compartment from on deck.

The centreboard is controlled by a line near the cabin entrance and is surprisingly light. The board itself is aerofoil in shape and is hollow. Ballast is right at

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the bottom and is just sufficient to counter the buoyancy.

All the ballast needed to make this boat fully self righting is in lead which is fitted to the full length of the shallow keel.

The wind was light and variable, rising only to about 10 knots but it was enough to be able to gauge the boat's performance.

She sailed extremely well with the lightest of tillers. There was just the right amount of weather for safety.

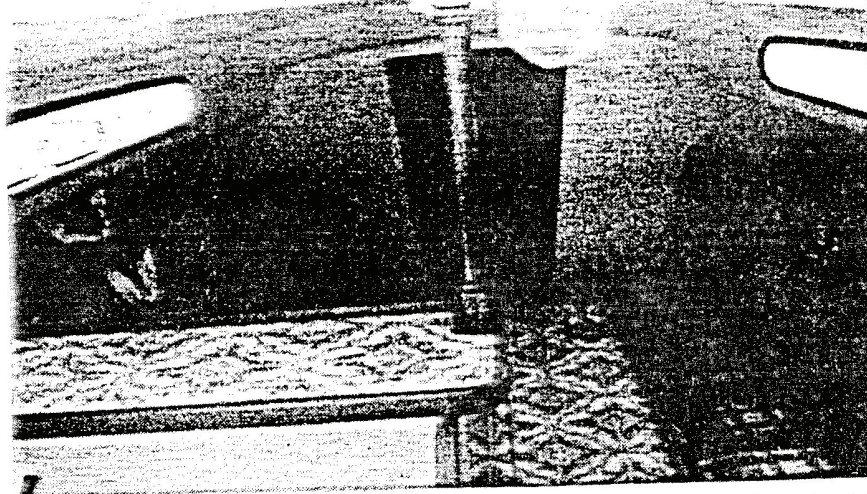
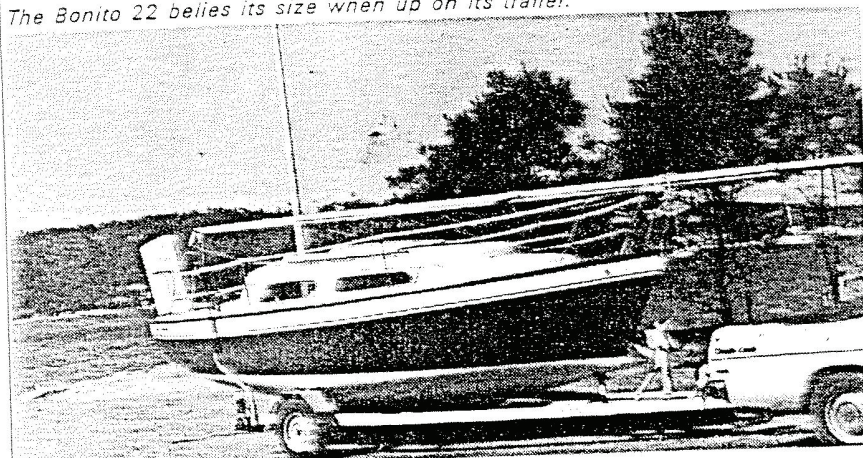
She heeled fairly quickly to her best sailing angle and firmed up very definitely. I would judge her to be a very good heavy weather performer and she proved herself to be surprisingly good in the light stuff.

Bearing out our impressions of Bonito's sailing ability Smith mentioned that she has already opened the eyes of owners of some competitive craft in the current NSW Trailable Yacht Association's race series in which at last advice Smith's boat was running outright second on handicap to a Sonata 8.

We had a little trouble with the sails. They were new and needed stretching. A little bit of fiddling here and there and we got off on our way. She was easy to put about, gybed like a lady and glided down wind with surprising speed.

With the main sheeted on hard, there was enough tension on the forestay even though there was no backstay. With the efficient little traveller, you would always have this sheet on pretty tight on the wind.

The Bonito 22 belies its size when up on its trailer.



The thoughtfully designed interior of the Bonito.

All told, I would consider the Bonito to be one of the best family trailer sailers that I have sailed.

