



At the Sydney International Boat Show, Sydney Yachts released a stunning little sister to their highly successful Sydney 38 OD. Barry Tranter test-sails the Sydney 32

SYDNEY 32



THE SYDNEY 32 is worth buying for the steering wheel alone. Place a hand on the rim of that big, brightly coloured wheel and you're singing the same song as Paul Cayard or Iain Murray, or the guy at the helm of the Sydney 38. At the helm of this boat, you'll blast away from the start line and won't be seen again for the rest of the afternoon.

A lot of thinking has gone into this yacht by Sydney Yachts and designers Murray, Burns and Dovell. Sydney Yachts sales manager Martin Thompson (the crew call him 'Tack' because he was only a little tackler when he joined Ian Bashford) reckons it was easy to work out that a market existed for a smaller version of the Sydney 38 one design.

"We talked to a lot of people and it seemed to us that more important than price these days is crew numbers," says Martin. "People want to sail with only five crew."

"We were also seeing a lot of one-design people from Etchells, Cavalier 28s, J24s and Young 88s who wanted a one design the family could enjoy."

The designers and builders have produced a one-design 32-footer with an IRC TCC of 1.027 which, according to Martin, the numbers predict should be able to match the 38 on corrected time.

The hull is balsa-cored and the topsides use high-density foam, sandwiched between hand-laid glass. Grand-prix construction was avoided to keep costs down and to pursue the simple ruggedness demanded by Australian conditions.

The boat has the usual one-design restrictions. The sail wardrobe is limited to a mainsail, three headsails and two spinnakers (from the sailmaker you choose) but only one non-amateur is allowed in each crew. You can have two new sails a year.

"The 32 is slightly more cruising-oriented than the 38," says Martin. "People aren't going away for a week anymore, but they want to overnight." There are two double berths aft, but the forepeak is empty except for the toilet and the sails. There's a full navigation area, as the owner will probably want to do, say, the Coffs Harbour race.

There has been no skimping on the galley, which includes a stove, icebox and sink in a linear configuration on the starboard side. There's a full settee and table – a pleasant cruiser/racer interior. In the bow you will even find an anchor well, not included on the 38.

There is some nice grand-prix detailing. There's that wheel, for a start, with no tiller option. Because the headsails don't overlap, the shrouds attach to carbon chainplates that are integral with the hull sides, as on America's Cup boats and current

Maxis. The backstay is hydraulic, and the mainsheet doesn't use a tackle – it is split and each part runs forward on the boom then back along the deck to a winch each side on the cockpit coaming.

"It's faster than a 6:1 system when you're ducking a boat or bearing away in a hurry, and a small girl can easily work the main," says Martin. The 6:1 traveller lines run to cams on the coamings but it is so easy for the crew to ease the main on the winch and let the Selden gas strut vang look after the leech. The winches are more than ample; 40s for the primaries, 32s for the main and spinnaker. The cockpit lockers are removable.

The Whalespar mast has twin spreaders and discontinuous diagonals. Rigger Phil Bate of Yachtworks has used locking clips on the genoa sheets and spinny halyard, the latter with the sheathing stripped from the Spectra core. The main and jib halyards are Vectran.

The 32 costs \$227,000, ex-factory. Martin is keen to point out that the price includes all the grand-prix-level gear. "We like to put all the stuff on as standard so the buyer knows at the front end what he or she is up for, instead of finding out halfway through the season," he says.

We saw 7.2 knots of boatspeed in 18 to 20 knots apparent, hard on the wind. On a two-sail reach we saw 8.2 in 18 apparent at 100 degrees. Okay, the breeze was all over the place so it was hard to get steady readings, but in gusts of 25 apparent with only two guys on the coaming (legs inboard), Martin on the helm and me back at the transom, the Sydney 32 bolted upwind, with

only occasional help from the mainsheet hand.

In gusts, the 32 heels, stiffens up and then accelerates. The helm is sharp and perfectly geared, the helmsman's footrests correctly placed, and everything about the boat is light to use. She has small-boat reactions and tactile responses, which is the highest compliment. But the strongest impression relates to how easy she is to sail, particularly on a gusty day. The tortuous path of technology has brought us to a point of wonderful simplicity which means novices can enjoy fast sailing as much as the diehard. ■



SYDNEY 32

LOA	9.67m
Beam at deck	3.21m
Draught	2.04m
Displacement	3,100kg
Ballast	1,300kg
Fuel	65 litres
Water	200 litres
Engine	18hp Yanmar saildrive, FW-cooled
Price	\$227,000, ex-factory
Design	Murray, Burns & Dovell
Contact	Sydney Yachts (02) 9979 8044