

TRAILER SAILERS are among the most popular sailing craft in Australia and come in an amazing variety of shapes and sizes. We've tested four of the most interesting for this special report. The Tropic 520 is an interesting New Zealand design, the RL28 is one of the biggest available, the Princess has no board box to clutter the cabin and the Status 19 is a racing day sailer.



Date with a Princess

The Princess is a bilge board trailer sailer which offers more accommodation than any other yacht her size. PAUL HOPKINS tried her out.

JOHN LUCKE loves Finns. He sailed one of these Olympic torture machines on Botany Bay for a few seasons and when the time came for him to think about a boat for all the family he decided on a TS with the flowing lines of a Finn.

"A Finn is a lovely boat to sail upwind," he said as we sailed his Princess TS across a surprisingly calm Botany Bay. "You'll find a similarity between this boat's hull and a Finn's underwater lines."

John's Princess is a complete departure from the run-of-the-mill GRP trailer sailers. She has twin bilge boards which house inside the bunk longitudinals to give a completely uncluttered cabin floor.

The Princess has more interior usable room than some boats metres longer. First appearance can be misleading as this TS doesn't look very big when first sighted. Its raised deck sweeps up to the companionway bulkhead, coamings sweep down to a pinched-in stern and the gunwale line divides the hull in two. Unlike on some boats where the gunwale just happens to be there, on the Princess it is a definite separation line between hull and tophammer.

In profile this newcomer looks something like a small Hood 23, yet gets away with the raised deck better.

John says it's only an average



Pinched in stern a la Finn. Simplicity is the keyword of this design. Medium-flow sails seems to work best.



skipper, yet, in the 1976/77 season his Princess and a sister ship won 50 percent of the handicap races with Botany Bay Sailing Club TS division. There are only a few other TS classes that give him much bother off the stick — one being the smaller TS16, the original trailer sailer.

The original Princess was launched a few seasons back and was all wood. It proved a success and a clubmember asked John to build him one. That's how John, a plumber, got into the boatbuilding industry in his spare time. He glassed up the original GRP hull himself — the one we sailed — but now has a contract GRP moulder do the hulls while he (John) finishes them off.

The Princess is not meant to be a luxury TS and it is not. However, it has a lot going for it. It is roomy, easy to sail, fast, well built, easy to trail — and inexpensive.

Sail away price of \$4995 is good, as for that figure you get a boat you can actually sail! Advanced basic hull at



Date with a Princess

\$3150 is good buying. *Advanced basic* means hull, deck and interior furniture moulds bonded together, all hatch covers supplied, hardwood backing pads glassed in, closed cell positive foam sealed in buoyancy tanks, deckhand insulation liner installed, interior

flowcoated, tough plastic gunwale moulding fitted, cockpit drains and bow eye installed.

Sail away includes the above plus mast, roller reefing, boom and standing rigging, all running rigging, sheets, halyards and so on, all necessary deck fittings installed, mainsail with class insignia and No 1 jib, hatch covers, hand rails and storm boards fitted, windows installed, galvanised steel retractable bilge boards fitted, rudder with pivoting blade fitted.

If you want the whole works, the *deluxe yacht* has all the above plus contrasting water line, protective pad fitted to outboard motor well, decorative timber table top, ice box and locker covers fitted, sink installed, galley pump and water tank installed, toilet fitted, waterproof carpet laid, seven vinyl-covered 150 mm foam cushions fitted.

Deluxe price is \$5400.

Optional extras: stainless steel bow rail, stainless steel pushpit, headsail furling gear, combination centre/end boom sheeting, genoa, storm jib, cockpit sun awning, gas stove and bottle, galvanised tilt trailer, outboard motor.

I met John and his crew on the beach in front of Georges River Sailing Club. He had the Princess anchored bow out with the stern a few metres from the beach. She looked a neat little package and definitely offers the TS sailor something different.

At 5.49 m overall she's as big as a Careel 18, yet she looks smaller. Waterline of 4.87 m and beam of 2.1 m combine to give length for upwind sailing and power to keep her on her feet.

We didn't have much wind for our sail — say eight knots from the NE — but a friend took her out in a 30 knot westerly a few weeks later and was impressed by her ability to cope with strong winds with full mainsail and storm jib.

It is interesting that John Lucke has achieved his TS racing record without any sail adjustment controls. He has a good suit of medium flow sails which he hangs on the spars the same way each week — and goes sailing.

He believes concentration and sheet trim are more important than a cabintop covered with control lines. He has a point and one which could be considered by the twitchy line-twitchers who sometimes get so confused they really don't know why their performance isn't good.

