Trailer Sailing
Australia

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THE FAST FARR

The trailer sailers from the drawing board of New Zealand designer Bruce Farr have developed a strong following on both sides of the Tasman, and now he's added a racing model to the range. VANESSA DUDLEY tried the new 740 Sport on Gippsland Lakes.

THE Farr trailable yacht owners were out in force for this year's Marlay Point Overnight Race in their patriotically-named boats; Farrnatic, for example, and Farr-Out, Farreal, Farrocious, Farr Skye. Among their ranks was a new Bruce Farr creation, a racing sailor's version of the cruiser/racer trailable yachts the New Zealander has previously designed. In keeping with the trend, the new boat was called Farrcical. It was a 740 Sport, the first of its kind to reach Australia.

Farrcical's owner is Barry Bladon, retailer of the Farr trailable yachts in Melbourne. Like the other retailers and manufacturers who took part in the Marlay Point Race in newly designed boats, Bladon was out to win. Though the race is supposedly just for fun and is regarded in that light by most participants, the guys with new boats to sell regard it as an ideal marketing opportunity.

Bladon did win the Marlay Point Race, taking line honours in the fleet of 600 boats in what was a frustrating, tiring and one hell of a good time race. He was beaten on handicap in Division one by a Compass Careel 22, a Castle 650 and a Hood 23, but explained during our boat test immediately after the race that the 740 Sport was designed for line honours rather than handicap wins.

"I started racing a Farr 6000 when they were first introduced," Bladon said. "It was designed as a cruiser/racer but for a while it was the fastest thing around. Then came the Seaway 25 and the Sonata 8, bigger boats which started beating us and people started saying those Farrs are too slow. The same thing happened with the Farr 5000 and then the 7500 when they were introduced. Both were cruiser/racers again but people forgot or didn't appreciate that. I got tired of being rubbished and when Bruce Farr came out here two years ago I asked him to design a true racing boat. There were two options; pure speed or good handicap performance. We decided to go for speed. Bruce looked at what was around and came up with the 740."

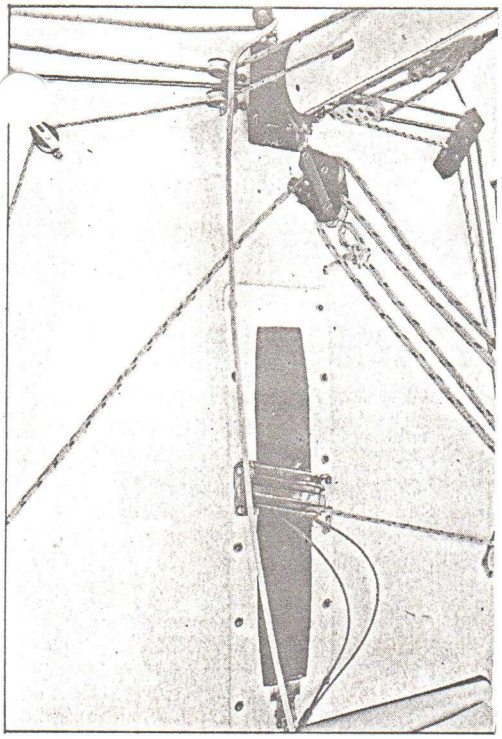
Farrcical was delivered in mid-December last year. She arrived too late for the first heat of the Kinnears Classic, the major series for trailable yachts in Victoria and probably Australia. She took line honours in the next two heats and second in the final race. Her handicap results were one first and two seconds, which put Bladon second overall in the series, just one quarter of a point behind the National JOG champion Ken Wilson who sailed a Sonata 6.7.

These results plus the Marlay Point Overnight Race win indicate the boat is a goer. She looks it too, with her sophisticated rig and characteristic shallow-hulled Farr hull design.

