

FARR B 30

One of the most important factors was the B 30's versatility. The fact that it is trailerable means that a trip from, say, Sydney to Mackay is a matter of three or four days *driving* rather than three or four weeks hard *sailing*. It also means that the yacht is set-up for quick unstepping and stepping of the mast, which will come in very handy later as we test different fittings and suchlike. And, not least, is the fact that the B 30 can easily be taken home to a house or workshop for maintenance or to be set-up for gear testing. And most of the **AB** editorial staff are firmly committed to the idea of shoal draft cruising yachts.

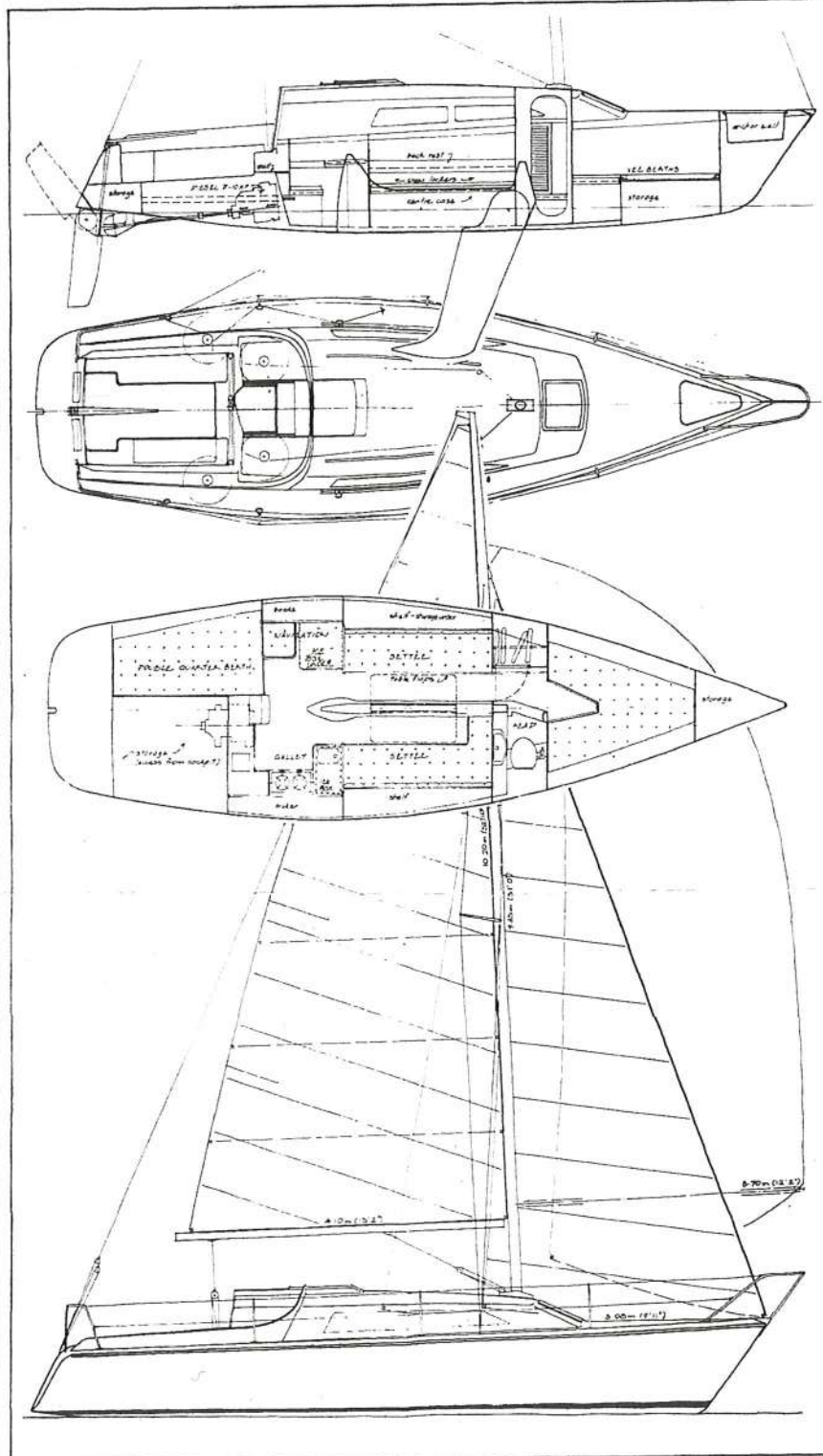
The size is also a factor. The 9 m length is close to the length of the 'average' yacht. The B 30 can take on the roles of a typical medium sized 'club' cruiser/racer; a modern lightweight offshore racer and JOGGIE; a trailerable yacht; and a cruising yacht.