The Princess carries some weather helm — which John likes — and is as easy to sail as any trailer sailer I have skippered. I sailed her from Sandringham Point to the airport extensions, fiddled around there to try to get some pictures of a bunch of fairy penguins feeding on small fish and ran back to Georges River before the fading breeze.

She went exactly where I pointed her, didn't fall away after each tack and seemed to clear her narrow transom quite well. None of the frothy drag seen on some broad-sterned trailer sailers was evident.

The steel bilge-boards seemed to do their job well; both were left down although the windward board could be pulled up if you are really keen. I once built a Moth with bilge boards and experimented with it for a season. The

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Easy to trail behind a small car and easy on the pocket — these are just some of the virtues of the Princess 18, mini TS. Story by JAMES HILL.

Princess is right royal value

Despite the increasing numbers of yachts and trailer yachts there is no doubt that most people still enter the sailing world via the wet and shakey deck of a sailboard or similar off-beach sailcraft.

For novices, the first hours of sailing are often a baptism by water and spray as they alternate between skimming over wave tops and taking unexpected submarine dives below the surface. At this point some sensible people give sailing up as a bad joke, but many, for some perverse reason, love the drama and dampness and become hooked.

Due to limited funds, the novice who wants to be skipper usually goes straight into something small and cheap which can be slung onto the roof of the car, or towed behind the car on a lightweight trailer.

Particularly if you are young and energetic, the best end of the sport is the off the beach skimmers. Whether it is a Hobie cat or a sailboard, a small sailcraft will give the ultimate amount of speed and thrills. However, there does come a time when one can tire of small-craft sailing. Living in a wet suit can get pretty unpleasant, especially when the afternoon breezes get cooler and a hot shower is a good half hour's drive away.

There is no particular point at which the small off-beach sailboat sailor decided to move up to something bigger. Some people make the move after less than a season in a sailing dinghy, while others might spend many years before deciding to go into a yacht or trailer sailer.

No matter how long the small-boat sailor has been sailing, the decision to move up to something bigger can be summed up in one word — comfort. A larger, ballasted sailboat may not always be dry, but it will always be a heck of a lot more comfortable to go sailing in. A bigger boat not only allows the small-boat sailor to get out of wet suits, but also enjoy the





Princess has a simple but practical raised foredeck design which not only gives excellent deck space but helps keep the cockpit dry. The rig shown here is standard, but the latest boat has a one-piece window.

pleasure of being able to sail further in a day without anywhere near the effort of the unballasted sailcraft.

The problem with moving up for most small sailboat sailors, however, is that they are not always financially ready to make the move. Unlike other hobbies or sports, sailing presents a very big dollar commitment between the starting out stage and the serious addicted stage.

Particularly when the average small sailboat enthusiast flicks through the classifieds, the overall impression can be that there is a big gulf between the ownership of a dinghy, or sailboard, and the ownership of a trailer yacht. Most secondhand trailer yachts start at least \$10,000 and most new boats start at more like \$18,000.

Many small-boat sailors are put off at this point because they feel they have to rake up too much cash to bridge the difference between what they will get for their own craft and what they see in the paper. The fact is that the commitment need not necessarily be as great as they think.

Many people seem to think they need to buy a TS of at least six metres to get

something worthwhile in terms of interior accommodation and cockpit space. In reality six metres is nice to have but if you can't afford it you might find that a TS of only five to five and a half metres can do the trick.

The classic Hartley TS 16 is a good example of a low-cost trailer yacht which is hardly more expensive than a sailing dinghy or Hobie cat. However the Hartley is as much a dinghy as it is a small trailer yacht and its low level of ballast doesn't make it immune to capsize.

Many hundreds of Australian sailors have found the Hartley TS 16 just what they want but in the last decade several other mini TSs have arrived on the market which offer more in the way of stability and creature comforts.

The Princess 18 is a fine example of a post-Hartley type mini TS designed to be both suitable for fibreglass construction and safe family cruising. The Princess 18, in many ways, is an ideal stepping stone for dinghy and off-beach sailors making the move into bigger boats for the first time. Designed by an ex-dinghy racing sailor, John Lucke, the Princess 18 is nicely positioned in size and price to

bridge the gap between dinghy prices and average TS prices.

Although it offers four berths and an interior which can match many six-metre TSs, the Princess 18 can be bought ex-factory in a complete, sail-away form for a very reasonable \$11,850. Considering that one can spend at least \$8,000 these days on an Olympic 470 or Hobie 18, the Princess seems to be quite good value.

John Lucke designed the Princess 18 very much as a graduate class for ex-dinghy sailors. Lucke had been a top Olympic Finn sailor for many years, but when the desire to sail with the family surpassed his enthusiasm for racing glory he decided that what he needed was not an expensive yacht but a lightweight trailable boat which could be rigged in much the same time as a dinghy. Apparently Lucke couldn't quite find what he was looking for in a TS at the time and so set to and designed it himself.

