

Reviewed in Australian Sailing magazine

Getting fresh

Open transom, modified coachhouse and fixed carbon fibre bowsprit are the major changes (Andrea Francolini/Sydney Yachts picture).



Sydney Yachts has freshened up its proven 36 model for low-stress performance, by Jordan Spencer

THE Sydney 36 design has been around for a few years now, putting in strong service both as a club racer and charter fleet workhorse. First designed by Murray Burns & Dovell in 1995, it has now been reconfigured as the new Sydney 36CR.

Essentially Sydney Yachts has taken a racing hull and upgraded it to suit a wider market. The 36 hull has always been a great design, perhaps the best hull shape in the Sydney Yachts range.

The new CR version is aimed squarely at what might best be called the “performance twilight racer” market: people who want a bit of fun racing

around the cans, without the stresses of needing a large and experienced crew, and who also occasionally want to sneak away for a few days’ cruising.

The CR version is configured to rate very well under IRC, while also having the “wow” appeal to impress non-sailing friends who are onboard for the New Years Eve fireworks.

The changes

The most noticeable changes are the larger coachhouse, the open stern and the bowsprit. Beyond that, there are a raft of smaller modifications.

The 1.1m fixed carbon bowsprit

sticking out the front is removable if required and is as long as it can be while still allowing the bowman to reach out and spike the spinnaker tack.

The 36 has a slender hull with a fine entry and a reasonably fine stern as well. Therefore, it shouldn’t need much sail area to drive it and as such should require smaller deck hardware and fittings. The trade-off is that the boat is likely to be more tender.

To counter this, Sydney Yachts has given the CR a deeper and heavier keel with torpedo lead bulb, heavier in fact than the Sydney 38’s bulb. This contributes to a ballast to displacement



ratio above 40 per cent. The boat also carries a little width in the midsection for form stability.

The headsails are non-overlapping, the mast and boom are Whalespar alloy sections and the mast is internally sleeved with twin spreaders and discontinuous rigging. According to Martin Thompson of Sydney Yachts, these masts (also used on the popular Sydney 38s) have been exceptional right across their range over the years and the company just can't justify using anything else.

The shroud base is a carbon chainplate structure. The carbon is wrapped over a two square metre section on each side and is certainly an expensive solution, but it provides the advantage of no holes through the deck or hull and therefore no leaks.

There is a Forespar telescopic vang and a substantial alloy mast bracket for the B&G instruments, which would easily support a crew member's weight if needing to reach up the rig.

All halyards are led back along the deck to a bank of four spinlock XTS rope clutches each side of the companionway. There are two Harken 40 winches there for the control lines, while in the cockpit the primary winches are 44s and there is another set of 44s for the mainsheet, which uses the double-ended "German system".

All the deck fittings are Harken, while the



ABOVE: Non-overlapping rig and hull are well proportioned and nicely balanced (Andrea Francolini/Sydney Yachts pictures).

LEFT: The forward V-berth.

stanchions and lifelines are custom made stainless, fabricated at the factory in Nowra.

The forward hatch is a D-shaped double-hinged Gebo, good for kite launches.

All the halyards and control lines are spectra or dynex rope, with the occasional bit of polyester here and there and no need for keen racers to upgrade.

Steering is via a large composite wheel (there is no tiller option). All control lines are led forward of the wheel, including the cascading backstay, leaving a safe, uncluttered area behind the helmsman for any inexperienced guests. The cockpit is longer than the old 36 cockpit, picking up an extra 240mm by opening up the stern.

As for construction, the hand-laid hull uses vinylester laminated with polyester resin over an end grain balsa core. The main structural bulkhead is moulded and uses a balsa core with GRP skin. The boat has a hand-laminated structural grid incorporating the longitudinals and engine bed.

The deck uses E glass and unidirectional glass with an end grain balsa and foam core. The non-slip is moulded in, as are toerails forward of the chainplates. There are no toerails aft for crew comfort sitting on the windward rail while racing. The boat comes complete with an epoxy undercoat and anti-fouling.

Inside

A relatively narrow hull doesn't allow for the roomiest accommodation, but what you do get here is immaculately presented. The interior is finished in a high gloss gelcoat and features a grooved moulding which makes the boat look as though it is wood-plank construction.

All the joinery and the saloon table are trimmed in southern myrtle and the table has a stunning finish. All corners are rounded and all the cupboards are fitted flush, so there are no edges to catch you.

