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SHIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Dancer is light enough for Fred, nimble enough
for Ginger and value enough to make you flog
your patent-leather pumps. Story and pics,
Barry Tranter.

TOWARDS the end of 1976, SEA-CRAFT tested a fully-imported powerboat made in New Zealand. Its quality and value were such that we were strongly impressed by the possibility that the Kiwis, if so inclined, could give the Aussie market a bit of a nudge.

Dancer isn't an import, but she's Kiwi-inspired. New Zealander Barry McMurray did a few sums and decided he could afford to build the 5.85-metre (19 ft 2 in) trailer sailer here and make the boat financially viable. Quality, he reasoned, was the critical factor. At the 1976 Sydney Boat Show Barry was told flatly by experienced yacht builders that he couldn't produce Dancer at the quoted price (a little under \$7000 at the time of writing). He did, and is still doing so.

The first thing you notice about Dancer is the quality of mouldings and



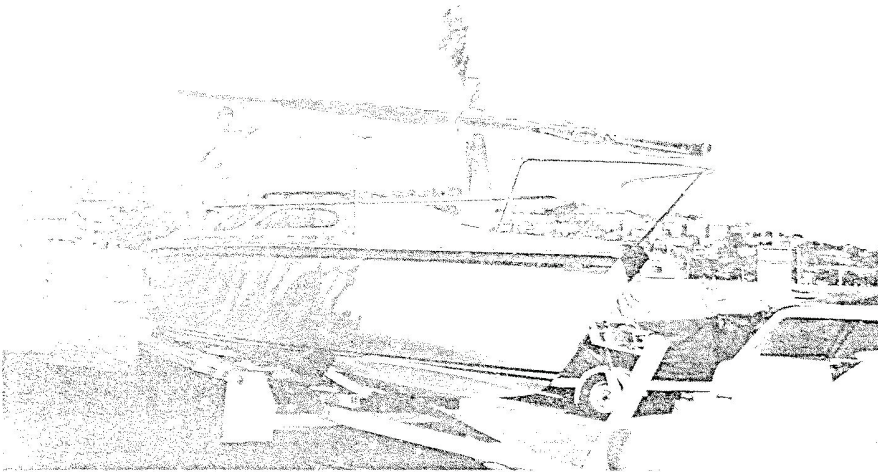


Dancer's builder Barry McMurray shows ample cockpit size, fine woodwork quality.

trim. The glass has a sheen and the gelcoat colors richness and depth we have seen only in other New Zealand craft. The plan drawing shows the long, fine entry, with lots of beam well aft and a wide, deep transom. The keel lifts by a mechanical contrivance operated by a screw thread; no winches, webbing or cable. Displacement is 860 kg (1895 lb), of which 225 kg (495 lb) is lead ballast, encased in the fabricated steel keel. There's no ballast inside the hull. Rudder is a wood dagger blade type in a fabricated alloy stock. The main is 7.8 m² (84 sq ft) genoa 13.6 m² (146 sq ft) and no. 1 jib 9.3 m² (100 sq ft).

Demo excursions vary in efficiency and friendliness. A lot of builders are put out at having to demonstrate their boats at all, and don't hesitate to let us know. A very, very few, like Barry and Elizabeth McMurray, arrive a few minutes early with a fully-prepared boat, launch it efficiently and get the test under way. And bring along the snacks and beer. We work quite hard, you see, and have trouble convincing the reading public that we don't test boats for a living, all day every day and that we actually appreciate a short, easily-handled test. Thank you, Mr and Mrs McMurray.





... as things gusting up a bit, she needed a bit of twist in the main.

For single-handing, Dancer couldn't be faulted; the cockpit's huge, the main traveller runs across the bridgedeck at the forward end of the cockpit (also the position of the keel winder). The cockpit is a mass of lockers (one of them an icebox) including a small hatch just in front of the traveller to take winch handles.

Below decks (look at the drawing) there's stowage everywhere, berths for four, an ingenious table arrangement; in fact everything we've come to expect needs 23 ft to accommodate.

As well we all know (or I hope as all we all do) you can add a couple of thousand to a basic price before you're happy. Dancer's single-axle Manta trailer is \$880, or \$1150 with two axles. The beautiful hot-dipped aluminium one Barry McMurray offers is \$1600. Add pulpits, lifelines, motor, bracket etc and you're well on the way. But the sail-away yacht, complete with deck winches, interior trim, water tank, tables, gas stove all rigging and two sails, was priced at \$6950 at the time we tested it. That's bargain basement stuff mate, these days.

Keel is controlled by mechanical arm system operated by this handle, eliminating hydraulic and winch/line problems.