The current plan is for *Grey Lady* to be trailed north for a varied programme of cruises around the 'Reef'. 'Round springtime, the boat will return to Sydney to be fitted with a set of racing sails in place of the roller furling gear. It will compete in a number of the major races this season, especially offshore. The very high IOR rating means that we have little hope of success on corrected time; instead we will concentrate on trying to best all the modern hot half-tonners and bigger boats over the line. On form, the boat should do that quite often, if well sailed. And, if we get hard running conditions, an occasionally decent corrected time result should be possible.

Design

The B 30 is the work of New Zealand designer Bruce Farr. The former dinghy and skiff designer was the first designer to draw lightweight yachts that were really successful offshore, and he's kept to that dinghy-like style in the B 30. The boat is 9.39 m long overall and has a waterline length of 7.92 m. The maximum width of 2.89 m is well aft. The bow is fine, with slightly hollow waterlines to help the light boat through a slop. The stern is wide, powerful and flat, to give the boat the fast running and reaching that is characteristic of Farr's boats. The underwater lines are very flat but unlike Farr's earlier boats and IOR racers, the lines are rounded, not angular. Overall it's a very smooth, undistorted and fast looking hull.

The displacement is 1996 kg. A ballast weight of 900 kg gives a ballast ratio of 45 per cent, but the bare figures don't tell the true story. All of the ballast is in



the lower metre of the 1.8 m deep keel, and most of it is in a streamlined bulb at the tip. Putting the lead a full 1.8 m below the waterline obviously increases the ballast's leverage and makes the boat a lot stiffer than the ratio would indicate. The boat easily passes the offshore self-righting test. Until last year, bulb keels had not been common on offshore boats, but a change in the rating rules, and some new ideas on keel design has seen Farr put bulbs on some of his recent

racing yachts with apparent success.

The lifting keel version is equipped with a hydraulic ram that lifts the keel in 30 seconds, or drops it in 10. The ram draws only six amps per lift, so there is little chance of accidentally flattening the battery. With the keel up the boat draws only 39 cm.

The perennial problem with lift keelers and centreboarders is the way the centreboard case protrudes into the accommodation. The Farr's keel swings

Counterpoint

by Ian Robottom

All boats are compromises, they say, but yachts like the Farr B 30 take the ideas of compromise and flexibility further than most. Built to a Bruce Farr design they are 9.4 m long, reasonably fast, roomy, and trailable. We have exploited this flexibility by racing our own Farr B 30 *Johanna* every Saturday with Royal Geelong Yacht Club, and trailing it to cruising grounds in the Gippsland Lakes in Victoria and Hervey Bay in Queensland. (See AB December 1982 — Ed).

The suitability of the Farr B 30 as a family cruising yacht has been commented on before — for example, by Mike Davidson in *Australian Boating*, May, 1983. However, the builder of the Farr B 30, David Binks of Adelaide, claims further capability for it, advertising the craft as 'the ocean going yacht which is trailable'. After sailing the boat extensively for four years, we decided it was time to test its 'ocean-going', characteristics by entering the 1985 Melbourne to Devonport Race.

This race offered a very strong safety and support structure for participating yachts, with regular radio skeds and the prospect of sailing in close company for most of the trip. We already had the boat to Category 3 in safety gear, and we were able to borrow a life raft and HF radio from other club members. The Melbourne to Devonport Race starts at Portsea, and is about 200 nautical miles in length. We sailed with a crew of six, including my 70 year old father (and co-owner) who was making his first ocean passage.

The 90 entrants started at 1500 hours on Friday December 27, and after a three mile reach to the Heads, encountered a fairly lumpy rip. Once again the rip claimed some victims — though not from the race fleet. A spectator yacht from Geelong was dismantled, and another craft was badly damaged as it rolled off a large wave. *Johanna* negotiated the Heads comfortably enough (though we had to tack in the middle of the rip) and set off on her 200 mile passage to Devonport.

The first 50 miles of the race was close-hauled or a very close reach, then the breeze gradually freed. We took the chance that this pattern would continue and attempted to sail the rhumb line. The wind strength varied from 15 to 30 knots for much of the trip, building to 40 knots in squalls near the north coast of Tasmania.

During the night we saw the Tasmanian Government Tourist Authority's Bass Strait ferry, the *Abel Tasman*, brightly lit and ploughing along the rhumb line. It made us realise how small our own craft was to be tackling the Bass Strait crossing.

One of the highlights of the trip was a six hour spinnaker run from six o'clock on Saturday morning. With two reefs in the main and a $\frac{3}{4}$ oz spinnaker in a 25 knot westerly we really took off, on many occasions surfing down waves at 15 knots or more. Over this six hour period we averaged 10 knots, and the B 30 showed remarkable stability, no doubt helped by its broad stern sections.

Another highlight was the sighting of an oil rig on the rhumb line about 50 miles from Devonport — an oil rig that was not cited on our recently acquired charts! Some of the crew immediately started to doubt the expertise of our navigator Paul Drewry, thinking that the presence of the oil rig proved we were so far off course that we were among the Bass Strait oilfields off Sale! On the return trip home three days later, we called up the oil rig on VHF: he promptly responded to the call of "oil rig, oil rig, oil rig — this is *Johanna, Johanna, Johanna*," and informed us of his co-ordinates and of the existence of several unlit hazards in the form of mooring piles nearby. His reply of "*Johanna, Johanna, Johanna*, this is *Oil Rig, Oil Rig*" brought smiles to our faces.