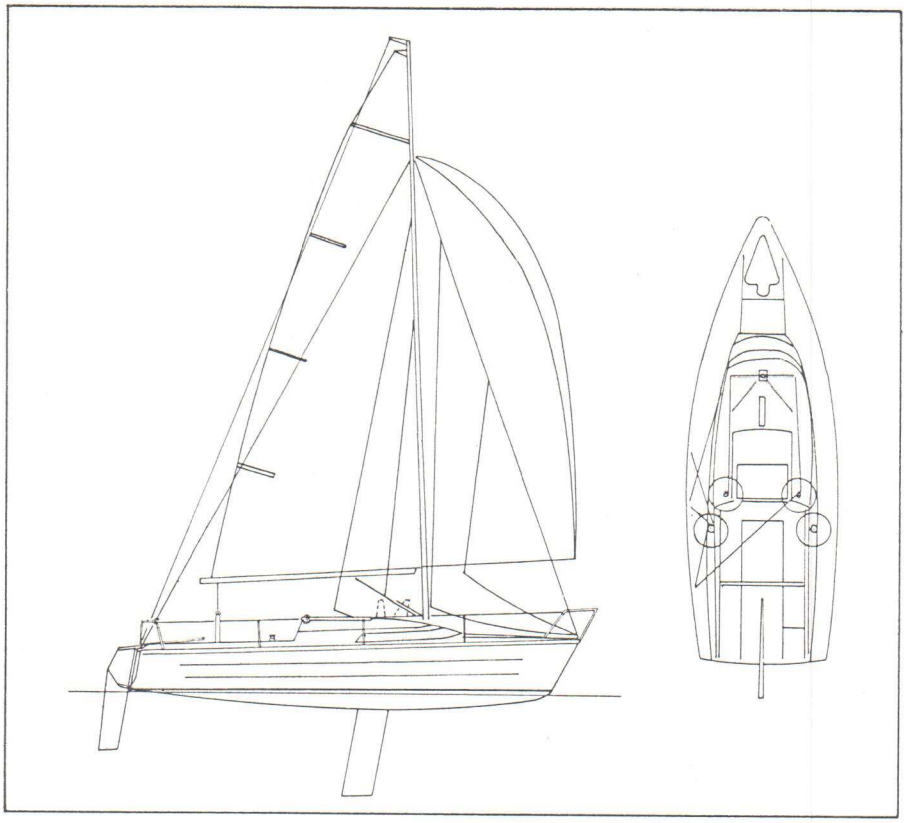
The 7.37 metre (24'2") hull has a straight stemmed fine-entry bow which widens from about 40cm (15") back, flaring to a 2.5 m (8'2") beam. The beamy lines continue right to the stern, giving the 740 a very wide transom. According to Bladon this gives the boat good stability. The long straight lines underneath are conducive to speed downwind.

Sea Nymph Boats Ltd in Auckland manufacture all Farr's trailable yachts and do a good professional job. Being the largest manufacturer of GRP yachts and power boats in the Southern Hemisphere they can understandably benefit from economies of scale and production line techniques.

The 740 is of hand-laid GRP con-



Racing layout of control lines includes centreboard hoist with controls to cockpit.



struction in the "clinker" style characteristic of all Farr's trailable yachts. This consists of two parallel "right angle turns" running along the topsides, the lowest about 40 cm (15″) above waterline. Bladon says this construction gives added strength while allowing lightness of construction. Materials in the deck include Kevlar for further weight-saving. The hull weighs 1040 kg (2300 lb) of which 118 kg (260 lb) is in the deck.

The hull is strengthened by four integral ribs running across the cabin floor at the bulkheads, the centreboard area, aft of the centreboard and just aft of the companionway.

The centreboard case is 'glass, covered with carpet, and takes up a fair amount of room in the cabin. After all, the boat is designed for racing rather than comfortable cruising. The centreboard is raised and lowered in its case by a 6:1 pulley system which is tailed around a winch. It is constructed of moulded lead within a 'glass outer skin, with most of the lead distributed in the lower half of the board. This accounts for the boat's entire 308 kg (680 lb) ballast.

The board gives a deep draft of 1.7 m (5′7″) when fully down. With the board fully up draft is a mere 0.277 m (11″). Like other centreboarders the 740 has a beaching rudder which swings back and up when released. This allows the boat to be sailed in shallow waters and beached ashore.

The 740's rig is modelled on the rig Farr designed for the New Zealand Quarter Tonner, Anchor Challenge, third place-getter in the Quarter Ton Worlds last December. The 8.45 m (27′7″) Yachtspar mast is stepped on deck and set up with twin spreaders in line and split backstay. Because the high aspect mainsail has a full-length batten up top and a fairly large roach the backstay runs from a longer mast crane than is usually seen. This ensures the backstay does not catch the mainsail leech during tacks and gybes.