It is quite obvious that Lucke drew inspiration for his petit trailer sailer from the Finn dinghy. The Princess is a much fuller sectioned boat but has the same nicely rounded topsides and the neatly pulled in stern sections. Like any trailer sailer of this size, the Princess employs extra beam for stability, but unlike the other designs it does not have the typically broad transom that beamy sections and a flat bottom encourage.

In performance terms the Princess is not as fast as a Hartley TS 16, but then it is a much heavier boat with proportionally more weight devoted to ballast in the hull and centreboards. One of the interesting aspects of the design is the use of twin "bilge" centreboards so the cabin floor space would not be cut up by an intruding centreboard case. The twin centreboards are made from galvanised 12mm steel plate and pivot up into moulded centre-cases which also serve as the bunk fronts. The centreboards each weigh 45kg which helps stability a bit but is not nearly enough to keep the boat on its feet in strong winds. To give the boat yacht-like stability the middle bilge area has lead ballast moulded into the floor. There is a total of 113kg of lead in the bottom of the boat and this is enough to pop the boat back from a total knockdown, even if both centreboards are fully raised in their cases.

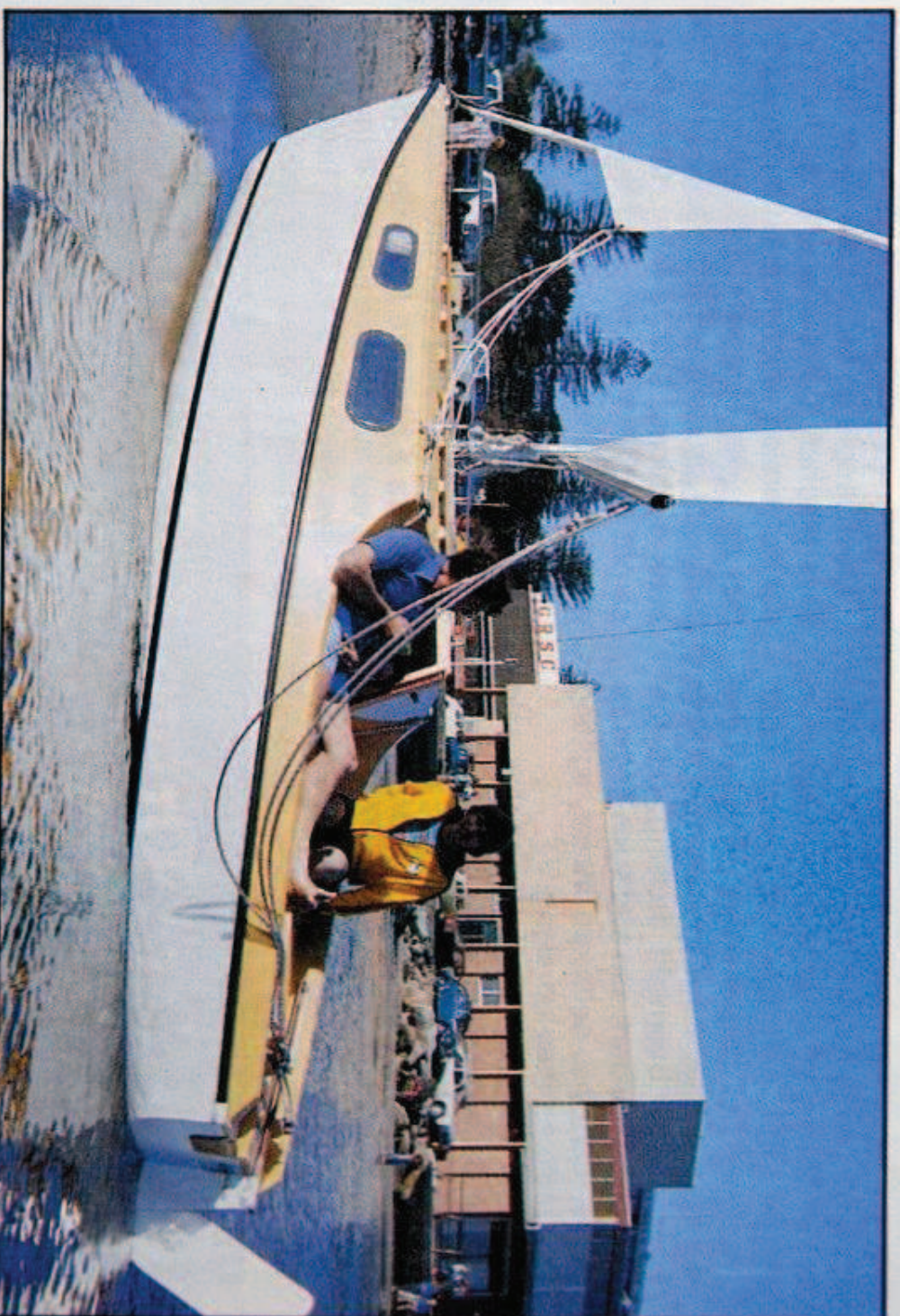
Apart from having open floor space between the bunks, the other design aspect which makes the Princess a particularly roomy boat below is its deck mould design which has the sides of the cabin right out flush with the topsides. There is, in effect, a raised deck ahead of the cockpit which not only gives excellent sitting headroom over all the bunks below, but also makes the deck roomy and easy to move around on. The flat deck is ideal for sunbaking and it helps