When we crossed the finish line at the mouth of the Mersey River at Devonport at 7 pm on Saturday, we were the 30th yacht to finish, our elapsed time was 28 hours, and our final handicap position was 14th. We completed the race in less time than last year's line honours' winner *Cut Loose*, and our average speed for the 200 nautical mile trip was seven knots. We covered only 10 nautical miles more than the rhumb line distance, thus vindicating our navigator!

The Farr B 30 is designed and advertised as a fast cruiser that is capable of being trailed. It is not an ocean racer, though the builder's advertising blurb describes it as 'ocean-going'. In our experience gained in the Melbourne to Devonport race, we found that care needs to be exercised when offshore. We found that while its buoyancy and broad stern sections endowed the boat with a 'dry' ride and sense of security in offshore conditions, the boat was not happy in a hard beat to windward. The boat tended to be thrown off line and out of its groove if we tried to really point high, and there was a disconcerting shudder through the boat when we pressed too hard. On the other hand, as

soon as the wind freed a little, and especially when the boat was on a broad reach, the boat's action became comfortable, stable and quite quick. Of course, these may be characteristics of most light displacement craft of the Farr breed.

An indication of the obvious fact that the Farr B 30 is designed more as a bay racer and trailable family cruiser than ocean racer can be gained from the sails used during the race. In the 15 knot southerly blowing at the start of the race, we used full main and No. 3 headsail — we should probably have carried a larger headsail, but the prospect of the Heads daunted us a little and we were being conservative. Once outside the Heads, we settled down to the close-hauled course to Devonport, but found after about half an hour that the breeze freshened a bit, causing us to tuck in a reef. At this stage we were able to manage the full main, but only with constant valving off of the mainsheet. In fact, after reefing, we found we were able to settle into a groove with ease, and soon passed an S&S 34 that had previously been able to hold us off. Later again, as the wind freshened further to between 20 and 25 knots, we took in another reef. We sailed most of the distance with one or two reefs and a No. 3 headsail or spinnaker — under this rig, the boat was easy to manage and seemed fast enough. As we approached the north coast of Tasmania, some sharp squalls were encountered which required further reduction of sail to three reefs and a No. 4 headsail, a combination that had not previously been needed in four years of sailing on Port Phillip Bay. So, in summary, the B 30 provided a safe and relatively fast ride to Tasmania, the seas posed little problem for the light, buoyant hull, but sail had to be taken off the boat pretty quickly as the breeze freshened. Boat speed remained good in the offshore conditions.

The obvious design compromises in a boat of this type (light displacement; low ballast ratio; swing keel) enable the craft to be trailed, and to be sailed with enjoyment in a range of settings — including bay racing, inland lakes cruising, and distant north east coast cruising. However the same design compromises did not prevent the B 30 from fulfilling the builder's claim that the boat is 'ocean-going'. In our view, the boat acquitted itself well offshore. And I wonder how many of the participating yachts in the Melbourne to Devonport Race will be spending the May school vacation at the Gippsland Lakes and the September holidays meandering mastless along the Murray River at Mildura?

up into a long case with a big 'boot', about .8 m high, at the tip that accommodates the ballast bulb. The 'boot' and centreboard case look a bit obtrusive, but actually you barely notice them.

About the only problem that the bulb creates is the odd shaped slot it leaves in the underside of the hull. The narrow (75 mm) keel needs only a narrow slot, one that creates negligible turbulence. But the opening for the bulb is about 30 cm by 20 cm, and under way,

the water tumbles around in the boot like a washing machine. The loss of speed isn't noticeable unless you are racing, but if you are the sort of sailor who likes to have the boat sailing at its peak even on a Sunday social jaunt, the water sloshing inside the boot can be annoying.

To streamline the water flow for racing, Binks provide a foam sandwich fairing piece that is manoeuvred under the boat and into the slot by floating ropes through the inspection ports in the

centre case. With the fairing piece in place the water flow is fine, but is something of a hassle to fit and if you run aground with the fairing piece in place, the keel can tilt back and damage it.

It seems strange to have a shoal draft yacht where running aground can cause damage. On his own boat, David Binks has the front section of the fairing piece hinging, so that the keel can be swung back some 30 degrees with the piece in place.

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If the fairing piece sounds like a hassle, then it is; but it's a hassle that only affects keen racing sailors who want *maximum* performance. Most sailors would prefer to sail without it in, accepting a negligible loss in performance for extra convenience.

The rudder sits behind a shallow skeg. On the lift keeler the rudder pivots up for trailing and shoal waters. The rudder gives good steerage even when fully up, but the rudder checks must cause a bit of turbulence, and the lock-down system (a small winch, operated by a standard winch handle) isn't easy to work and can lead to winch handles going for the long swim.

