



2 SIDED

Radical TS

**from the U.S. delivers
20 knot performance
with a 40hp outboard
and surprising
sailing ability when
the wind's up.
Mark Rothfield's
words and pics.**

TEST: MACGREGOR 19 POWERSAILER

FROM the moment man added motors to boats, prejudice has existed between "petrolheads" and "grotty yachties" — for a start, the priorities of the two parties are diametrically opposed, one enjoying getting to their destination, the other enjoying the process of going there. Of course, both activities have great advantages and ideally should be combined.

Enter the MacGregor 19. This American-built trailer sailer is the first real attempt to blend the best features of both worlds. With a 40hp outboard bolted to the transom it can do more than 20 knots, and it's also no slouch under canvas.

First and foremost, importer Malcolm Douglas insists, it's a fun boat: "It suits the guy who wants maximum pleasure on the water. He could power to Moreton Island (or any protected anchorage) on the Friday evening, have breakfast next morning, waterski, then sail in the afternoon when the wind gets up."

MacGregor 19 is primarily an efficient powerboat, achieving more than 20 knots in flat water with a 40hp Yamaha on the transom. However it's also a safe and steady, if unspectacular, performer under sail.



In the same scenario, a conventional trailer sailer would have to delay departure until Saturday morning and thus miss a night at anchor. And a powerboat may be left tethered to the beach when the wind and waves increased due to the often uncomfortable ride. Another bonus is that newcomers to boating could potter around with the engine until comfortable with the craft, then learn to sail.

Sounds great in theory, however there are physical limitations because essentially it's a powerboat that's been conformed to sail, not so much a sailboat than powers well. Compromise is the key word. There are numerous examples of it throughout the boat, as the designers have struggled to solve the fundamental differences.

In fairness, they've made a pretty good fist of it. The hard chine and straight lines, the brochure defends, have been proven by sailboats as diverse as the Star and International 14 skiff. Also: "At 25mph under power, a deadrise of about 17 degrees provides a perfect compromise between good comfort (minimum slamming) and speed with moderate horsepower.

Happily, it is also the optimum angle for a good sailboat". I'd query the latter.

Power options will depend on intended usage. A 40hp motor delivers sufficient power to tow a small skier, however it hinders sailing performance due to excessive weight. An auxiliary of around 8hp could be used, but this would rob the boat of its major asset,

"I was on a trailer sailer - that, I knew. But to see a wake boiling for 200m astern, and to hear the raucous growl of the engine was just mind boggling"

namely planing ability. One solution is to have a 40hp for speed work and an 8hp for pure sailing — these can be interchanged by two men, as Douglas and his partner demonstrated during our test day. The second alternative is a 20hp outboard that should get the yacht planing, though not fast enough to tow a skier, and still not wear out its welcome when sailing.

Another critical factor is ballast.

Obviously, the weight needed to offset the rig's heeling motion is totally unwanted when powering. The answer is to dump it; i.e. water ballast. A gate valve at the transom is opened to allow 360kg of seawater to flood into the cavity amidships, sufficient to make the boat self-righting. The water can be drained by releasing the valve when motoring at around eight knots, or once the boat is back on the trailer. It also lightens the towing load.

An unballasted centreboard swings down to improve windward performance and manoeuvrability. In power mode the board creates drag but since it retracts fully into the hull it's not such a problem. Not so lucky are the twin rudders, which, by necessity, are small and stubby — larger ones would be placed under enormous stress and be too positive at high speed. They dull the helm feel when sailing, not helped by having the tiller attached to the rudder crossbeam via a pivoting point rather than being direct.

Located under the waterline, lowering the rudders involves someone going into thigh deep water and pushing them down by hand, finally securing them with a thru-bolt ... not the most pleasant



200m astern, and to hear the raucous growl of the engine, amplified by the well walls, was just mind boggling. The speed was exhilarating, the noise I could've done without ...

Transition to planing was effortless, akin to a powercruiser, with minimal bow raising and smooth acceleration. I was surprised at how cleanly the hull ran, impressed by its ability to handle chop, grip on through turns, and eat distance.

Back at the ramp, the 40 was exchanged for a 5. The ballast tanks drank their fill in about three minutes and a soft breeze had us sliding downstream at about two knots hull speed ... effectively doubled by the outgoing tide. Most owners would be inclined to motor in these conditions, but I must say the silence was golden.

There was more wind at the Southport seaway, and those chunky chines started to bite as the hull heeled, providing quite remarkable stability and no tendency to round up. The water flowed cleanly from the fine bow and along the hull, only to become turbulent at the stern where the deep transom created a "pocket" which confused the flow terribly. Still, pointing ability was acceptable, helm response sufficiently positive and leeway resistance adequate.

