80-footer is a big step forward for maxi design for her

Despite appearances, Karl Kwok's new P
80-footer is a big step forward for primpressive handling systems

Taken at face value, the least l clone. She has a fixed bowsprit like a marlin's snout and no spinnaker pole-she has masthead asymmetric kites.

> Her towering carbon mast, with its five sets of spreaders, twin topmast backstays and checkstays, are evidence that her mainsail will look like a modern VO70, with its square top head and rectangular shape. Once up, it does.

Yet Karl Kwok's latest Farrdesigned racer is much more than a grouping of all the juicy bits in race boat design and technology. Beau Geste is a big step forward for maxi boat design and an indication of what could be about to filter down through the ranks.

Fact file

Designer – Farr Yacht Design Builder - Cookson Yachts NZ

79ft 10in LOA 24.33m 24.20m 70ft sin LWL 6.15m 20ft 2in Beam 5.55/3.8m 18ft 3in/12ft 6in Draught 24,031kg 52,979lb Disp Sail area: 2,476ft2 230m² Mainsall 1,719ft2 Genoa 159m²

6,146ft²

IRC RATING - THE COMPETITION Beau Geste-1.626

571m2

Ran-1.562 Alfa Romeo 3-1.568 Leopard-1.868

VO70-1.698

Spinnaker

inshore course. To hoist and set the

It took the same amount of time at the bottom of the downwind leg And both manoeuvres employed just three people on the foredeck!

A large part of this manoeuvrability comes down to powered winches and the innovative spinnaker-handling system that allows a 'conventional' asymmetric to be furled (see Leading Edge, page 33). Indeed, most of her sails forward of the mast are furling types. Those that aren't use soft hanks and no headfoils. The result is a sail plan that is not only easy to handle, but ready to be deployed in a moment, especially the spinnakers which don't require repacking or wooling each time.

On deck, the lack of pedestals, let alone genoa tracks or complex multi-purchase control lines, makes for an open and uncluttered cockpit. Instead hydraulically powered conventional winches provide the grunt for trimming and soft toggle-style loops provide a variety of anchoring positions for the genoa barber hauler.

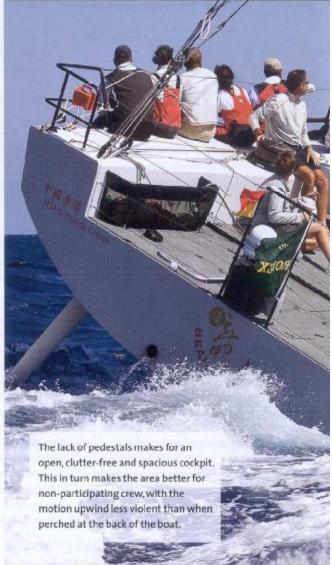
"I believe we're living in a changing world where organisers are taking a different view on powered systems," says Kwok. "We decided against a canting keel system, however, because that would take us into a different division."

But perhaps the most impressive thing about her is that it takes just 12 to race her. It doesn't seem that long ago that double this number were required aboard a maxi to go half as fast.

The five-spreader rig incorporates a fullwidth chainplate base and nonoverlapping headsails. However, the fathead-type mainsail does mean that twin top mast backstays are required to support the mast fore and aft



Lazyjacks are more usually the domain of cruisers, but Beau Geste is fitted with lazyjacks to help flake the mainsail when lowered



Looking aft on port side from the companionway. She's spartan, but comfortable and beautifully finished below decks



A deck-stepped mast is unusual aboard a boat of this size, but is necessary given the lifting keel, which rises up to the deckhead. Note the shims required for setting the pretension in the rig



Soft eyes with toggles replace the more conventional transverse genoa tracks. The system is geared more towards offshore sailing and saves weight, not only in the track and car system, but with the additional components required. Note the full-width chainplate base

successes

Cowes Week

Just 2m 10s short of new round the Island record

astnet Race

2nd across the line, 7th overall

Maxi Yacht Rolex Cur

ıst in class in Sardinia in September



Halyard locks – a red light under the mast-mounted instrument displays shows when the halyard has gone beyond the lock

Winches – all winches are powered apart from those for the running backstays, which are manual for safety reasons. All winches can be operated with a top handle Primaries and mainsheet – Harken 1125. Pit winches: 2 x Harken 990, 2 x Harken 65 Crew – she typically races with 12-14 crew, less than half the number required on maxis of two decades ago. The rest are guests!

e lifting keel cextends to underside he deck and uces draught m 5.55m to ranageable





Forward cabin doesn't get more minimalist than this, but the boat is used for cruising



Navigation station is positioned on the centreline, under the cockpit floor aft



The wheel-shaped steering quadrant drives tillers for both rudders