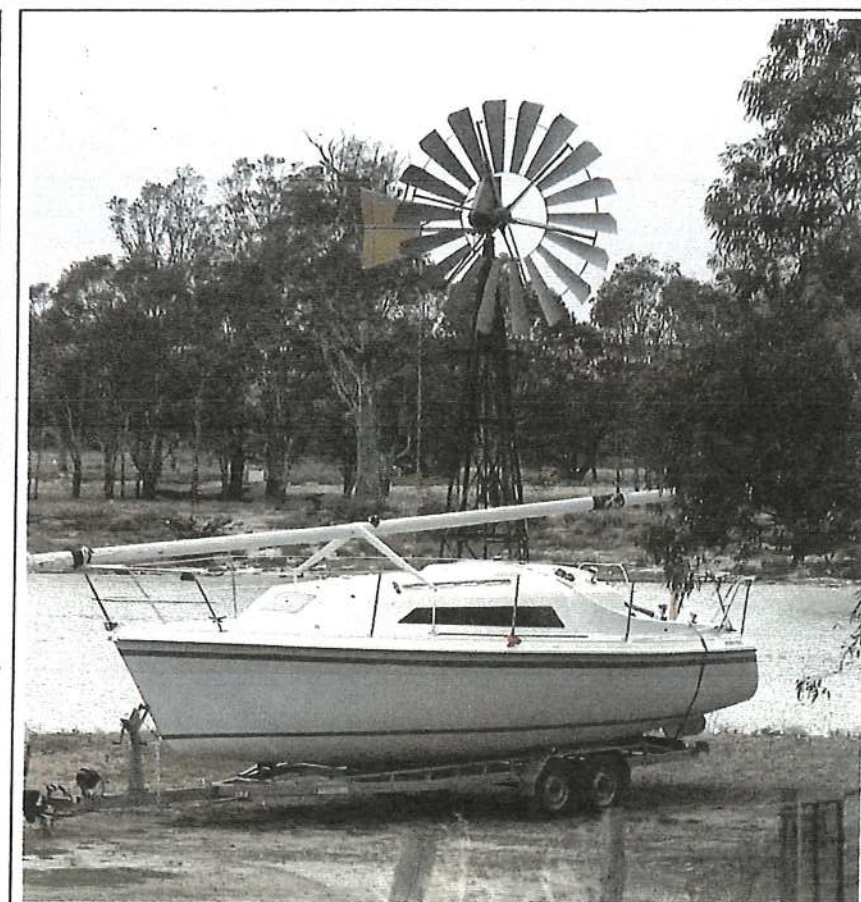
On the newer boats, there is a moulded-in step on the tip of the wide transom. It's only about 30 cm deep, but this small feature makes swimming or boarding much easier.

On Deck

In the bows of the Farr is a big anchor locker that can take a big anchor and rode. There is a bow roller, rather small but, adequate for the short range cruising most B 30s will do, and a large metal mooring cleat. Unlike most Farr designs, the B 30 doesn't have a low, wedge shaped coachroof. Instead there is a rather large superstructure, which gives a lot of headroom down below but inevitably makes the deck harder to run around and interferes with the helmsman's forward vision. But there is still enough room on the fore and side decks for comfort. The non-skid grip is good, and there are moulded toe-rails all around the boat.

All the halyards and sail control lines run back from their turning blocks in the specially cast mast tabernacle to a bank of jammers and a self-tailing Barlow 19 winch each side of the companionway.

The cockpit is simply laid out and very roomy. The traveller runs across the back of the small bridgedeck and two benches provide cockpit space for half a dozen people. The standard boat has a pair of two speed, self-tailing Barlow 20 winches on the coamings. There are small cave lockers in the coamings and inside the transom is room for a bilge pump, two life rings, and a pair of 5 kg gas bottles. BUT the main stowage compartment is revealed when you open the lid of the starboard seat. Apart from some room that is taken up by the motor, the whole of the starboard quarter and much of the area under the cockpit is available for stowing a full wardrobe of cruising sails, an inflatable dinghy, fenders, and all the other bulky



items you need on a cruise.

Unfortunately, the boat as supplied does not have a bulkhead to stop gear falling onto the motor, a rather odd oversight from a first class manufacturer. THERE is a large plastic horn cleat for mooring on each quarter.

The cockpit has large drains straight through the transom.

Unlike some lightweight yachts it's a deep, secure cockpit.

Sail Plan

Like most Farr boats, the B 30 carries a fractional sail plan, a three-quarter rig, which suits the boat well. The fractional rig means that jibs and spinnakers are relatively small and very easy to handle; the mainsail is big and powerful but easily flattened and depowered by mast bend, outhaul adjustment and sheet and traveller tension; and the low centre of effort helps to keep the boat on its feet upwind in heavy airs.