keep the cost of construction down to a minimum.

There is another advantage of the deck design and that is safety in a knockdown. The extra buoyancy inherent in the raised deck helps to float the hull high when it is on its side and so keep the hatchway clear of the water surface. There is a wide companionway and sliding hatch let into the deck, but even with the hatch open there is a good chance that a total knockdown will not see the interior of the boat flooded.

As is the case with most mini TSs, there is no pop-top in the cabin roof but the main hatch is made as big and as wide as safety permits so that it really is a de-facto pop-top. In a boat of this size there is simply not a enough room on deck for a pop-top and it is both better from a cost and structural point of view to plan the interior around sitting headroom height.

Below, the Princess 18 features a practical interior layout with no dividing bulkheads or mast support structures at all. It takes a few minutes for most people to notice but when they do they are surprised to find that the deck-stepped mast is supported by a pre-stressed beam moulded into the cabin roof. This simple but very clever design feature completes the picture of a open cabin space and certainly goes a long way to making this little 18-footer feel like a



much bigger boat below.

The interior accommodation follows the logical layout for this size of boat, that is, two quarter-berths extending into the cabin and separated from two fore vee berths by moulded galley units. The bunks and galley unit are moulded as one in a single furniture mould which drops into the boat after the ballast and centrecauses are fitted. The galley is a

simple affair consisting of a moulded sink and water pump on the starboard side and a benchtop on the port side with a stowage locker underneath. The space behind the sink is big enough to take a small two-burner primus stove, but stoves are not included in the list of options available with the boat.

According to the directors of Princess Yachts, Alan Mitchell and Barry Carr, the

current marketing concept behind the little 5.5-metre sloop is to present a simple and economic sail-away craft which will get people sailing. Even at the deluxe sail-away stage the boat is not fully fitted out for overnight cruising, but the idea is that owners can add such items as stove, curtains, outboard motor, lighting and radio as they go along.

At the sail-away stage the boat is sold complete with mast and rigging, deck fittings, windows, centreboards, rudder, hand-rails, number two headsail and mainsail. A single-axle trailer with brakes to suit the boat costs an extra \$1,250 with registration.

Most people go for the sail-away stage, says Mitchell, but some also go for the deluxe version which makes the boat just that bit more complete and suitable for overnight cruising. At this stage you get bunk cushions, sink, a toilet, fitted floor carpet and timber covers on the lockers under the bunks. The price \$12,950.

Essentially the Princess 18 is one boat where it is possible to start sailing for \$13,000, or about the value that two dinghy sailors could cash their boats in for and share a boat like this without having to fork out much more money. If they did so, says Mitchell, they could take turns family cruising and racing or sail together

when they race.

While we did not get the opportunity to give the Princess an on-the-water evaluation for this issue, we did get a chance to get alongside the latest model. This little 5.5-metre TS has altered very little since it first came onto the market about 10 years ago. The minor changes have all been incorporated so they do not affect the strict one-design class rules for the boat. A group of 33 Princess owners enjoy occasional class racing within NSW and the builders have tried to foster this class-owner base by keeping the boat as unaltered as possible. Recent changes include foam sandwich construction in the deck/cockpit mould and a single piece window instead of double windows aside. A slight saving in weight in the mouldings of the current model enabled the builders to place an extra 20kg into the lead ballast.

The Princess is simply rigged with a fractional rig supported by single cap and lower side shrouds as well as a forestay. There is no backstay or runners and in the interests of containing costs there are no winches on the deck. A tackle arrangement allows the halyards to be made up hard and a 2:1 purchase on the headsail sheets removes the need for sheet winches.

Some owners have added either diamond stays or swept-back spreaders to give the rig extra support, but according to Mitchell these spreaders are not necessary for cruising. The simplicity and size of the rig makes the Princess an easy boat for one person to rig. The boat can be quickly and effortlessly rigged on its trailer and launched within 15 minutes. The mast has a cast alloy step which enables it to be lowered through 90 degrees while the foot is held. The 6.7-metre long spar weighs only 15kg so is not difficult for one person to lift and raise.