Turning for home, facing wind and tide, we summoned the auxiliary. The extra nudge made all the difference, the 19-footer setting a fair clip and heeling merrily, while maintaining acceptable noise levels. Obviously it's crying out for more sail area or lots of breeze, perhaps both.

ACCOMMODATION

Beneath the distinctive, two-tiered cabin lies a remarkably spacious and well appointed interior, comfortable enough for a family of four to spend a weekend aboard. There's a huge double berth under the cockpit, with good access and ample room above to turn over — or whatever else you do in bed — but with the ballast tank directly

because of potential weakness with the joint; fortunately the Powersailer's seemed quite well engineered.

The test boat's rig was as basic as could be, with three shrouds and two halyards. For cruising it's all you need, a cinch to handle yet powerful enough to keep the hull moving. However, future boats will get a taller section with aft-swept spreaders, lowers, backstay; even an optional carbon fibre bowsprit flying a 32.5sq m asymmetric spinnaker.

Standard sail area is a moderate 15.5sq m, the fully-battened mainsail comprising two-thirds of that. A genoa of some 9.9sq m is optional. Controls are again ultra-simple, with the jib being sheeted by two small winches atop the cabin and a vang and light-purchase mainsheet handling the boom. The latter attaches to the tiller post which is aft of the clew, not the most efficient of pulls.

PERFORMANCE

Rigging completed in just 10 minutes, the Powersailer slid effortlessly off its purpose-built trailer (imported with boat) and lay docile in the water. The Yamaha 40 fired into life with a flick of the key and soon had us edging away from the ramp and onto the Gold Coast Broadwater.

Once clear of the no-wash zone — something normal sailboats don't give a second thought to — the cockpit-mounted throttle was thrust down. What followed was a sensation unlike any I've experienced in 10 years of boat testing. I was on a trailer sailer — that, I knew. But to see a wake boiling for



of tasks on a slimy ramp. On approaching a beach the procedure is reversed, and once raised, the hull draws a mere 23cm.

Soft riding though the hull is, the inevitable pounding at planing speed is accentuated through the mast and can shake the living daylights out of it. To sidestep this, MacGregor has opted for a two-piece mast that breaks into 3.8m sections, short enough to be stowed below in a special rack, along with the boom. That's fine with small spars such as on a Laser dinghy, but most mastmaker's advise against the practice



Opposite page: Custom trailer supports the hull perfectly and keeps it low for ease of towing and launching. With a draft of only 23cm, beaching is a breeze. Companionway hatch hinges for good cabin access and airiness. This page: Not so great are the stubby spade rudders which bolt down.

below, the slop of water may disturb light sleepers. The second double fills the forepeak, generously proportioned thanks to the flared bow.

To starboard in the saloon is an enclosed head, so small that only a child or demure adult could squeeze in there — accordingly the compartment will most often be used for storage. Better to put the galley there, to my way of thinking, but MacGregor has different ideas, recessing the stove and an icebox under the vee berth and explaining: "You rarely cook and sleep at the same time". Fair enough, but what happens to bedding and clothing when it comes time to cook? A neat sink is built in above the berth, on the starboard side, while the mast holders are to port.

The furniture and headliner moulding is nicely finished, creating a clean and bright appearance. Headroom is ample for sitting, aided by a pop-top that pivots up or can be replaced by an optional dodger cover that raises the height to 1.80m. As well, the floor is wide and flat, unhindered by a centre-case, which allows easy movement.

A legacy of the largish coachhouse is that it encroaches slightly on cockpit space, plus the tiller and engine get in the way somewhat. Three or four

people could squeeze in when sailing, perhaps six when powering, but at least they'd be protected by the high coamings. Also, fuel tanks, fenders and so on can be stored in lockers under both seats.

To sum up, the Powersailer performs its dual role as well as could be expected and really can offer tons of fun on the water for weekending, though falling short of specialised craft on both sides. If you're a yachite who yearns to get home quickly in the evening, or a powerboater who occasionally enjoys some peace and quiet, then ya canna' buy better than this MacGregor ...

MACGREGOR 19

LLOA:	5.70m
BEAM:	2.30m
DISPLACEMENT:	566kg
WATER BALLAST:	362kg
DRAFT:	1.54m
Board up:	0.23m
SAIL AREA:	15.5sq m
OUTBOARD POWER:	8-25hp
PRICE:	\$26,450
Test boat supplied by South Pacific Sailing,	
phone/fax (07) 263-8161	
Thanks to Sundown Marine, Redcliffe, QLD	
for supplying Yamaha 40 outboard.8.	