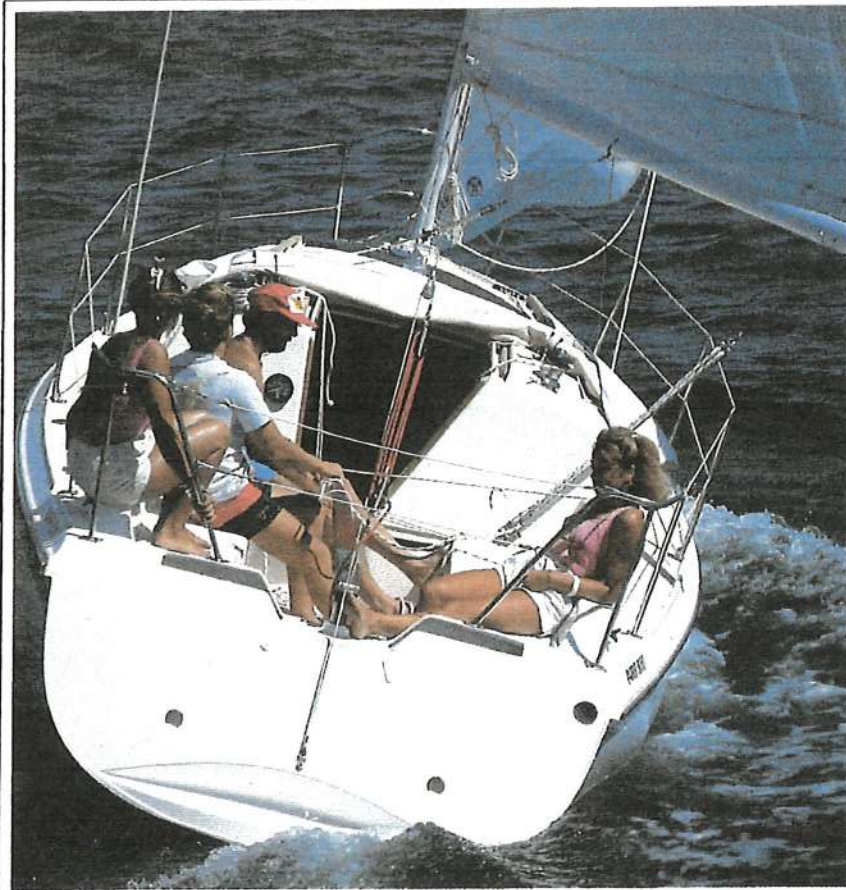
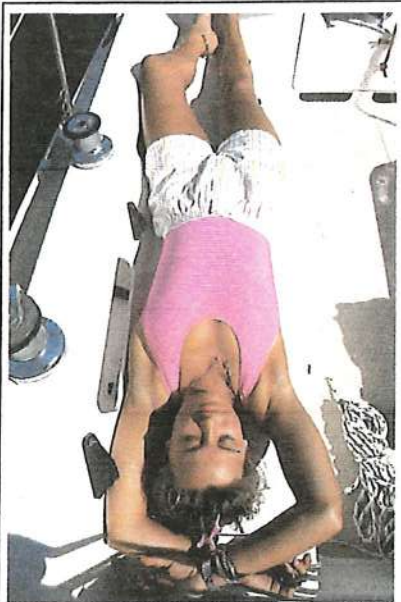
Swept back spreaders and shrouds allow that runners aren't needed; Binks doesn't recommend them even in boats that are to be keenly raced. Modern fractional rigs are getting a bad reputation for dropping over the side, but that reputation is earned by 'grand prix' rigs with multiple in-line spreaders and a needle-thin mast supported by twin runners. The B 30's style of simply rigged mast is slightly less efficient when

it comes to extracting the last .01 per cent of boat speed, but it is extremely reliable and easy to use.

The mast is supported by a forestay, swept back cap shrouds, swept back lower shrouds, and an adjustable backstay. The adjustable backstay is controlled by an 8:1 tackle, rather inconveniently located out of reach on the stay itself. The backstay is there mainly for fine tuning the mainsail shape and keeping the mast under check in strong winds — in light winds it is often left slack while the mast bends to the puffs, automatically freeing the mainsail leech and flattening the sail. It adds up to a very easy to use rig with only one problem — the spreaders stop the mainsail from being squared right off for running.

The mast is a hefty, well tapered Binks' spar reaching 12.95 m (42½') above the water. The standard sailaway yacht comes complete with a 4:1 vang, mainsail halyard, two reefing lines and two genoa halyards. The optional spinnaker kit, comprising the spinnaker and jockey poles, main and spinnaker pole, toppings lifts, pole downhaul, two Barlow 16 winches, secondary winches, and spinnaker sheets, costs \$1,570.

The B 30 carries a 22.48 m² (242 sq. ft) mainsail, a 23.96 m² (258 sq. ft) No. 1 genoa, and a big 79.8 m² (860 sq. ft.) No. 1 spinnaker. Although the mainsail



boom is long and overhangs the front of the cockpit it is high enough (around 1.9 m above the sole) to let the crew keep out of its way easily.

