

** To remind you why you bought your Sabre - all its great features.*

A trailable yacht that has the edge on others

by SANDY PEACOCK

THE SABRE 22 is a practical and well-thought out little yacht that has done well in its two years on the Australian market, probably for one basic reason; it represents as much as you can fit into a 22ft stock trailable yacht that is still fast and lively to sail.

She belongs to what should be called the 'Kiwi type', which share a number of common features. Their light dinghy-style hulls are flat bottomed, snub-nosed and broad in the transom — with fractional rigs and powerful mains, they perform and handle like big dinghies.

To get maximum interior room without high topsides and boxy lines, the designers use all of the boat's beam and often extend the cabin to take up much of the deck space though leaving a deep and roomy cockpit.

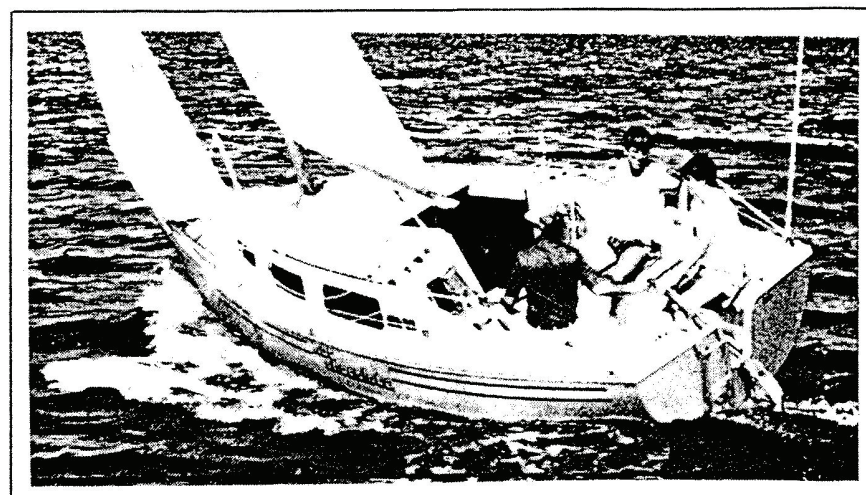
In these respects, the Sabre reminds me of impressive Kiwi trailable yachts like the Farr designs and the Noelex 25, though she's quite different in looks. She also shares two of the Noelex' most interesting features which I believe are a big plus on a family cruiser/racer.

First, the fractional rig relies even more than usual on the driving power of the main, with an extra-long boom (though the Sabre's sailplan is still quite high-aspect). The jib is small and easy to handle — children can work the sheet — and no winches are needed on the boat.

The 110 per cent jib on the Sabre is not self-tacking like that of the Noelex, but it's close. Moreover, only one headsail is required, and when there's enough breeze to take it away, the boat will still sail effectively to windward under main alone. That's not only a luxury, it's also an important safety feature on any small yacht that families or inexperienced sailors are likely to be attracted to.

The second similarity to the Noelex is that the auxiliary engine is positioned inboard in a well in the cockpit floor just forward of the transom.

The Noelex has an outboard while the Sabre has a lightweight 7.5hp Volvo



Penta petrol engine (twin-cylinder, four-stroke) with a saildrive which pushed her easily into a hard breeze and chop on our test sail.

A moulded fibreglass 'box' is mounted over the top of the motor with the starter cord and controls protruding through apertures in the box. This set-up is more expensive than an outboard bracket and it slightly clutters the cockpit floor, but its advantages are worth it.

The propeller is low in the water, the engine is protected and access is easy, the weight is further forward in the boat, and there is no obstruction to boarding the boat over the stern from a dinghy, a beach or the water. Obviously the drag of the saildrive will slow the boat, but this should be counted in its class or individual handicap.

I sailed the Sabre in a fierce winter westerly that was blowing a steady 25 knots with rogue gusts funnelling down the upper reaches of Sydney Harbor at well past 30 knots. Hardly the sort of weather in which a reasonable person would take a 22ft trailable yacht for a sail, but then, you never know what sort of conditions you might get caught in.

On the plus side the boat was fast, especially downwind and responsive on the helm. The rig felt well-balanced in the steadier patches of wind, with the single slab reef tucked in as befitted the conditions. She was also surprisingly dry on some very choppy stretches of water.

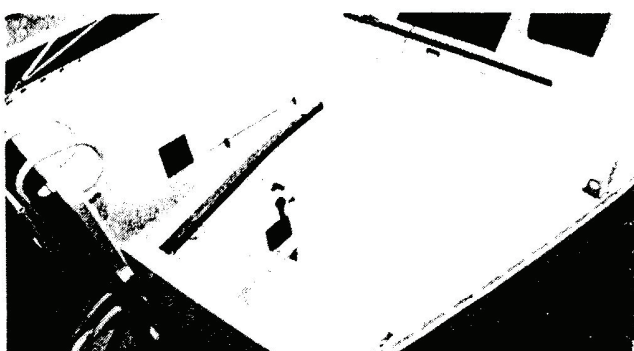
The Sabre would be easy for one or two people to sail in most conditions, and she impressed me as a lively but comfortable and simple family yacht.

The full mainsail would have enough power to keep her moving well enough in light airs. The mini-jib makes tacking effortless and the gear layout is clean and efficient.

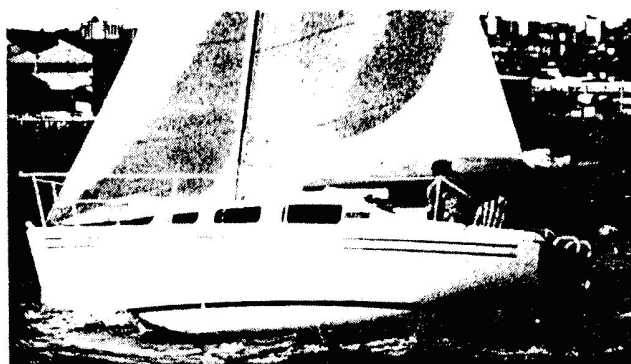
On the debit side, I felt the boat was too tender in these conditions under jib and reefed main, tending to sideslip in the steady breeze and rounding up in bad gusts.