SPECIFICATIONS

Designer... Clive Jeffries, NZ.
LOA 21'10"
Beam 8'
Draft 1'6" centreboard up
..... 5' centreboard down
Sail area:
Main 140sq.ft.
Genoa 135sq.ft.
Working Jib 90sq.ft.
Weight..... 2200lb
Ballast 730lb

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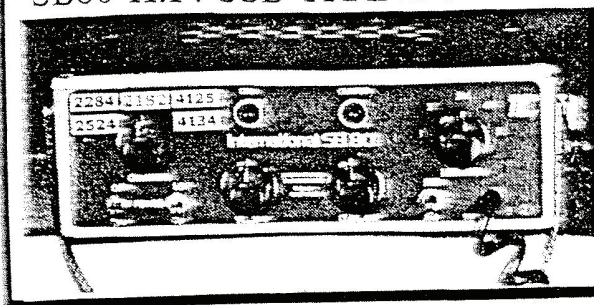
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SPECIFICATIONS

Design: Clive Jeffries

Builder: Bonito

Craft Ltd. (N.Z.)

Construction: Hull solid G.R.P. Deck & Cabin G.R.P. & Balsa

core L.O.A.: 6.66m (21'10") L.W.L.: 5.89m (19'4") Beam: 2.44m

(8'0") Draught: 1.458m - 1.52m (1'6" - 5'0") Displacement incl. Ballast:

998kg (2200 lb) Ballast: 331kg (730lb) **SAILS** Main: 13.2m sq. (140

sq.ft.) Genoa: 12.5m sq. (135 sq.ft.) Working jib: 8.4m sq. (90 sq.ft.)

Storm Jib: 4.2m sq. (45 sq.ft.) Spinnaker: 37.16m sq. (400 sq.ft.)

OTHER: Height on trailer (13" wheels) 2.4m (7'11") Centreboard

and rudder. Hydrofoil in G.R.P. **STANDARD EQUIPMENT INCLUDES:** 3

tone coloured hull and deck. Galley unit with sink top, pump & tank. 3 drawer cabinet with chart table. Forward compartment for head/wet gear/sail locker/motor/etc. 2 cockpit lockers. Self draining anchor locker with lid. Fixed hinged table. Full bunk cushions and backrests. Navigation lights. 3 interior lights.