The traveller, from Ronstan, has easy to use control lines and is radiused so that mainsheet tension doesn't alter as the traveller is slid up or down. The mainsheet blocks the companionway when it is in the centre of the track but that is a small price to pay for having a clear cockpit and having the main sail controls, (effectively the B 30's accelerator) so close to hand.

Both the reefing lines exit from the end of the boom and lead through the leech cringles, down to the boom and through eyelets in the sail. It's not a good system, because it isn't possible to alter the lead of the reefing lines and they aren't all that well positioned for proper sail shape.

Under Power

The B 30 is powered by a 13.4 kW (18 hp) Volvo 2002 RV diesel. In the keel version a Saildrive is used, in the centreboard boat a Vee drive is used. In order to protect the propeller and shaft when the boat is in shallow water or on the trailer, the engine and shaft have been offset to starboard, allowing the rudder skeg to act as a prop guard. The offset prop and flat hull gives the boat a definite tendency to slew to starboard

when reversing, but manoeuvrability in forward gear is excellent as long as there is 30 cm or so of keel down to stop the boat from skidding sideways, rather than pivoting.

On flat water and light winds the Farr will reach about seven knots under power and cruise comfortably at around five knots. The 50 L (11 gal) fuel tank should give the boat a cruising range of about 200-225 nautical miles.

Access to the motor is through a removable panel at the rear of the cabin (clear access to the batteries and front of the motor) and through the cockpit locker (clear access to the right hand side, top and driveshaft). Access to the port side of the motor is poor.

Accommodation

The B 30's big-bodied hull contains a lot of accommodation. There are permanent bunks for six, an enclosed head, a good galley, a chart table, dinette, and enough room and stowage for a crew of four to six (depending on the cruise duration and the crew's compatibility) to enjoy cruising. The accommodation is conventional in layout and materials. All the furniture (except for the tables) is glassfibre, but the excellent finish and the amount of mahogany used in trim and structure makes for a really attractive cabin.

After going down the hatch (which

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has heavily angled sides that would let the hatchboards fall out if the boat was ever knocked down) you drop down the mahogany companionway ladder into 1.82 m of headroom and find the galley to starboard and the chart table to port. The galley layout is a shallow U-shape with plenty of working space (although much of it is on top of lockers).

The standard cooker is a two burner Maxi spirit stove, but there is an optional Roden Clipper two burner gas stove with oven. There are plate racks and small shelves to the stern and outboard, a useful cup/can holder, a built-in food bin and a 4.6 m³ icebox or refrigerator built into the bench. Underneath is a cutlery drawer and more lockers. The fibreglass sink has a hand freshwater pump fed by the 225 L of water in two tanks underneath the settee berths. For a longer cruise (say over a week or two) with a crowd aboard the B 30 might be a bit light on for food stowage space, but otherwise the galley works well. The only real failing is that there is only 1.62 m of headroom when working at the stove or the bench.

The navigation station includes a proper seat (so the navigator doesn't have to sit on the quarter berth) which contains the diesel tank. The chart table will take a folded chart, and there is plenty of locker room for books, radios, instruments and the switchboard. The chart table lifts to reveal a 6 m³ freezer. Behind the navigator is a quarter berth, which is either a roomy single or a rather cramped double with more storage underneath.

The roomy saloon is one of the boat's best features. Although the centre case runs down the centre it rarely gets in the way. Two settee berths, 1.9 m long, run down each side of the cabin. There are large lockers outboard of the berths, with smaller 'cave lockers' under the side deck. The main lockers are top loading, which makes them much more convenient to use than side loading lockers. There is a mahogany drop-leaf saloon table mounted on top of the centre case, with room for four to six people.

For keen racing sailors optional pipe cot pilot berths are available so that the maximum amount of weight can be kept to windward. The pipe bunks go on top of the lockers, but unfortunately when you're sleeping the lockers below can end up digging into your hip.

On the other side of the attractive timber faced bulkhead is the head compartment to starboard and lockers to port. In the head compartment is a pump-out toilet, a small vanity cup-

board, lockers, small hand basin, and a large mirror that takes up much of the rear bulkhead and does a good job of making the rather small compartment appear roomy. Unfortunately, like 90 per cent of production yachts the B 30 has no ventilation in the head compartment!

The lockers opposite have enough room for two, three or four loaded sea bags or for use as a hanging locker.

The forecabin is mostly taken up by a pair of 1.9 m long Vee berths. There is 1.68 m of headroom over the small standing area, there are lockers under the bunks and under the side decks. Unusually, there is no in-fill piece to make the two single berths into a double. Nor is there any way to close off the forecabin from the rest of the accommodation, although the head door fills much of the passageway and provides some measure of privacy.