The yacht is fractionally (three-quarter) rigged, and therefore running backstays are necessary to allow forestay tensioning. These backstays run down through blocks on either side of the stern to a 6:1 pulley system which allows fine adjustments to be made without using a winch.

Sails on Farrcical are from the Hood loft in New Zealand. They consist of a mainsail with trim reef and triple reefing points, No 1 Standard, No 2 and 3 genoas and stormsail plus two kites; one full downwind kite and a smaller flat reacher. Bladon regretted he did not have a No 1 Light Mylar genoa for the Marlay Point Race, but said such a sail would be included with the others if the 740 was bought fully rigged. He said package buyers could choose sails from the Hood lofts in New Zealand or Melbourne or the Melbourne North loft. Buyers preferring to equip the boat themselves would be provided with sail plans.

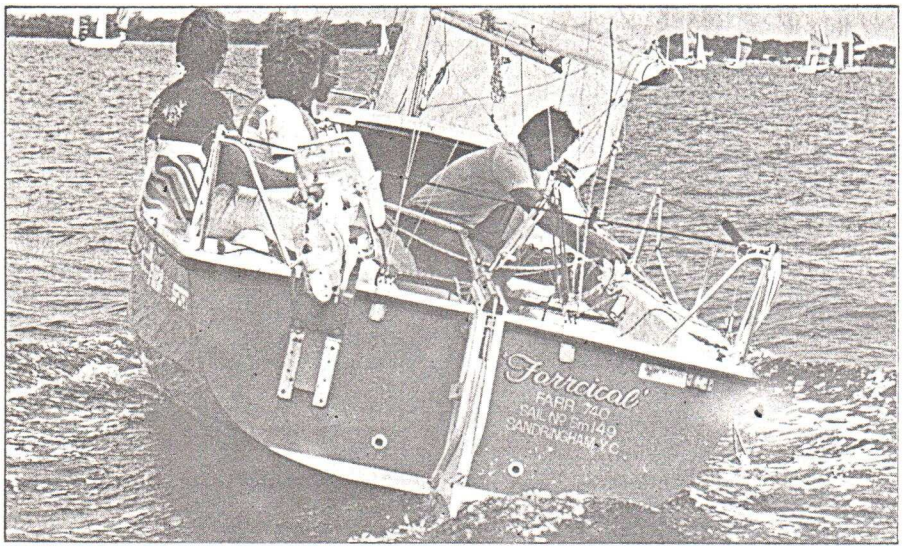
An interesting application of dinghy theory to the bigger yacht is the spinnaker pole set-up. When not in use the pole resides on the Baverstock section boom, held there by strops. The topping lift and kicker remain attached to the pole at all times, which means the crewman who is poling out the kite has only to stand beside the mast to do his job rather than clambering around the foredeck.

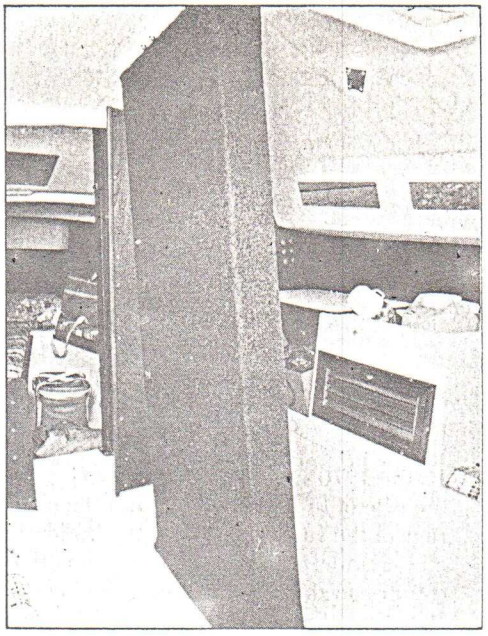
The foredeck and sidedecks are non-slip surfaced. At the bow is a recessed anchor well and a hinged ventilation hatch providing access to the for'ard cabin. The sidedecks are wide right back to the transom and are separated from the cockpit by high coamings.