While designed only for sheltered water cruising, the Princess 18 has been proved in more demanding waters such as the Whitsundays on numerous occasions. It might be a small boat but it is nonetheless a tough little trouper which has earned its place in the trailer sailer scene.

Specifications

Length	5.5m
LWL	4.88m
Beam	2.13m
Displacement	500kg
Ballast	113kg
Draft	18cm-178cm
Built in buoyancy	approx. 150%
Working sail area	12 m ² (approx)
Price	\$11,850 sail-away
Manufactured by: Princess Yachts, Westleigh, NSW.	



Princess 18

Neat, functional and well-performed — this award winner T.S. has a bright future.

Without any doubt, the hardest boat test to produce is the one concerning a product which is very good. A product that doesn't really have any major faults, and scarcely any minor ones — such as this award winning Princess trailer yacht. Having won the Australian Design Award from the Industrial Design Council of Australia, it really comes as no surprise to learn that we could find very little wrong with this craft; if you are in the market for a neat, economical, comfortable and safe yacht to trailer behind your (fast shrinking) small vehicle, read on. The Princess trailer yacht will suit you down to the proverbial waterline.

Design

When I first saw the Princess, I must confess it looked a bit like a Hood 23 that had been left out in the rain and shrunk, or a stretched Dennis 500 — but designer John Lucke assured me that nothing could be further from the truth. The Princess is all his own work, although he makes no attempt to deny that the flush deck cabin trunk idea was most certainly borrowed from Warwick Hood's classic yacht.

The reason, John Lucke explained, is simply that it created much greater internal volume (that's another word for "roominess") below decks in a 5.5 metre yacht. He set out with the notion of creating a yacht that would comfortably sleep four, have a toilet, a practical (if small) galley that would just suffice for periods of up to a week — and a sail plan that would give the yacht good performance with a simplicity of rigging John felt was lacking in many family

craft. His original target was 5.1 metres, but this was slowly enlarged until the final version emerged at 5.54 metres down the centreline, with a waterline length a neat 4.8 metres. John sailed the original timber version with his family for many months before finally committing the funds to the production of a complete set of moulds.

The Princess has an LOA of 5.54 metres, LWL of 4.87 metres, a beam of 2.13 metres and weighs in at a very handy 498kg. It has a built in ballast of 113kg (250lbs) and the unusual distinction of being a twin fin keeler, the fins lifting up and down in centreboard fashion through two slots in the hull instead of one. The two fins are easily raised and lowered in the cockpit without any tackle or hydraulic pump arrangement being necessary.

Lucke wanted to remove the centreboard casing from the cabin, so he set about looking at alternative arrangements. Inspired by the success of the twin fins on multi-hulls he figured there was no good reason why such a

scheme could not be adapted to a conventional mono-hulled yacht. While an eyebrow or two could be raised at his analogy with the multi-hulls, there is no doubt that he has achieved some success with his twin fin concept; not only has he eliminated the bothersome centreboard case from the cabin, he has at least matched the directional stability and resistance to heel of competitive trailer sailers using conventional centreboards or swing keels. After a degree of initial scepticism, a few simple tests during our sea trials proved the effectiveness of the system. There is no question about the simplicity of his lifting arrangement — a lanyard attached to the fins (without tackle) is merely lifted up and down according to the desired height of the fins, with the lanyard secured by a very basic jam cleat. This system will prove very popular with short handed or inexperienced sailing crews — and just as popular with skilled sailors who will quickly take advantage of the system's speedy adjustment — particularly sailing off the wind or running.

The 7/8ths sail plan is a natural choice — although not too many purchasers have worried about the larger, overlapping genoa 6.9 sq.m. preferring the combination of the main 9.94 sq.m. and jib 4.64 sq.m. for their sailing endeavours.

Although there is an active class association, the Princess so far has been sold mainly to cruising families who enjoy a social race or two, but whose

The Princess ... perhaps not the prettiest yacht in the world, but what it lacks in beauty it makes up in sheer functional efficiency, packing a lot of room into a small package.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	5.54m
LWL	4.87m
Beam	2.13m
Displacement	498kg
Sail Area:	
Mainsail	9.94 sq.m.
Jib	4.64 sq.m.
Genoa	6.9 sq.m.





The Princess is a cinch to launch and retrieve, even when there is only a couple of millimetres of water.

motivation is more directed at sailing for pleasure than for competition. Nevertheless, the genoa is available for sailors looking for the maximum potential for the Princess.