There are only three real faults in the B 30's accommodation. One is the lack of a door for the forecabin; another is the lack of full headroom over the galley, and the third fault is the serious lack of effective ventilation down below. *Grey Lady* has already been given two

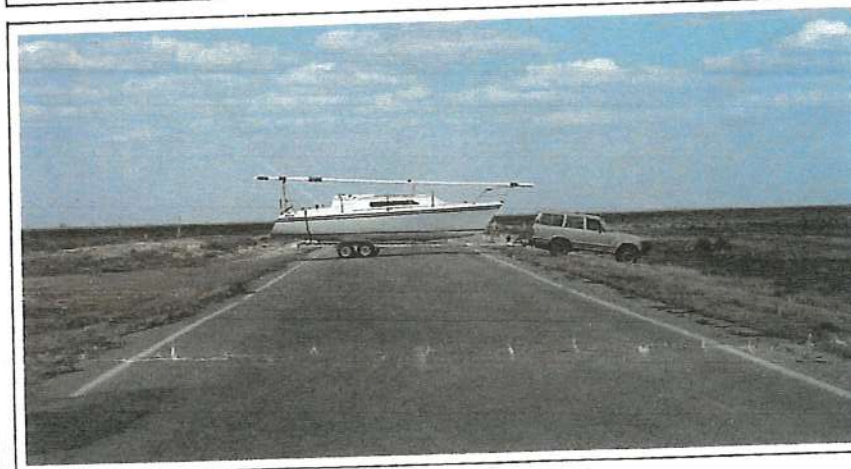
small hatches and three large dorade vents, and they've made a big improvement — but why aren't they standard equipment? You might even be able to get by without your Mum — but everybody needs ventilation in the ruddy loo!

Finish

The finish of the B 30 is very good, both in fibreglass and timber work. All of the GRP mouldings are excellent; there's good non-skid, attractive texture on the headliner, and good details like the non gelcoated, transparent strips that allow you to check the level of the fuel and water tanks. Mahogany is widely used for fiddles, the bulkheads, the table top, locker lids, and general trim. Together with the attractive upholstery and the good amount of light down below, it adds up to a very good looking boat.

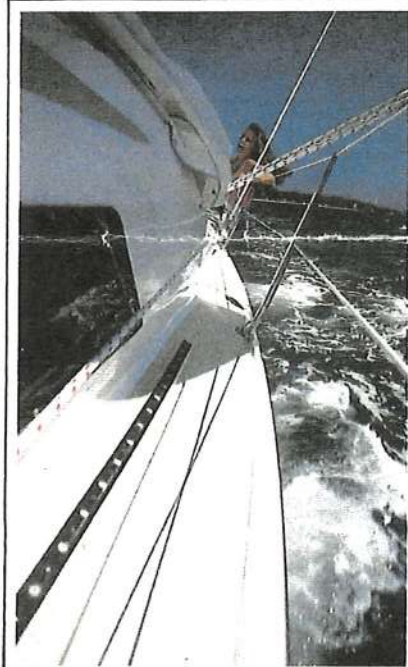
Trailing

Despite the B 30's size it is not a hard boat to handle ashore, although it's an awfully big load to haul. The AB LandCruiser 4WD hauled the empty boat the 1500 km from Adelaide with





The saloon is remarkably roomy.



The new step in the stern counter is a big help for swimmers.

comparative ease, holding speeds of 80 km/h with little trouble. This highly modified two tonne LandCruiser though, is about the smallest vehicle that could handle the B 30, the trailer and the combined mass of some 4.00 tonne. Larger vehicles (such as the LWB Ford F-250) would be better, but she's a very big load.

Another approach to tow vehicles is to buy a cheap old truck and save the considerable wear and tear that a new 4WD encounters. The Robottoms (AB December, '82), bought a 1970 Dodge light truck. The AB group has purchased a big International six tonne truck, which handles the load with ease, and cost considerably less than a struggling 4WD.

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Since the boat's beam is well over the legal limit of 2.48 m, a wide load permit is required. Obtaining this is normally little more than a formality, requiring a stop at a police station in each state, as you cross the border. Wide loads are permitted to travel only in daylight and must not drive in some major cities in peak hours.

Launching and retrieving the Farr is simple, in calm conditions, but in a breeze the high topsides can blow the boat around easily, and calls for some skills with the shorelines. Lifting and dropping the mast is also quite easy, thanks to the \$305 mast raising kit.

The kit includes a stern post with roller to carry the unstepped mast, an alloy strut with special removable stays, special chain and plates that hold the stays to the cabin sides. Stepping the mast means rolling it forward and dropping the foot into the tabernacle. The alloy strut juts from the base of the mast and acts as a sheer leg. Supporting wires run from the chainplates to the strut and the mast to keep them straight while the rig is winched up or down. The jib hal-yards are led over a strut and connected to a line leading from the trailer or sheet winch, and then you simply wind away. The mast cannot sway and winding is surprisingly easy — literally child's play. Stepping the mast is slower than on a smaller trailer yacht, but there is little effort or hassle.

