

The Azzura Marine brand pointedly describes its new Sydney Yachts 36CR as a cruiser-racer yet this boat has many similarities to the performance oriented Sydney 38 one design and the hull and rig are exactly the same as the previous Sydney 36 Sports design. The main differences are in the accommodation.

The 36CR has a powerful high aspect rating fractional rig, an almost plumb bow and a very long waterline length for its size; it's got fine entry forward and beamy, powerful aft sections for good reaching and running performance.

Steering is via a massive, highly responsive, destroyer wheel. This allows for comfortable control out at the edge of the wide cockpit where the helmsperson has excellent forward vision. In fact the steering position is as good as on a one design racer like the 38. The cockpit is virtually clear allowing for easy crew movement. The mainsheet traveller is at sole level just forward of the wheel, where it causes least interference. Aft is an open transom just like the 38 and many other racing designs.

This is clearly a racing boat!

But look again. A substantial coachroof runs from well forward giving full standing headroom below decks for most of the length of the boat. The interior is fitted out for comfortable accommodation for a weekend away, or even extended cruising. The fitout is, however, simple making the interior seem spacious, more like that of a 45-footer. And it is bright and airy down below with daylight streaming in from long eye slit windows in the sides of the coachroof.

Back up on deck, the rig has most of the sail area in the moderately roached main. The headsails are non overlapping making tacking a simple process which should not require anyone to move from the cockpit. Also, the boat is set up for asymmetrical spinnakers which don't require a pole so setting and gybing kites should be much easier.

And the cockpit is flanked with comfortable, properly shaped, moulded seats with backs. You don't have to perch on the edge of the cockpit here. There is room for a crew plus guests along for the ride on a twilight sail. In fact the cockpit is big enough for a table for outside dining.

This is clearly a cruising boat!

So you see the difficulty in pigeon-holing the Sydney 36CR! While it would serve as a comfortable cruising and club racing boat it is also clearly designed to be capable of offshore passages and offshore racing, even a Rolex Sydney Hobart!

There is nothing coincidental about his boat's split personality. The 36CR was drawn up by the Murray Burns and Dovell design team to appeal to both the cruising and racing markets. Once, that would have



SYDNEY YACHTS' NEW 36CR IS A BOAT WHICH MAKES THE CRUISER-RACER VERSUS RACER-CRUISER DEBATE SEEM IRRELEVANT.

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been setting up for a fall but these days the two sides of the market are not so far apart.

Under the IRC, modern racing craft have fair, easily driven hulls and modern racing rig configurations focus on ease of sail handling. Modern materials and building methods make it possible to build boats lighter and stiffer than ever before.

Today's cruising craft take advantage of many of these advances. They can be built lighter and stiffer so good performance is feasible and there is little point in skimping on gear when the difference in costs between adequate and the best is ever narrowing.

Many of today's buyers of cruising and club racing boats learned their sailing crewing aboard light, fast boats. They appreciate that this style of boat is easier to handle as well as providing more satisfying performance. So, a boat which can combine performance with short-handed sailing capability and

comfortable accommodation will clearly appeal to the widest market today.

Response to the Sydney Yachts 47CR showed the design team that they were on the right track and they offer much the the same concept in a more affordable package with the 36CR.

Sydney Yachts describes this as a design which should offer universal appeal to racers, couples and young families alike.

"Fast, easy to handle, stable and spacious, the Sydney 36CR serves as a comfortable cruiser, short-handed daysailer, family weekender and competitive racer," says Sydney Yachts.

That is a tall order, but after a sail on Sydney Harbour and off the Heads, I would tend to agree.

We motored out from the CYCA Marina at Ruschcutters Bay with the 30hp three-cylinder Yanmar on low revs. With its sail drive and two-blade Gori folding propeller the motor provided plenty of power to drive the boat in calm conditions. Later, in a moderate seaway off the Heads, the motor proved more than adequate at less than half throttle.

Hoisting the sails proved easy using Harken 40.2 two-speed self-tailing halyard winches. Within minutes the motor was off and we were sailing.

The big wheel proved every bit as effective as it looked, needing only gentle pressure and yet giving a feel of positive control. Early on a late winter morning, we were blessed with a surprisingly stable, if gentle, westerly breeze and we were soon able to point up in the gusts and feel some of the boat's power. While it felt very stable even under motor, as soon as it got up some speed this boat felt as stiff as a much larger craft



and proved to have excellent pointing ability.

Trimming the headsail proved a simple task with the Harken 44.2 two-speed self-tailing sheet winches. Tacking was no challenge with the non-overlapping headsail taking itself easily across to the leeward side each time.

Before long we were wheeling around tacking and gybing, usually with only the helmsperson and one crew actually sailing the boat. The mainsheet is well positioned to be flipped across by hand, when necessary by the helmsperson. Setting and gybing a kite also proved well within the capabilities of a two-person crew although, naturally, peeling off a headsail and retrieving the kite were tasks for which another couple of crew members could be

gainfully employed. Under a Hood asymmetric kite flown from a bow pole, we tacked our way downwind at good speed for the light conditions, a task which was highly enjoyable, particularly as we had a couple of crewmen on board familiar with gybing the kite. This is, however, a simple enough process for most sailors to master, at the risk of a wineglass or two in the process.