Safety has been well considered. Apart from underfloor foam buoyancy providing nearly 150% buoyancy i.e. it will not only support its own weight, but the weight of another 50% (the crew) should something untoward happen. Despite the best laid plans of sailors and men it does happen occasionally. People do sail into oyster leases and punch a hole into their fibreglass trailer yachts, others inadvertently damage the craft during a launching — only to discover (half a mile from the ramp) they are slowly sinking, and on fortunately rare occasions (usually in highly skilled, competitive racing) a trailer yacht is knocked-down in very heavy conditions because the crew was carrying too much sail power aloft. Putting all those gloomy thoughts aside for a moment though, the Princess will take care of herself in most conditions, given some prudent sail reduction at the appropriate time. With a beam width of 2.13m and a rather hard turn of the bilge, these features, together with the lead ballast (right down low along the keel) are claimed to give the Princess complete

self-righting capabilities even when the fins are fully retracted. Naturally, the cockpit is completely self-draining, and importantly, has a high bridge-deck coaming ahead of the companionway to prevent any water from rushing down into the cabin.

Going below decks in the Princess will be a pleasant surprise for most families. This is one of the roomiest 18 footers we have encountered, and we will happily endorse John Lucke's belief that the trade-off between the conventional styling of a cabin superstructure with side decks vs his flush deck arrangement is well and truly worth it. I am just over 6' tall, yet I could sit quite comfortably near the companionway and chat with the crew in the cockpit, without my head touching the "roof" or deck. Later John Lucke joined me below, and the two of us were able to sit very comfortably opposite each other, with room for 2 or 3 more adults — and that's quite unusual in a craft only 16' along the waterline.

Apart from the feeling of roominess, the Princess has a very practical layout.

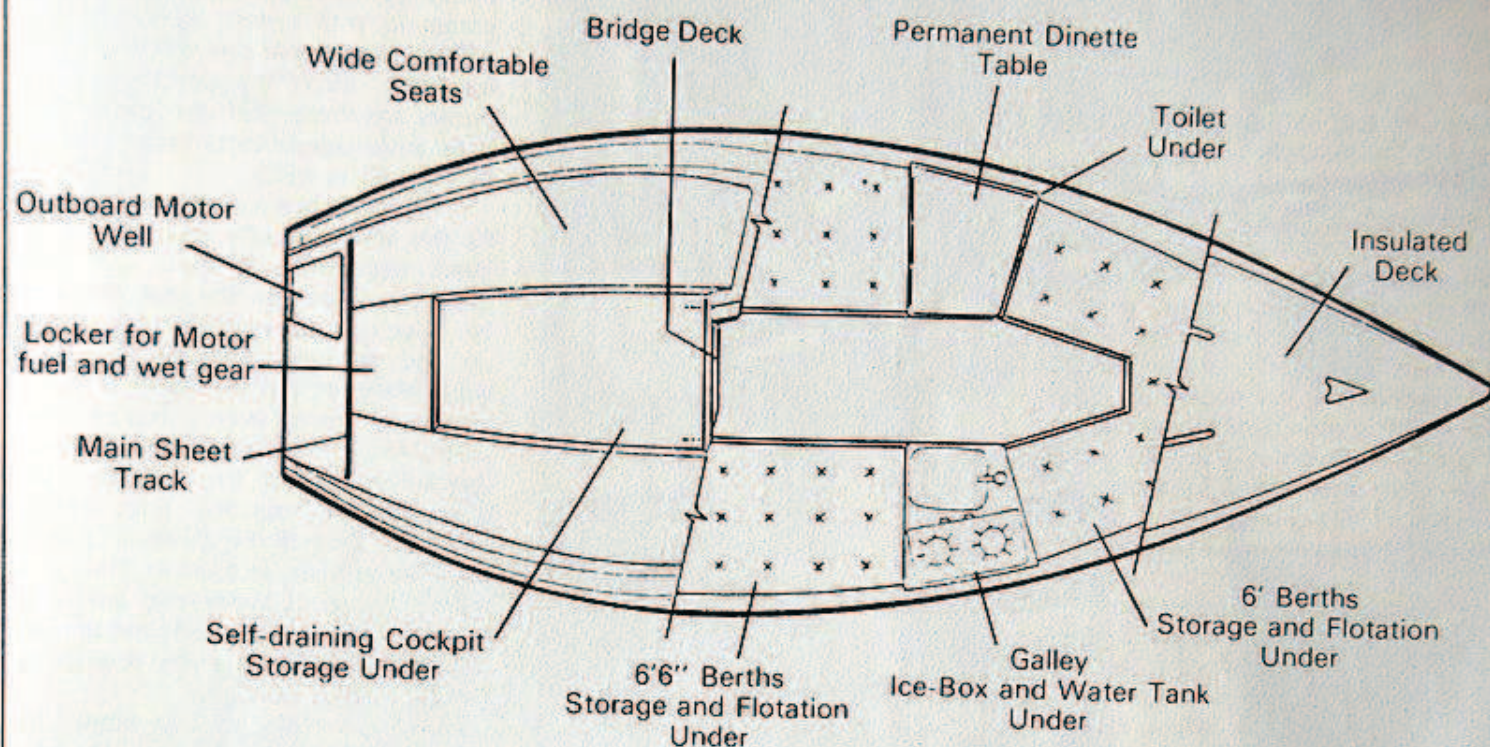
There is no revolution involved (beyond the lack of a centreboard case) but the whole thing works extremely well. The design of the furniture mould which runs from the forepeak right

