



Family Fun Sailer

YACHT REVIEW: CATALINA 250

The first Catalina 250 to arrive in Australia was launched shortly before the Sydney Boat Show in late July.

Trailer Sailers are a different breed, so I'm told, but to see a yacht of this size put together in just over an hour, is truly amazing.

We trailed the 250 from the parking area at Middle Harbour Yacht Club, to the Roseville bridge ramp, just up the harbour from Sydney's Spit Bridge.

The trailer is large and very solid, coming as part of the deal, although I wondered whether it was necessary to have a low vee cut in the rear-most alloy support. Despite this the trailer did not scrape, even when coming down a steep embankment. However, a word of caution, this is a wide boat on the trailer, over eight foot, and close to the limit, so take care especially when turning. At just over a ton off the trailer, it can be towed by a medium sized sedan.

The mast has a lift pole to assist with fitting the rig and the deck hardware is packaged in the most user-friendly way possible. It is literally a case of opening the book and putting the 250 together! As well, once a crew is practised, it shouldn't take them longer than 40 min, even if only two people.

The 250 sells for \$50,000 including the trailer, according to Norm Ambrose of Catalina Yachts.

Watching her go into the water, it was easy to see why Catalina markets the 250 as the best of both worlds. She still looks like a big boat, but has all the advantages of a trailerable.

Once she is in the water, a seacock situated under the last step of the companionway is opened and up to 500kg of water ballast flows into the hull. Remember to open the air pressure valve in the anchor locker forward! Once the air stops rushing out, you are safe to lower the centreboard which comes down to a satisfactory depth of 1.75m. The centreboard control line is situated under the main sheet block in the centre of the cockpit. It can be operated manually as it is pulley-assisted and cleats off cleanly.

It was interesting to see another example, with water ballast, of how racing technology has benefitted cruisers.

There is easy access through the transom to the cockpit and the cockpit ladder is particularly useful when on the hard.

The cockpit is a typically large Catalina one, this is a big boat for a 25ft trailerable.

The tiller has a lovely Honduras mahogany finish, while another striking feature about the cockpit is that the saloon table can also be mounted here, when required.

As well, the companionway hatch has a strong opening bracket and is very long and wide.

There are storage shelves on both sides of the cockpit and two large lockers under the port and starboard seats. A whale gusher pump is situated aft to port while the depth and speed instrumentation is located on the starboard side of the coachroof facing the cockpit.

A conspicuous feature of the cockpit is the outboard fuel box, located in the aft centre of the cockpit.

Up front, there is an anchor locker, forward hatch and two

tracks running along the forward part of the coachroof.

This rig is as simple as possible, especially compared with the performance type of trailer sailer tested elsewhere in this issue. The comparatively short, high set boom is well clear of the cockpit and presents little danger to crew.

The headsail is easily controlled by a forward furler from the cockpit and two Lewmar 6s, situated on either side of the aft coachroof top, are more than adequate.

Below decks, the 250 continues to show her 'big boat' feel.

A forward (open) vee berth sleeps two and the main saloon table is situated underneath. The saloon has a smaller coffee table which was fitted when I arrived, a useful additional feature when more space is required below.

When not in sleeping mode, the saloon can be arranged quite smartly for entertaining and seats six comfortably.

The interior is well lit with two spotlights and four large white lights. The heads to port has a generous hanging locker and trusty Porta Potti. There is only cold water.

The galley opposite has a one gas hotplate, double drawers, cool box, sink and storage underneath.

We were able to sail off from the ramp at Roseville, en route to the Spit Bridge, without any problems despite the fluky airs.

It must be said that one of the attractions of the 250 is that it is easy to sail. By contrast to the performance trailer sailers, the 250 is kept as simple and comfortable as possible.

Hence there is always good visibility forward and an absolute minimum of deck clutter and lines to get in the way. In some ways it takes the stress out of sailing. Significantly, it can easily be sailed by two or even single-handed. Ambrose and I certainly had no problems sailing her back to the Spit and experienced a variety of wind conditions en route.

The helmsman can look after the mainsheet leaving the crew to handle the headsail.

She responded well and it was fun to be using a tiller again, in some ways making sailing that much more instinctive, enabling one to feel the movement of the wind on the vessel.

We tacked, jibed, ran and reached with considerable ease, a tribute to the vessel which neither of us had sailed before.

After its release at the Miami Boat Show, 250 of these craft were sold in the first year! It offers many improvements over its predecessor, for one thing it is half the weight.

In conclusion, the Catalina 250 is the ideal yacht for those interested in getting into yachting, in fact a keelboat version is available should that be preferred. Its simplicity, safety and trailerable qualities make it perfect for family sailing as well, while older sailors will enjoy its short-handed capabilities.

- Stephen Hurworth.



Specifications:

Length	7.62m
Waterline Length	6.48m
Beam	2.59m
Sail Area (100%)	
fore triangle	24.9msq
Displacement (dry)	1,090kg
Draft, board up	0.51m
Draft, board down	1.75m