The cockpit is deep, wide due to the amount of beam aft, and about one third of the boat's length. The cockpit benches are wide and long enough for all four crew members to be seated. The helmsman sits behind the main traveller, which runs across to the coaming on either side and is set up with the continuous 2:1 purchase traveller line. The mainsheet system is 4:1 with the final swivel block positioned on the cockpit floor. The helmsman obtains better forward vision when he perches on the coaming or sits on the sidedeck,

Specifications

Displacement	1320 kg (2293 lbs)	LOA	7.30 m (24′2″)
Ballast	308 kg (680 lb)	LWL	6.640 m (21′9″)
Price, Bare Hull	$14,000	Beam	2.500 m (8′2″)
Hull Fitted Out	$15,900	Draft (Board Up)	0.277 m (11″)
Complete (inc. trailer, sails, pushpit, pulpit etc)	$20,000	Draft (Board Down)	1.770 m (5′7″)





LEFT: Backstays are complicated and not for the unskilled.

ABOVE: Interior showing carpeted centreboard case, sink and space for stove to starboard.

using the tiller extension. The crewman next to him works the mainsheet, traveller and backstays.

The other two crewmen work the control lines which are led to the aft end of the cabin top, where there are Maxwell 16 winches, one on either side. On the port side are the control lines for the port headsail halyard, the spinnaker halyard and the topping lift and kicker. To starboard are the main halyard, starboard headsail halyard, centreboard and cunningham downhaul control lines. On both sides are spinnaker tweakers.

All these lines could result in one monumental tangle, a situation which is avoided by the use of large cloth storage bags attached to the inner face of the coaming and the companionway bulkhead. Similar bags are attached along the starboard cabin wall down below. They are a useful addition.

The genoa sheets are led aft through blocks on one of three inboard tracks or through clip-on blocks in fixed positions outboard of the walkway, depending on the conditions. They are sheeted home on Maxwell 16s, which also serve as spinnaker sheet winches.

The cockpit benches house storage lockers. The starboard aft locker is self-contained with ventilation and drainage for safe storage of the petrol tank. The outboard on Farrcical is a Johnson 7.5 on a transom mounting on the port side.

Down below the 740 is adequate if not luxurious. For'ard is a semi-separate cabin divided from the main cabin by a full bulkhead to starboard and a half-bulkhead to port. This cabin contains a V-berth which can be left as two single bunks or converted into a big double bunk by the addition of a timber insert and cushion. The after end of the starboard bunk is hinged and is designed to lift, revealing the modest head. There is a certain amount of privacy because it is positioned behind the full bulkhead.

In the main cabin are bunks on either side, a 2.7 m (9′) bunk to port and a 2.1 m. (7′) bunk to starboard. Half of the starboard bunk is tucked under the cockpit floor, leaving room for'ard for the galley. This consists of a recessed stove, sink and louvered cupboard. A port quarter berth can be fitted by buyers themselves if they wish.

Bladon said the accommodation was kept simple because the aim was to design a racing boat, not a floating caravan. As it is the boat would comfortably sleep four.

Testing the boat after the Marlay Point Race had its disadvantages; all of us were tired and there wasn't a great deal of breeze. But it was interesting to step straight onto the Farr 740 from Space Invader, Ken Wilson's Sonata 6.7 which I had sailed on in the race. Both boats are centreboarders and designed as racing boats for the JOG and trailable yacht circuits.

I had found the Sonata sensitive to crew movements and sail adjustments, quick to tack and accelerate and light and responsive on the helm; very much the big sister of high performance dinghies. The Farr 740 felt quite different; more the displacement boat, light on the helm but less sensitive to crew movements, tacking more slowly but carrying her momentum further during lulls. Both boats have plenty of get up and go and I would dearly love to sail them in a fresh breeze, an opportunity which didn't arise on the Marlay Point weekend.

The difference between the two boats rests largely with the difference in size. The extra couple of feet and beam of the Farr 740 makes her a roomier boat on deck and below.

The boats have similar layouts, both effective and with little that can be improved upon. This is because they are both unashamedly racing-oriented and their designers have hence put much thought into the rigs. The Farr is a faster boat because of her size and larger rig but she is more expensive and more difficult to trail. The Sonata has proved an excellent handicap performer.

Comparisons aside, the Farr 740 Sport is for racing sailors who know what they are about. It is well equipped for racing, less equipped for low-key sailing but still adequate. ▲