

# New cruising tune for Sonata 8

One of the more successful performance TSs in its day, the Sonata 8 metre looks set to have a revival. With a new deck and rig it is now more appealing to the family-cruising market. Vanessa Dudley reports.

**T**he Sonata 26 promoted at last year's boat shows is a modified version of the Sonata 8, a yacht which proved popular and successful in both fixed keel and centreboard configuration following its introduction in the late 1970s. Designed by respected American naval architect Gary Mull, the 8 was introduced as the largest boat in Sonata Yachts' range, and was marketed towards buyers primarily interested in racing, but who also wanted a boat that could be used for family

weekending or cruising.

When the Nowra-based Sonata Yachts failed a couple of years ago, new Sonatas were no longer available; nonetheless many of the existing 8s retained their racing edge and the boat's secondhand market value has remained quite strong.

Now Investigator Yachts in Newcastle, NSW, has the Sonata moulds and is building them alongside the Investigator trailer sailer range. The Sonatas being produced are the 6.3, 6.7, 7, 8

and the new 26.

Investigator builds all the hull, deck and interior fibreglass mouldings of the Sonatas, while various levels of assembly are completed by the Sonata agents: Shoreline Yachts in Sydney (for NSW and Queensland buyers); Pacific Sailboat Centre for Newcastle NSW; Sundance Marine in Melbourne for the Victorian market and Mau Mau Marine in Goolwa for South Australia.

While the new Sonata 26 shares the same hull moulding as the 8, changes



Pop top features a snap-on soft canopy which allows top to be left raised at night.









Large galley unit with stove, sink and generous locker space is a Sonata 26 feature.

have been made to the deck mould, the interior plan and the rig in a bid to attract buyers interested in more cruising comfort than the 8 has to offer. Jim Voysey, previously the principal of Sonata Yachts and now of Shoreline Yachts, felt the time was right for this shift in emphasis, because he believes the market for race-oriented boats in this size range is now well catered for, and it's the cruising oriented buyers who are looking for something new in a less saturated market.

The cabin top has been widened and lengthened, reducing the day sailing appeal of the boat by taking away some sidedeck and cockpit space, but increasing interior space. The open interior plan of the 8 has been revamped with the addition of a full bulkhead to port, across to the centreboard case, giving some privacy to the forward vee berth (for one adult or a couple of kids) and the head tucked in to port behind the bulkhead and centreboard case.

Instead of having two small galley mouldings either side of the centreboard case, followed by two single bunks each side running down into the quarters, galley and storage area has been increased and made more accessible by putting it along the starboard side of the saloon, previously bunk area. The two quarter berths remain, with storage space between them behind the companionway ladder, and the port saloon berth doubles as settee with comfortable padded backrest and removable timber table.

The pop top gives 1.9 m headroom over the saloon when up, 1.7 m when down, and a canvas and perspex cover is easy to fit over the top. A large hatch over the forward vee berth also allows ventilation and access

to the foredeck.

Up on deck, the boat is still well set up for sailing with rig control lines led back to clutches and winches either side of the companionway, an uncluttered cockpit and open transom. The standard rig for the 26 is an untapered mast with backstay but no runners; the 8's tapered spar with running backstays can be added on request if rig tuning is a priority.

Sails are by the Lidgard Sydney loft with about 4 m<sup>2</sup> extra area in the mainsail. This should give a performance lift especially when using the standard No 2 jib rather than the optional No 1 genoa, which cruising sailors may decide to leave to racers.

While the boat could be expected to be heavier with a more complex interior and larger cabin top, this is offset by using a lighter construction layout: Divinycell/Firet core material is used in place of plywood core in the deck, while the hull is still a GRP laminate of chopped strand mat and woven rovings, but with a balsa core backbone. While Sonatas gained a reputation for turning out heavier than specified, and in this they are by no means alone, in the trailable yacht category especially, the claimed displacement of the 26 is some 80 kg less than that of the 8s previously built by Sonata Yachts. So the 26 should retain the nippy performance of the 8.

During our short sail of the 26 the feeling was in fact just the same as that of the 8: the boat sailed like a big dinghy — which means fun — and while it was quick to heel, the ballast then took over, giving a feeling of stability. The lightness of the helm and easy turn of speed appeals to grown-up dinghy sailors in particular.  $\Delta$

## Specifications

LOA .....	8 m
LWL .....	6.02 m
Beam .....	2.5 m
Draft:	
Fixed keel .....	1.6 m
c/board up .....	21 cm
c/board down .....	1.55
Displacement .....	1280 kg
Ballast .....	453 kg
Mast height .....	9.45 m
Sail area:	
Mainsail .....	16.75 m <sup>2</sup>
Jib .....	11.17 m <sup>2</sup>
No. 1 genoa .....	17.69 m <sup>2</sup>
Spinnaker .....	40.96 m <sup>2</sup>

Prices (ex-Sydney, November '84)

### Basic Assembly:

Hull with furniture and anchor well bonded in and deck bonded on; centreboard/keel fitted; windows cut out; cockpit drains fitted; hatches, rudder, rudder blade fitted .....\$10,480

### Sailaway:

As above with windows, hatches, gunwales, stern fitting and chainplates fitted; pop top fitted, halyard winch, two sheet winches and cleats fitted, mast and boom with standing and running rigging, adjustable backstay, boom vang, mainsheet traveller and car, mainsail, jib and sheets .....\$17,250

### Cruise Package:

As above with interior carpets, teak trim; galley unit with sink, pump, water tank, two-burner stove, plate and cutlery racks; separate toilet compartment with Porta Potti toilet; bunk cushions; pulpit, stanchions and lifelines; navigation and interior lights with switches and fuses; bilge pump, fire extinguisher, outboard bracket .....\$22,467

### Optional extras include:

Spinnaker .....	\$753
Spinnaker pole and gear .....	\$268
No 1 genoa .....	\$665
Storm jib .....	\$196
Pump out toilet .....	\$365
Tapered mast .....	\$240
Twin spreader rig with running backstay package .....	\$395
Anchor, chain and line .....	\$95
Trailer with brakes .....	\$2590
Extra for power winch .....	\$545
Outboard well .....	\$285
Extra for lead antimony keel .....	\$512

Builder: Investigator Yachts Pty Ltd, Lot 11, Macquarie Road, Cardiff 2285.

Test boat supplied by: Shoreline Yachts (NSW agent), PO Box 169, Newport Beach 2106.