through to the transom, is very good. Amidships two moulded cabinets are provided, one for the toilet and the other for the galley. It's an unusual place for the toilet, but it apparently works and that's what good design in small yachts is all about. The galley is very simple. A lift out basin features a simple hand operated cold water pump; behind this provision is made for the standard two burner metho stove. You can't do much else in the available space, but at least all the essentials are there for the preparation of basic meals.

Provision is made too for an icebox, and there is room for an esky to be slotted away under the cockpit sole.

Surprisingly, the quarter berths are extremely comfortable and unusually wide. They measure 2.00m, with a net width of 0.65m with plenty of hip height under the quarter. The two forward berths are smaller, being described as 1.82m in length, but in reality they struggle to make a true 1.67m measured down the centreline. As they are only 0.48m wide, they are more suitable for children than they are for adults.

Out in the cockpit, a careful study reveals a great deal of thought has gone into the layout of the Princess — more so than is usually evident in craft of this type and size.



Note: There is no restrictive centre-board case or mast prop in the cabin.

For example, the trailing edge of the cabin forms a very comfortable backrest. It has been deliberately raked back to about 15° for this purpose. The cockpit seats are 1.72m in length and one can envisage many a pleasant Sunday afternoon spent quietly snoozing under a tropic awning, letting the world slip slowly by . . . ! Against the stern, more good design is evident, with an outboard well moulded into the transom, and a big locker positioned right on the tuck which is just right for stowing away the auxiliary motor. The Princess only needs a little 4.47kW outboard, and designer Lucke made sure every brand of outboard will fit his transom mounting, and the locker. Not only does the outboard go in the locker it is a handy spot for wet weather gear, anchor and warp, not to mention the fuel tank itself.

One of our few criticisms of the Princess in fact concerns the anchor and warp — there is no provision on the foredeck for an anchor chain and warp to be stowed — they are carried in this aft locker.

I questioned John Lucke about this unusual situation, but he explained that as the Princess is invariably sailed straight onto the beach, it is much easier to get over the stern of the Princess and

walk around to the beach than it is to clamber down off the bow. He felt it was more practical to keep the anchor aft and walk it around, than it was to keep it forward in a well.

Although we agree that in 99 cases out of 100 it wouldn't make a lot of difference, it is the 100th time that counts — that occasion when the family gets caught (say) in a short sudden blow, and rather than try and weather the storm, dad (sensibly) decides to douse the main, furl jib, and ride out the blow with the anchor down. Under these circumstances, the placement of the anchor so far aft, probably buried under the outboard tank motor and tangled up with wet weather gear, could prove to be of serious consequence. We would much prefer to see the anchor left in its own locker or well on the foredeck, ready for use whenever the need arises — whether that need is just anchoring for lunch, or securing the yacht safely during a blow.

The only other design matter of note concerns the flush deck arrangement. Fitted with a sliding hatch over the companionway, access in and out of the cabin is very good, and thanks to the large (fixed) windows fitted on either side of the cabin, the Princess is light and airy below, even with the hatch and

washboards in position. The flush deck will prove popular with sun bathers — this is one of the rare small yachts with space to lie down for a snooze on deck.

Underway

Leaving the launchramp at Palm Beach, I was pleased to note that no attempt was made to secure the motor on the transom, as both the owner and John Lucke were obviously content to sail through the moorings in the fluke conditions. That's always a good sign. With just the merest puffs of wind, we were able to gently sail through the moorings, with the little Princess pulling quietly but firmly away. Steering response is at all times excellent — whether you are sailing near maximum hull speed, or just ghosting along between puffs.

Once clear of the moorings, we settled back to enjoy several hours of mixed sailing on Pittwater, an area notorious for its wind shifts and fluke conditions. Whilst this can be a nuisance sometimes when sailing with the family, it does create near perfect conditions for yacht testing: one minute you are lazing back half asleep — and the next, down on your ear!