Built-in outboard well. **MAST & RIGGING:** 3/4

tapered aluminum mast. Spinnaker mast gear

fitted (no pole). Mast support. 2 winches used

as snubbing blocks. Stainless steel rigging

and screws. Jiffy reefing. **SAILS:** Main. No. 2

Genoa. **OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT:**

Pushpit-pullpit stanchions & lifelines, fitted

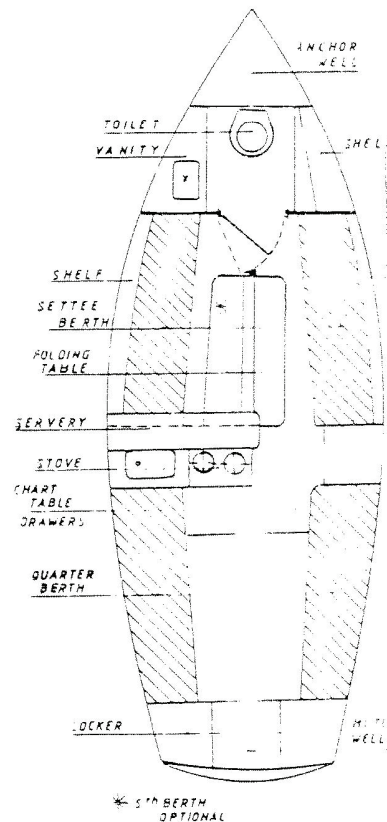
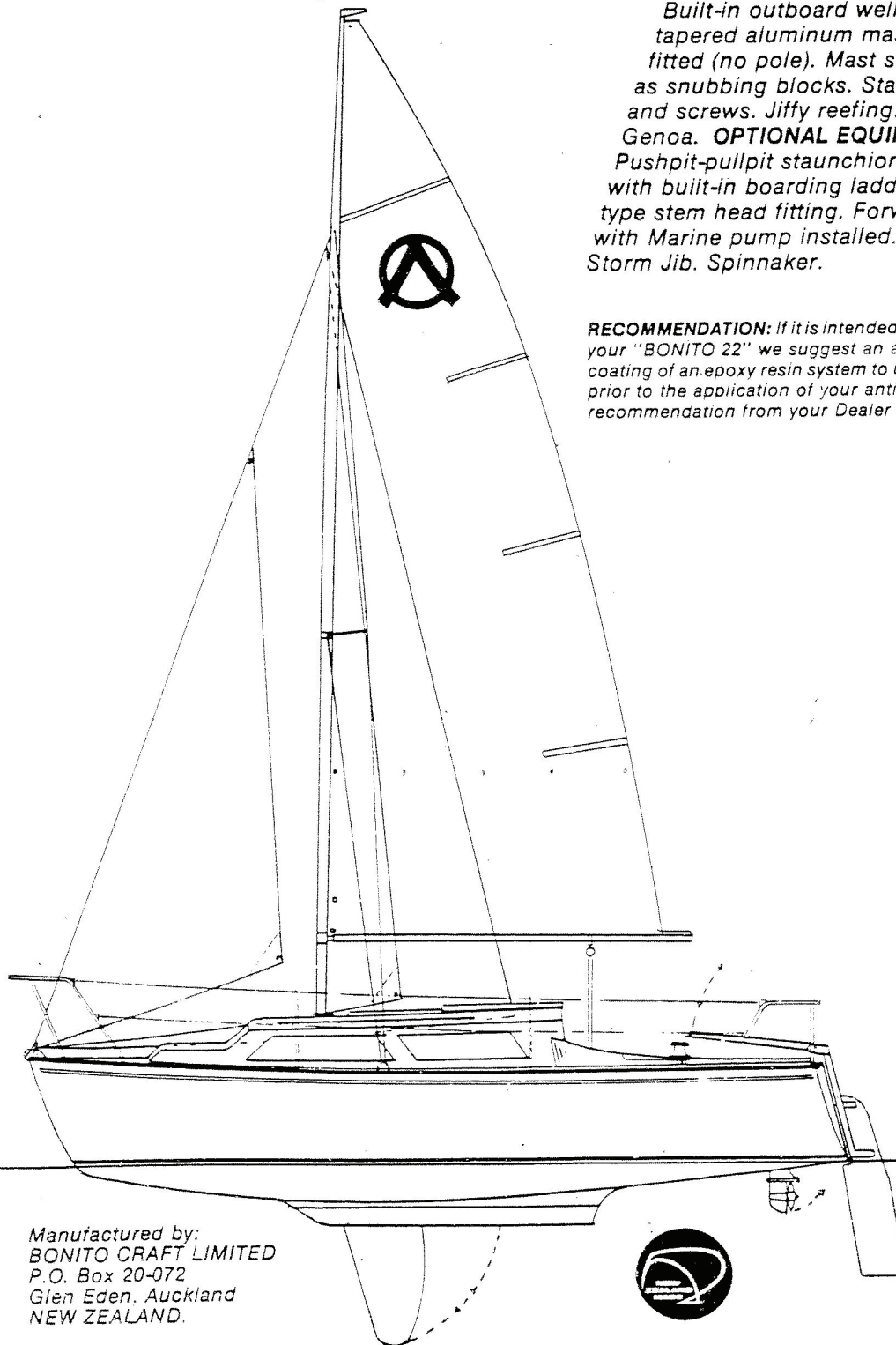
with built-in boarding ladder. 5th berth. Roller

type stem head fitting. Forward vanity unit

with Marine pump installed. No. 1 Genoa.

Storm Jib. Spinnaker.

RECOMMENDATION: If it is intended to permanently moor your "BONITO 22" we suggest an additional surface coating of an epoxy resin system to underwater hull areas, prior to the application of your antifouling. A recommendation from your Dealer should be obtained.



Manufactured by:
BONITO CRAFT LIMITED
P.O. Box 20-072
Glen Eden, Auckland
NEW ZEALAND.