

NORTHWIND 7 — A GREAT WAY TO FLY

The sea off Mooloolaba on the hot January morning was the way the sea should be — a swell enough to let you feel you are out there, and a little joggle over the top because there was 10-12 knots of sea breeze blowing.

We were heading out from Old Woman Island (Mudjimba of the charts) to Gneering Shoals, with the self-steering doing all the work. A close, easy reach, with the sun bright and the beer cold. I didn't really mind breaking into my holiday for this sort of work.

We were trying out the NW7, a very seaworthy trailer-sailer built in Brisbane by North Wind Yachts Pty. Ltd. Our host was Max Kennedy, whose North Haven Yachts has one of the best addresses on the east coast of Australia — 8 Pacific Boulevard, Point Cartwright. Anyone who has sailed in or out of Mooloolaba will know that address. It's the last house on Cartwright, with the copper roof. Max can see the sun rise and set in the Pacific.

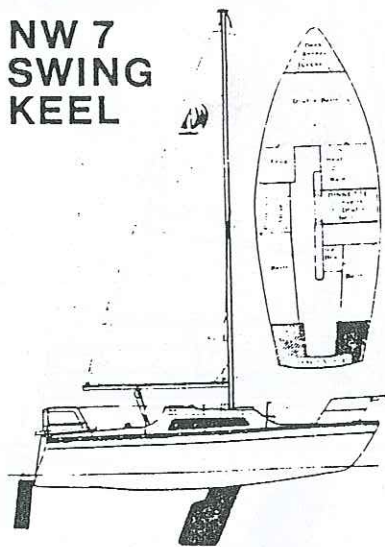
Max's boat, to get back to the job in hand, is rigged for the seas she sails in — solid pulpit, pushpit, staunchions and lines. She carries a sensible amount of sail — 108 sq ft. main and, on the test sail, 140 sq ft. No 2 genoa. This was just about about the right amount of power in the conditions. It was a very comfortable sail, with the four of us dispersed about the boat in relaxed style.



She likes to be sailed upright and I think this would be crucial if you were racing. Max motored her out of the river using a 9.5 outboard that is attached to a solid support on the transom. He carries a good deal of electrics, and was glad to give the battery a charge from the outboard. She slips along beautifully under power.

Out into the ocean, the little boat lifted herself and sailed easily on starboard tack to Mudjimba. Max knows his way around these waters, as he does those of several southern ports, and he called the shots as we slipped close in to the breakers of the Old Woman, put about and laid a course for the Gneerings.

NW 7 SWING KEEL



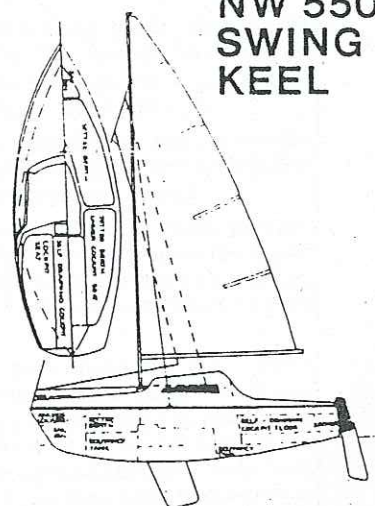
THE NORTH WIND 7-METRE

The North Wind 7-metre swing-keel yacht has been designed specifically for the man who enjoys the thrills of class racing and the comfort of a six-berth cruising yacht.

THE NORTH WIND 550

The North Wind 550 Swing Keel Yacht has been designed specifically for yachters who enjoy the thrills of class racing at a budget of under \$6000 for a sailaway yacht with trailer and outboard motor.

NW 550 SWING KEEL



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he reckoned it would take an hour or so to reach the mark and with a fairly constant wind there was not a great deal to do except sit back in the sun with a cold can in hand. So we connected up a neat little self-steering gear, that works on either compass or wind, and let her go.

Just as the buoy came into sight one of the crew (all right, my crew, my racing crew) became ill from the effects of the night before. We pressed on for awhile, then became merciful (well, it was holidays) and headed for home.

It was too good a day to waste just pottering along, so I asked Max if we could put up his spinnaker. It was a pleasant exercise and it is an impressive spinnaker that pulled her along well.

Below, the Northwind 7 is a real achievement. The amount of room is surprising. There are a few and only a few boats of this size that can sleep six adults and even fewer that can do so in comfort. The NW7 can.

Starting from the bow, there is a huge "V" berth to accommodate two. There is no chance of having your bed mixed up with wet anchor lines as these are all stowed in a self draining well that opens from the foredeck. As well as ample stowage area underneath, there are two small head lockers.

Aft to port is a chemical toilet. Next is the galley, which has a sink and pump, bench and elevated mounting to take the normal two burner spirit stove.

Aft of this again is a big quarter berth



Her fine entry and deep forefoot lead off into a well proportioned hull and it performs as well as it looks.

with stowage under and a lot of usable space under the cockpit.

To starboard is another quarter berth of similar proportions. This one extends further aft and is slightly lower in consequence.

Then we come to the very cunningly conceived dinette which converts to a double bed. The dinette has two moulded seat sections with a well between for feet and the side of this arrangement includes the swing keel case. This way, the problems associated with a free standing case are overcome.

The whole area taken up by the seats, the forward one of which is very wide, is given over to storage. There is also a big storage area under the galley and a number of pockets moulded into the cabin at various useful places.

A full glass headliner is available with wiring included for cabin and navigation lights. The cabin has a big pop top with sliding hatch included so that, as well as a good air flow, there is full standing headroom for the major part of the cabin.

Tinted windows and forward hatch complete the functional cabin.

The cockpit is not big (but then I'm used to a Thunderbird). The seats are wide and comfortable. There is a bridge deck area which starts about 15 inches behind the main companionway, and uses a good deal of cockpit space, but it takes care of the mainsheet traveller and houses the keel winch and the bilge pump, which empties into the cockpit.

All halyards lead back to winches set on the aft of the cabin top. Sheet winches are on the wide cockpit coaming.

There is a big cockpit locker that will hold a five gallon fuel tank and plenty of other gear. If you want it, there is an optional 20 gallon fresh water storage under the forward berth, and even an optional shower attachment.

The rig has the same feel of seamanlike solidity about it as has the hull. It's not a go-anywhere boat, no TS pretends to be.

She moves along nicely, though she wouldn't be the fastest TS. Properly handled, she would give you competitive racing, if that's what you want.

She will certainly give you safe, comfortable cruising within the reasonable limits of her size and design.

She can be easily sailed by one person. One man can raise and lower the mast, and a couple could certainly handle her from carport to ocean and back with no strife.

With the keel raised, the NW7 draws only 12 inches, so that takes care of one of the drags about sailing in places like Moreton Bay, where all the anchorages seem to be several hundred yards from the beach if you draw more than a couple of feet.

NW7 Swing Keel