The floor is covered in a great product called Flexiteek which is very grippy and doesn't shift when you walk on it like floorboards do. Overhead, there are no bolt heads at all showing through from the deck; the liner has a completely clean finish and it looks great. This yacht is the first in the Sydney Yachts range to have a full headliner and the result is fantastic.

Up front is a cabin with a V-berth which is 2.1m long and has plenty of storage underneath. On the port side is a toilet and sink with hand basin, hot and cold pressured water and shower.

In the saloon there are two settees, again both 2.1m long. At the base of the companionway to port is the galley with a twin burner methylated stove, an icebox which can be upgraded to a fridge, and a sink. To starboard is the small navigation station and table.

Our sail was on Michael Delany's *Eye Appeal*, which looked very sleek in black and white. *Eye Appeal's* fitout included VHF radio, CD player and the option of fitting electronic navigation instruments and/or room to use a laptop computer instead.

The aft quarters each house long berths, either wide singles or narrow doubles (depending on whether you are a glass half full or glass half empty person). In between, the companionway stairs lift out to provide full access to the engine. The engine is a 30hp Yanmar diesel, driving through a Gori two-blade folding propeller.

Sailing

Our outing was in a 12-15 knot north-easterly. *Eye Appeal's* sails from the Hood loft consisted of a full main and a No 1 medium jib, basically a cruising set and fine for the task at hand.

The forestay reaches about seven-eighths of the way up the mast and includes a Tuffluff headfoil. The mainsail track is a new system custom engineered and built by Whale Spars to accommodate cars, a bolt rope or a combination of the two.

A powerful mast certainly helps boats with non-overlapping rigs by allowing the main to provide that little bit of extra grunt. The problem with non-overlapping



Looking forward in the saloon; revamped interior has that "wow" appeal.

headsails is that you give up something in the light stuff, but what you gain is a far easier boat to sail and greater longevity from your jibs, which spend less time smacking around the mast through tacks and need less horsepower from the crew to sheet them in.

There were four of us aboard for our outing and none of us bothered hitting the windward rail. The boat was very stable and not tippy at all; you could even race the boat three-up. The 36CR looked and felt beautifully proportioned in terms of mainsail to jib size and also sail area to boat size.

When I started steering the boat I found I was over-steering, as the helm is so direct. So I gradually reduced my inputs, until I was able to lift my hands off the wheel completely and leave them off for a good few minutes. The boat was so well balanced, it could be steered upwind by trimming the main alone.

Off the wind with the asymmetric spinnaker up, the 36CR felt great. There is plenty of bite in the rudder, so you can flick the boat down the waves or carry the spinnaker at a shy angle fairly comfortably. It helped that the kite was a really good shape; a lot of people seem to think bigger is always better for these things when that isn't necessarily true. Hood seems to have a nice pattern for this one.

Gybing, setting and dropping an asymmetric is so much simpler than a symmetric spinnaker, which also means you can chase shifts more easily. Plus you don't need nine or ten crew members to make it happen.

I am not a big fan of quoting numbers, because you just don't know if the instruments are accurate. However, uphill we were registering 7.3 – 7.5kts boat

speed for 26 – 27 degrees of apparent wind angle (AWA), and downhill we were reading between 8.5 – 9.5kts at 150 degrees AWA. The uphill numbers did seem a little ambitious to me for a 36ft boat, but in any case it was easy and fun sailing.

The Sydney 36CR is a rejuvenated design with changes that have definitely added to the boat. Combine that with a very competitive price and you are looking at a very good yacht. I suspect this will prove to be the most successful version of this boat. The quality of construction and fitout is immaculate and that makes this boat a very worthwhile proposition. 

Specifications

Length overall	10.99m
Beam	3.45m
Draft	2.30m
Displacement	5200kg
Sail area: Main & jib	70 sq m
Construction	Hand-laid vinylester/polyester resin/biaxial and double bias GRP/end grain balsa sandwich hull; isophthalic white gelcoat; E glass/end grain balsa sandwich deck; moulded GRP structural grid.
Water capacity	100lt
Engine	Yanmar 30hp diesel saildrive
Base price	\$259,000 ex sails and electronic instruments; \$271,000 sailaway with basic sails and instrument package.
Designer	Murray Burns & Dovell.
Builder	Sydney Yachts, Jones Bay Wharf, Pyrmont, NSW.
Website	www.sydneyyachts.com.
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