Even in a good north-easter, this would be a boat which could easily be raced by a crew of four inshore, I felt; and even if only three turned up they should still be able to make it around the course. But if half a dozen or more fancied being aboard they would not fall over themselves in the big cockpit.

Incidentally, although the review boat had a fixed bow pole it was removable. The owner wants to have the option of sailing the boat with poled out headsails in twilight races.

We only encountered a moderate swell off the Heads but the boat felt as though the fine forward sections and its stiffness would ensure it maintained good directional stability in much steeper seas. And the rudder was clearly keeping a good grip. In short, the 36CR had the feel of an Australian boat designed and built for Australian conditions.

Heading back upwind, we discovered there were a few more holes in the breeze than we had earlier noticed. I began to appreciate how well this boat generates apparent wind once it is under way. Once we got the hull speed up again, it was easy to keep the boat moving through the light patches. This is clearly a boat that makes sailing seem easy.

To details: As already noted, the lines of the CR36, are not dissimilar to the Sydney 38, with a fairly flat run aft from behind the keel. And the appendages also have family resemblance. The keel is a deep hydrofoil section with most

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of the ballast concentrated in a bulb at the bottom. The ballast ratio is over 40 per cent which is high for a cruiser-racer. The rudder is a balanced deep spade set almost directly beneath the helming position.

The spars are custom built anodised aluminium by Whale Spars with the mast tapered and fractionally rigged. The two spreader rig is of stainless steel wire with an adjustable, purchase system backstay which can be adjusted from the cockpit.

Running rigging is in spectra and braided polyester by Sydney Rigging.

All structures are built in accordance with the American Bureau of Shipping Guide for Building and Classing Offshore Yachts.

The hull is laminated around an end grain balsa core with vinylester and polyester resins and reinforced with biaxial glass and double bias fabric.

The deck is cored with end grain balsa, for lightness and stiffness and is reinforced with double bias E-glass in the laminate.

A detail I liked was the integral carbon fibre chain plates, the upper parts of which are covered and sealed by the deck moulding.

A detail numerous female Sydney Boat Show visitors liked, according to Chris Pomfret of Sydney Yachts, was the easy to clean, fully moulded headliner that hides boltheads etc. This is one boat where you have to

look hard to find flowcoat finish.

The layout of the interior is conventional for a cruiser racer of this size. In cruising mode there is a double V-berth forward, although I would think it would mainly be used as a sail storage area. Then, working aft, there is a fully enclosed head with vanity basin to port and hanging lockers to starboard.

Aft of the mast step there is a big saloon with deep settees right out against the hull sides and not much else. This makes the saloon seem particularly spacious.

Further aft there is an L-shaped galley to port and a good sized navigation station to starboard. The engine is enclosed behind the companion way steps and either side are good size double berths.

This boat offers comfort for a family while still being a no-nonsense craft boat suitable for racing and offshore passages.

The Sydney 36CR is offered at a basic price of \$259,000.

The boat, as reviewed, with Hood sails, Brooks & Gatehouse Hydra 1000 electronic instruments, an auto pilot, Harken Quatro spinnaker winches, additional jammers for extra halyards and many other personal choice items and optional extras would, of course, cost considerably more than that.

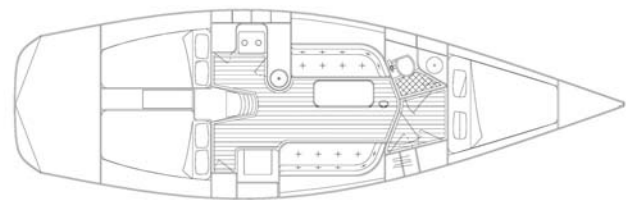
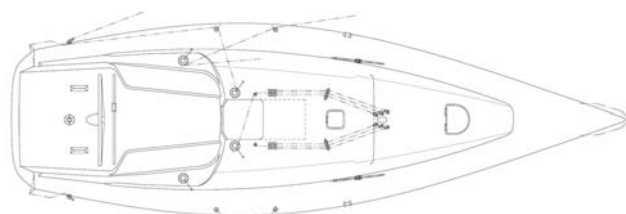
But, as Chris Pomfret, explained: "The options and pricing structure of the Sydney 36CR allows owners to option the boat to meet their needs. The base boat really allows for a club racer or weekend cruiser to buy only what they need. The racers will want to option the boat up to include instruments and other desirable race equipment. The standard Harken fit-out will, however, ensure people will be able to race these boats in Australian conditions without replacing any standard gear.

"We have a sail-away package that allows for a basic set of Tacktick wireless instruments, a plotter and a twilight set of sails (a one-reef, Dacron, fully battened mainsail plus a Kevlar tri-radial jib) for \$271,000. This will certainly meet the needs of most club sailors who just want a boat for social sailing.

"The brand of sailmaker is the owner's choice. Sydney Yachts does not like to get involved in choosing sails, or instruments, for owners as these are very personal choices."

"All the Sydney 36CRs will come with a Harken fit out. This will ensure people will be able to race these boats without having to write off the standard equipment supplied simply to meet basic racing needs in Australian conditions." ○

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



10.99 m	LOA
3.45 m	BEAM AT DECK
2.30 m	DRAFT
5,100 kg	DISPLACEMENT
70 sq m	SAIL AREA
30 HP Yanmar three-cylinder	ENGINE