Performance

The Farr B 30 is one of the fastest 9 m cruiser/racers around, and is at its best reaching and running in heavy airs. It seems that most B 30s have been used for club racing or cruising, so only a few have been raced in major events. But even so, they have made their mark. An uprated, bigger rigged version took five straight line honours' victories in the '83 Junior Offshore Group national championships. Admittedly that was a few years ago now, but since then there have been no real breakthroughs in cruiser/racer design (modern JOG 'maxies' like the Rocket 31 and Stienman *J Law* type are clearly faster, but you couldn't really call them cruiser/racers) and the B 30 is still very competitive against any boat with full accommodation. More recently, a B 30 won its class in a shorthanded race off Sydney.

It adds up to a boat that, while not a world beater, is more than fast enough to lead all the other 9 m racer/cruisers home at the local water hole, and a lot of bigger boats as well.

The boat is generally easy to

handle, although like most lightweight boats it doesn't like being clumsily sailed. The optimum heel angle is around 25 degrees — let the boat tilt much more and it will round up, not violently but definitely. Like any Farr, the B 30 isn't stable in the manner of the old 'leadmines'; instead of lugging big sails and leaning, the sophisticated rig is used to flatten the sails, play the main to keep the boat flat, and go fast. Best racing performance is definitely achieved with half a dozen bodies along the windward rail to provide live ballast, but for family cruising, the rig can be depowered simply (the jiffy reefs take only seconds to drop in, and simply flattening the main with backstay tension and a few tweaks can handle an increasing wind) and the boat will still sail very fast with small gear up.

The manoeuvrability given by the flat hull is excellent. The boat will turn within its own length, and the powerful winches make tacking the small headsails a breeze.

The helmsman hasn't got a particularly comfortable job. There is quite a bit of weather helm in the boat, despite the fact that the B 30 is one of the few Farr boats that doesn't carry a lot of mast rake. Nor is the seating position comfortable. The cabin is a bit high for good forward vision for a helmsman of something less than average height, and there is nowhere to brace your feet to stop sliding off the coaming when steering to windward.

Unfortunately most of our sailing on *Grey Lady* has been in light to moderate winds. We haven't had the opportunity to test her out in the conditions that the boat revels in — running and reaching on surfing conditions. There is no doubt that the B 30 will be exceptionally fast off the breeze in a blow, and handling is good. I wonder though, whether the rudder might not cause turbulence and cavitation when surfing at high speeds.

In the sailing we have had, the boat has been going well. As she is currently equipped for cruising only, we are using a small (140 per cent overlap) roller furling headsail, are leaving the centre-case fairing out, and the boat is loaded down with gear like a hefty anchor winch on the bow. Nevertheless, in the boat's only twilight social race so far, it went well, quite easily beating two conventional half-tonners and taking time out on a fast Blazer trailer yacht with a man on trapeze — and that was sailing one up, in unfavourable light conditions and using an odd genoa off a 20 footer instead of the not-then-delivered genoa!

For keen racing sailors, the B 30 rates around .7450-.7350 under JOG rating and is quite competitive. Under

the IOR it rates prohibitively high, around 27.5 feet, and has little chance except in a hard run.

Conclusion

Except for the usual post delivery problems so common (but still unforgivable) in new yachts from almost any boat builder, we are very happy with the Farr B 30. So far it has shown every sign of being everything we wanted it to be.

In summary the main problems are lack of ventilation down below (a fault shared by most production yachts), the hassle with the keel fairing piece, and the rather poor rudder tie down system. It would be nice to see more privacy in the forward cabin and a bulkhead in the stern compartment too. But they are definitely outweighed by the good points — the boat's speed, the amount of room down below (especially the big saloon), the finish, and the shoal draft. We haven't had a chance yet to head offshore into a gale, but I have sailed similar craft offshore (Noelx 30) and have no doubt that the B 30 will be fully seaworthy, albeit with a lively motion. I'll also stand by my earlier belief that the boat will beat just about any similar sized cruiser/racer or IOR boat.

But the B 30's real winning point is its versatility. The Robottom family showed it off to advantage by taking their *Johanne* racing across Bass Strait and cruising both the highways and the Sandy Straits. But the versatility shows even in less ambitious ways, like a recent Sunday sail when I motored *Grey Lady* into shallow water to pick up a crowd of friends (no messing about with dinghies here — they just waded aboard) and set off with 11 crew and 10 surfboards on deck. We used that easy access transom to make swimming and surfing off the boat easy (it's a small feature but one that is really appreciated), dropped everyone back into shallow water, and then sailed home single-handed (passing 11 and 12 m cruiser/racers) before simply lifting the boat onto its trailer the next day for some maintenance.

You just can't do those things that easily, or so quickly, on a conventional yacht. The B 30 has the ability to trail to distant cruising grounds, to handle a long offshore passage, roomy accommodation, and all in a high performance package — it's hard to ask more from a 9 m yacht.



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