I was intrigued by the twin fin system, and spent some time experimenting with the twin fins in relationship to the yacht's performance to weather, on a reach, and when running, finally concluding designer Lucke has come up with a very workable alternative to traditional centreboards or swing keels. All of the demands of the purists are there, with the more mundane advantage of extra cabin space to be enjoyed as well.

The Princess is a delightful little craft for the family. It sails very sweetly indeed, responding to gusts and puffs quickly but steadily. She goes down on her bilge quite a way before hardening up and responding to the increased wind pressure, but the effect is nicely cushioned, giving even a novice crew sufficient time to either brace themselves against the opposite seat squab to ride out the gust, and/or harden or ease off the sheets according to the helmsman's inclination. The point is that it doesn't happen so jerkily or quickly that there is insufficient time to respond — and that's a very nice safety valve for family sailing.

Given a strong enough blow, she will finally round up, but as I subscribe to the school of thought which believes this is preferable to having the yacht knocked down, perhaps taking water in the cockpit, I found the Princess' handling in extreme conditions both predictable and always responsive.

Actually, it took quite a gust to find out the worst, and even then, we had to help it along by hauling on the main sheet instead of easing it off, virtually tripping the Princess over to find out what would happen if Dad found the mainsheet stuck hard on. This is not necessarily a manoeuvre one recommends sailing with grandma, but it is not such a bad idea for families to experience in moderate conditions, just so they will know what happens should they get caught out in heavy weather.

If it occurs in the Princess, they won't have much to worry about, as this little craft is capable of riding out with some safety any blow one is likely to encounter in day or harbour sailing.

Measuring a yacht's performance is always difficult, but typically, the Princess was at her best with the sheets eased away in wind strengths of up to 15 knots. She fairly flew along in a broad reach, although it must be admitted her

ABOVE: Designer John Lucke demonstrates the simplicity of the rudder arrangement. BELOW: As you can see, the Princess has plenty of space for a family, and beautifully simple rigging arrangements. Observe neatly moulded outboard well with protective timber pad on transom.



skiff or dinghy — and that's the sort of handling every good trailer yacht should feature.

Trailing & Rigging

Setting up the Princess to go sailing takes about 20 minutes on your own. With practice you could do it in less — I would think a husband and wife team would get it down to a neat 10 minutes without a lot of extra effort. Designer John Lucke has cast a special "knuckle" fitting at the maststep, so the mast curls around the casting in such a way that he has eliminated the need for any pins, bolts or shackles at the foot of the mast insofar as the basics of raising or lowering the mast is concerned. There is no need to remove the two shrouds, and the forestay is fitted with a pelican clip to facilitate easy removal. The jib is fitted (standard equipment) with roller furling, so it disappears in short order, and the mainsail is removed in standard fashion.

As far as trailing is concerned the fin keels lift right up into the hull so the Princess is just like any trailer yacht except for a little extra support provided by the trailer right under the keels. However, as they are recessed, they have no real effect on the launching or retrieval of the Princess.

The trailer (an \$800 extra) is not too impressive, but it apparently does the job adequately. It has a 5:1 winch, the minimum number of rollers necessary and is fairly well galvanised.

Conclusion

With the exception of the missing anchor well on the foredeck, it's not too hard to agree with the judges of the Industrial Design Council who gave the Princess the highly coveted Australian Design Award.

A delight to sail, well built, a good standard of finish and a number of design innovations give the Princess a degree of comfort and roominess not usually found in yachts of this size. It adds up to a good value package for small car owners looking for a modern, safe family yacht that will require a minimum of maintenance and take up a relatively small amount of space in the backyard.

performance downwind (with the fins up) was quite respectable. I don't think it pointed quite as finely to weather as several other yachts in this category, but the degree of difference is so finite.

Of more concern (to this writer) is a yacht's ability to sail to weather *without* the leerrail awash and everybody hanging on for grim death. It seems much more important in a cruising or family environment for the yacht to make good her way to weather, firmly sheeted down perhaps, but with her crew dry, relaxed and enjoying their sailing. So it is with the Princess — this is a yacht that will convert even the most nervous mother or child to the world of sailing very quickly.

We ended our session with a typical Pittwater beat back to the beach (30 yards forward and 29 backwards!) as the wind dropped further and further away and changed from sou'east to nor'east as we tacked back and forth, inching our way back to the beach launchramp.

Once again, I was impressed with the excellent lightweather performance and tacking ability of the little Princess. With the wind coming in puffs between the boats moored at Palm Beach, we slowly worked our way inshore, with the Princess coming about easily and gently with scarcely any discernible way on. Nevertheless, we slowly worked our way through the moorings. Just as easily as we would have done in a lightweight