Mast is no problem for two people to step, rig consisting of forestay, main shrouds and lowers.

Annoyances? The dagger rudder rattled in its stock (a bit of felt will fix it); I felt the wide transom dragged a bit, so she'd probably respond to fore and aft trim. As to performance, as usual it's impossible to judge unless other trailer sailers can be found to judge against. She seemed, however, to be up to par for a 19-footer and, let's face it, she's so far ahead on other points I don't think it matters anyway.

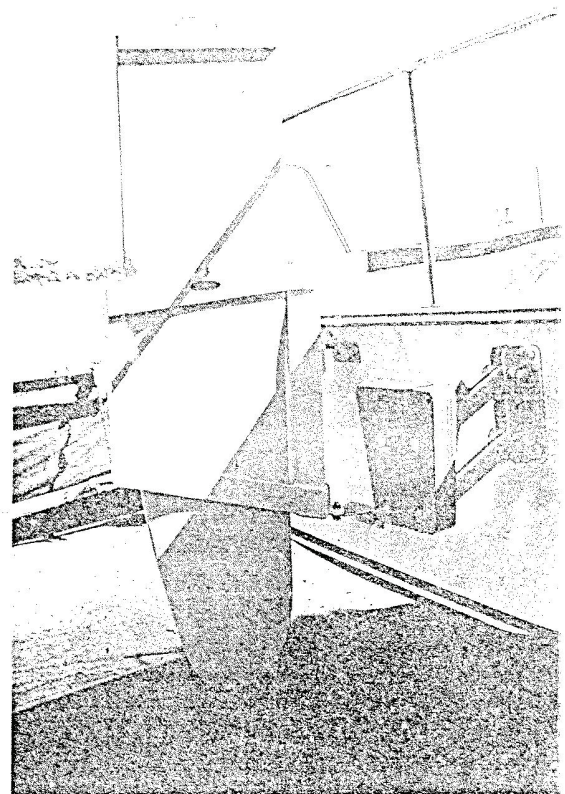
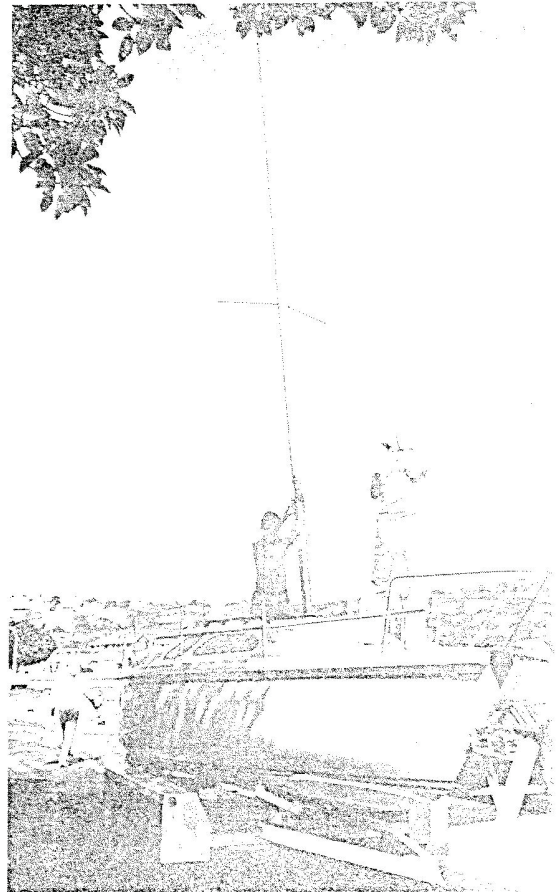
DANCER

Distributor: B.S. & B.E. McMurray, PO Box 69, Dural, NSW 2158. Phone 652 1312.

LOA	.....	5.85 m (19'2")
LWL	.....	5.05 m (16'6")
Beam	.....	2.35 m (7'7 1/2")
BWL	.....	2.0 m (6'6")
Displacement	.....	860 kg (1895 lb)
Ballast	.....	225 kg (495 lb)
Sail area	.....	21.4 m ² (230 sq ft)
Main	.....	7.8 m ² (84 sq ft)
Genoa	.....	13.6 m ² (146 sq ft)
No. 1 jib	.....	9.3 m ² (100 sq ft)
Storm jib	.....	5.1 m ² (55 sq ft)
Spinnaker	.....	31.6 m ² (340 sq ft)
Mast height	.....	7.5 m (24'6")

PRICE: Sailaway yacht (see text)

\$10500 -00



Rudder is dagger blade in alloy stock, easy to operate but rattling on test boat. Outboard bracket is easy enough to reach with a little practice.