Windward performance wasn't really a problem, as she was a lot more controllable and still sailed efficiently after the jib was taken off. But for reaching and running in strong winds, she needs a second reef in the main, partly because the full run-out of the mainsheet is limited by the sharply swept-back spreaders. These are needed to support the mast because there is no backstay on the boat — an excellent feature in terms of an uncluttered cockpit and easy access over the transom, but a limiting factor on the rig.

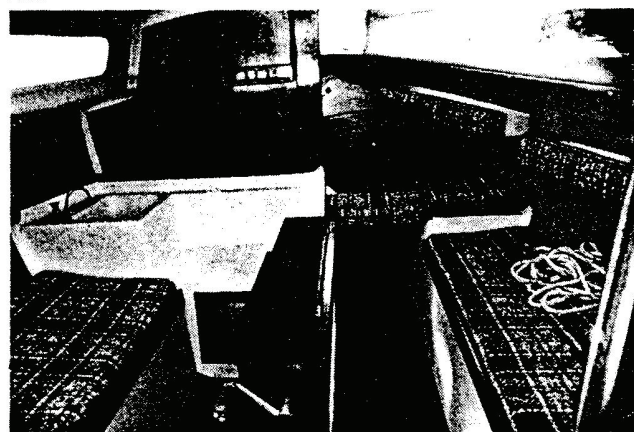
Overall the Sabre is an enjoyable yacht to sail with good control for the helmsman from the the deep aerofoil rudder mounted on the transom. The rudder has a cast aluminium stock, bolted through the transom with its timber core. After the rudder's friction clamp is released, the blade will kick up automatically when it touches the



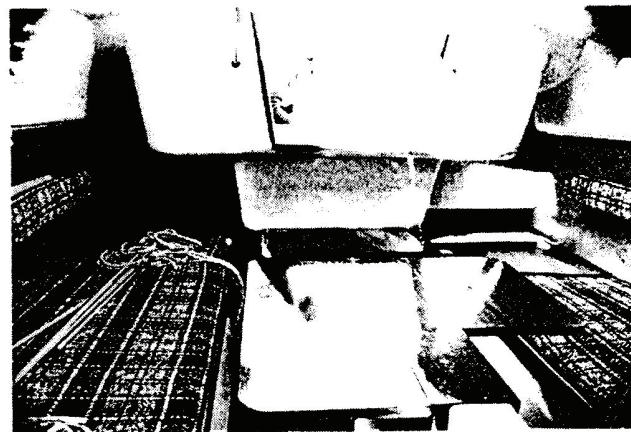
The cockpit layout of the Sabre 22 featuring the transom-hung rudder.



The Sabre 22 under sail.



The Sabre's roomy V-berth accommodates large sailbags.



The berths of the Sabre extend down under the cockpit.

bottom, but it will still kick up if it hits a submerged object even if the clamp is not released.

The swing keel is also an aerofoil section with 341kg of lead ballast encased in fibreglass. All the lead is in the leading face of the keel so that when the keel is retracted into the amidships skeg and the shallow case inside the hull, the ballast is at the bottom.

The Sabre has passed the NZ and Australia trailable yacht self-righting tests with the keel retracted.

The lifting mechanism is a self-sustaining worm and nut winch operated by a handle in the back edge of the keel case in the cabin just in front of the companionway step.

The deck layout of the Sabre features a wide, deep cockpit with room for six or more people to sit around and four to sit on the windward side when sailing. The non-skid finish is good and the cockpit provides plenty of leg support when sailing, plus high coamings for a comfortable back support and keeping water out of the cockpit.

A noticeable feature of the boat is the cut-away opening in the centre of the

transom. Alan Scott designed it mainly for safety — instant drainage if a wave comes aboard — but it also aids easy access into the cockpit from the transom, along with the absence of a pushpit.

The interior layout does provide a surprising amount of room for a 22-footer with a shallow dinghy-type hull. There is sleeping accommodation for five people and I liked the open feel of the layout with space for several people to sit around without too much crowding.

The forward berth area which is partly separated from the rest of the cabin by a wood half-bulkhead to port, holds a V-berth for two with a lifting partition to cover a marine or portable toilet. The 92-litre (20 gallon) water tank is moulded into the boat under the berth.

In the main cabin area are two settee berths with a wood dinette table in the middle, mounted on top of the keel case and able to fold away downwards in two parts. Behind the bulkhead to port is the galley unit with a sink, storage space, and gas stove or room for other types of stoves.

One person can launch and rig or unrig the boat. After the mast is dropped and disengaged from its step, the same pin which locks it into the step is used to lock it into its mounting on the top of the pulpit. Part of the standard equipment is an aluminium wishbone-shaped mast crutch, which mounts in fittings on the boat's transom to support the mast aft. The mast is easily raised by one person and locked down by a high-field lever connected to the forestay.

SPECIFICATIONS Sabre 22

LOA.....	6.6m
LWL	5.8m
Beam	2.5m
Draft.....	1.4-0.36m
Displacement.....	952kg
Ballast.....	341kg
Trail weight.....	1338kg
Sail area:	
Main.....	13.8sq m
Jib.....	7.9sq m
Spinnaker	35sq m
Designer	Alan Scott
Builder... Sabre Yachts Aust Pty Ltd	
257 Elizabeth Ave, Clontarf	
Redcliffe, Qld 4019	