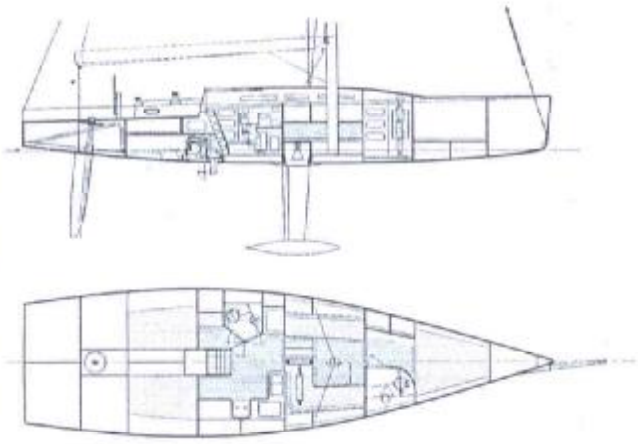
Cookson 50

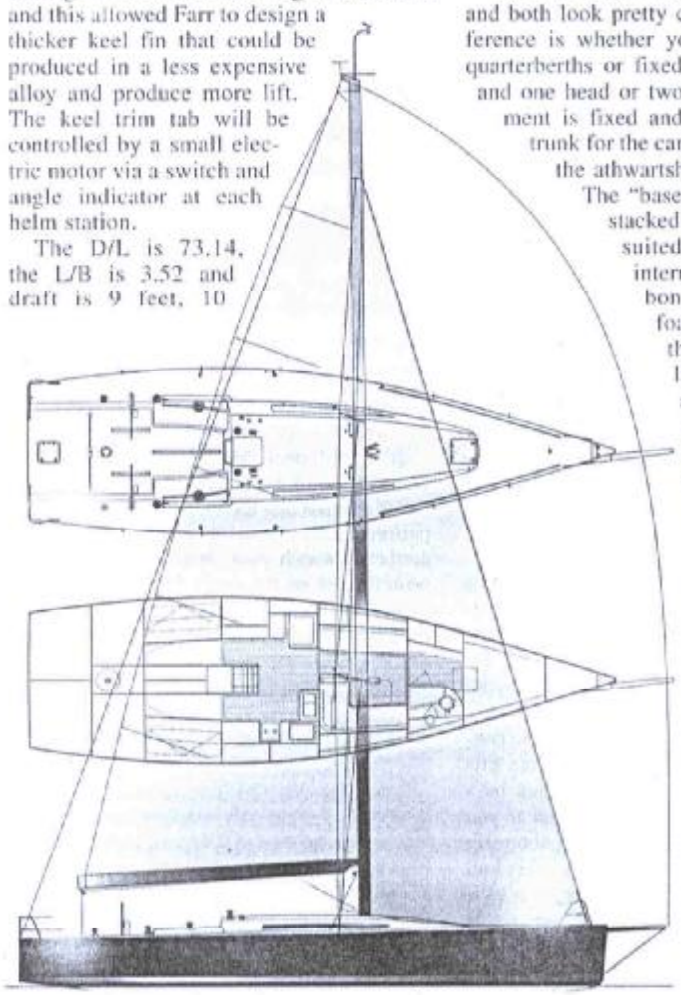
Racer-cruiser

Now this design is really not your father's cruising boat. Mick Cookson, of Cookson Boats in New Zealand, wanted a new racer-cruiser for himself and he started with the idea that a 50-foot version of a Transpac 52 might be a good way to go. But without the constraints of the TP52 box rule he imagined what would happen if you married a swing keel to the basic TP52 hull form at an LOA of 50 feet. After considering other radical go-fast ideas Mick swung back toward what he calls a "more conservative go-fast boat." Mick calls this a "seriously quick high-performance production 50-footer." The Farr design office did the design work.

The primary consideration in going with the canting keel was cost. With a very high aspect ratio canting fin supporting the lead ballast you would usually add some type of forward foil to provide the lift you lost with the canting keel. To save money, Mick went with a trim tab on the canting keel and restricted the canting angle to 35 degrees. This reduced the travel of the canting ram and further helped to reduce cost. By eliminating the forward foils drag was reduced and this allowed Farr to design a thicker keel fin that could be produced in a less expensive alloy and produce more lift. The keel trim tab will be controlled by a small electric motor via a switch and angle indicator at each helm station.

The D/L is 73.14, the L/B is 3.52 and draft is 9 feet, 10 inches. The daggerlike rudder blade is about 75-percent of the keel fin area. There is enough overhang aft to prevent the 50 from dragging its transom in light air. In TP52-style the transom is cut off vertically. This maximizes deck space while maximizing sailing length. There is maybe 6 inches of overhang at the bow. I can't tell much about hull shape from the plan and profile views. I suspect the BWL is narrow and the run is quite flat. The sheer shows about one and a half inches of spring and the transom has no camber at all. This will be a very fast boat at its very best blast reaching with the keel canted all the way. I would guess that sailing upwind the keel will not be canted to the full 35 degrees and in fact will be kept as vertical as conditions allow in order to maximize lift. The trim tab will help with this.





You can chose from two interior layouts and both look pretty comfy to me. The difference is whether you want stacked pipe quarterberths or fixed double quarterberths and one head or two. The saloon arrangement is fixed and designed around the trunk for the canting keel that is below the athwartships leg of the dinette. The "base boat" layout with its stacked pipe berths is more suited to racing. All the internal structures are carbon and E-glass over foam with epoxy. With the well-laid out and large galley, and oversized heads, both of these layouts should be suitable for cruising. Boats like this are usually semi-custom anyway so I'm certain Mick would entertain interior modifications so long as the saloon was left alone.

The deck layout is a hybrid combining racing and cruising needs. There is a low and short cockpit coaming forward that will provide some security when sitting forward and also help keep some water out of the cockpit. The steering wheels are well forward in the cockpit and the mainsheet traveler is aft of the wheels. The side decks are broad and clean with a small toerail (trip strip) forward so the foredeck man has at least an illusion of security when changing sails. My complaint with this deck layout is that there are only three hatches and that includes the companionway hatch and the hatch all the way in the stern. There is no hatch over the head and no opening ports. There is no hatch over the saloon area. I'd like to see a few more hatches sprinkled around the deck for better ventilation.

The rig is an all carbon fractional-type with double swept spreaders with a sweep angle of 22 degrees. This is a lot but I can't imagine this boat sailing much with the wind aft of 130 degrees apparent so interference with the mainsail will not be a problem. This amount of sweep eliminates the need for runners. The bowsprit is retractable and the asymmetrical chute is flown from the masthead. There is about 12 inches of roach overlap on the 12mm Vectran backstay. The SA/D is 34.61. That should perk the old man up. "Hey Dad, wake up, we're doing 16 knots."

A sailing writer asked me recently to define "motorsailer." It might as well have been "cruising boat." The old definitions don't work anymore. A cruising boat is a boat you cruise in: Period. Mick Cookson will be able to cruise on by just about all the other cruisers out there in this 50-footer.

LOA 50'; LWL 45'6"; Beam 14'3"; Draft 9'10"; Displacement 15,432 lbs.; Ballast 6,600 lbs.; Sail Area 1,345 sq. ft.; SA/D 34.61; D/L 73.14; L/B 3.52; Auxiliary Yanmar 4JH3CE 56-hp; Fuel 56 gals.; Water 105 gals.

TP Cookson Boats Ltd., 59 Hillside Road, Glenfield, Auckland, New Zealand, 64-9 444 9915, **www.cooksonboats.co.nz**.

OBE: $750,000
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