

Sydney

H118

Sizzler

The new Sydney 38 is winning friends in Australia and the tough United States market by being an outstanding boat at a very competitive price.

If you want a comprehensive definition of the way Australian yacht design is going, together with accurate readings of its speed, you could do worse than look to Iain Murray. With his partners at Murray, Burns & Dovell he has played a major hand in making Sydney Yachts one of the more sought after design partnerships in the country.

The Sydney 38 is their latest offering. It joins the earlier releases of the Sydney 36 Sports, Sydney 41 Sports, Sydney 46 Cruiser/Racer, Grand Prix

and Sports plus the Sydney 60. It suffers nothing in comparison to any of them and may well prove to be the pick of the litter by the time this decade draws to a close.

The Sydney 38 will appeal to serious racers as well as devotees of twilight regattas and corporate entertaining. It is comfortably fitted out below decks without pretending to be a long distance cruising yacht. Most appealing of all, this is a strict one design class with owner/driver rules that ensure it will never be

hijacked by professional yacht jockeys.

Don't just take my word for it. Look at the evidence. It has so impressed judges in Chicago that five were sold there off the plan before even one boat had landed on the dock. In Australia another 11 have been sold in the same way.

The rig

The Sydney 38 seems to have followed the growing trend towards simplicity. Gone are the days of running backstays and checkstays. Instead there are smaller, non-overlapping headsails that use a custom double spreader rig supported by Dyform rigging with custom metal work.

This makes for smaller running gear all around and helps to keep the overall price of the boat well down. The bonus for the owner is a boat that is simpler to sail and more forgiving in circumstances we all like to avoid e.g. Chinese gybes and uncontrolled (aren't they all?) round-ups.

LEFT: Fine entry forward means a clean, flat wake.

BELOW: The cockpit is uncluttered and dominated by an oversized wheel.



Deck layout

The simple theme that dominates the rig aloft has been carried through to the deck. The mainsheet uses a split-system that runs to two self-tailing winches set either side of the cockpit. Behind the skipper is a large, open cockpit area that is perfect for daysailors who want to escape the action or twilight crewing where an excess of bodies can be more of a handicap than a bonus.

The deck has fixed polycarbonate windows with an opening hatch that ventilates the saloon and galley below while at the same time ensuring the entry of natural light.

There are moulded toe rails on the foredeck and strategically placed footchocks in the cockpit, all finished in a non-slip coating that also spreads to the coachroof.



“It took only a few minutes at the helm to appreciate how easy to sail the Sydney 38 is.”

Interior layout

Accommodation has clearly been designed to meet IMS and IRC requirements. There is a designated navigation area to port, just forward of the double owners' berth. A hanging area divides the two.

Forward again to port is a spacious settee and then towards the bow is the head and washbasin while the forepeak has been devoted solely to sail storage.

On the starboard side of the

Sydney 38 there is a galley and sink arrangement, more hanging space and then a folding settee berth as well as a set of dual stacked bunks.

All of the above is finished in immaculate fashion. Exposed surfaces have high gloss gelcoat while timber surfaces have a satin finish. Settee cushions are thick and comfortable with owners' choice being allowed to dictate fabric selection.

The most striking combination of all the above results in an interior that effortlessly blends natural wood with synthetic materials. It's a good look all around.

Hull

The hull is laminated with vinylester and polyester resin using E-glass unidirectional and biaxial fabrics. The hull and deck is fully cored PVC foam and end grain balsa. The yacht features a GRP moulded structural grid incorporating unidirectional fibres to carry rig and keel loads.

I know all that because it says so right here in the brochure, however anecdotal evidence gleaned from two new owners based at the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in Sydney suggests all of the above simply translates as: “it's a really strong boat”.

As good a summation as any for the purposes of this review.

Performance

The day of the test sail there were medium range breezes and flat seas on Pittwater, north of Sydney. It only took a few minutes at the helm to appreciate how easy to sail the Sydney 38 is and how quickly it responds to the slightest change in sail trim. More a big skiff than a production yacht.

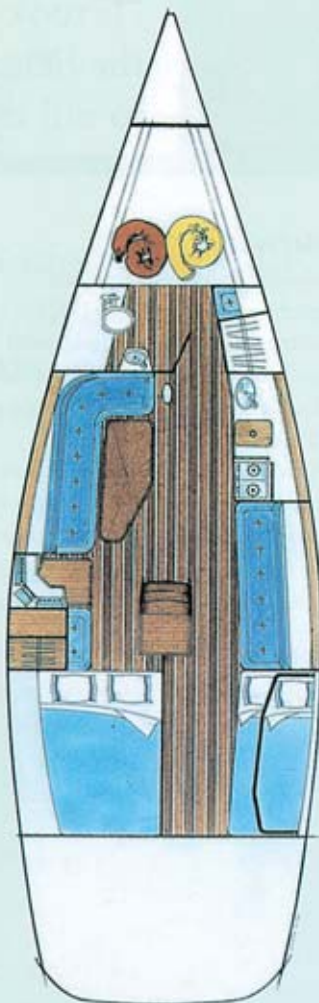
The Sydney 38 accelerates well out of a tack. It is stiff (all ballast is carried in the keel rather than as internal ballast) and benefits from a bulb design straight from Murray, Burns & Dovell's latest research.



Close hauled power is well controlled.

STATISTICS

LOA	11.6m
Beam at deck	3.75m
Draught	2.65m
Disp.	5200kg
Power	30hp diesel
Water cap.	200ltrs
Fuel cap.	100ltrs



The cockpit is dominated by an over-sized steering wheel but this ensures good steering positions are always available on the wind. The wheel is mounted on a low-set base that also houses the control for the hydraulic backstay gear, meaning a helmsperson must reach through or around the wheel if, in an emergency, the gear tension has to be released in a hurry.

This is not so much a problem as a niggle. Perhaps setting it into a recessed area on the cockpit coaming would eliminate a potential problem – there it could be reached either by skipper or crewmember.

All up, the Sydney 38 should have no trouble in keeping up with other 38 footers and be an absolute pest for anything around 40 foot.

Conclusion

The Sydney 38 just may be the harbinger of a tide (can a tide have harbingers? Probably not, but I can't stop now for a couple of mixed metaphors) that could sweep the yachting world clean of expensive owner-commissioned one-off designs.

Then again it may find itself a niche as the thinking person's race boat, where class fellowship and keen racing override the more natural human urge to be the fastest boat around the race course and to hell with the cost involved.

Time will tell. One new owner who is in no doubt, however, is Barry Moore. He sails the delightfully named *Blowfly* on Pittwater and has this to say about the Sydney 38.

"We have a lot to get out of her and even at this initial stage the boat is proving to be extremely fast and competitive. I bought the boat from Sydney Yachts off the plan and am absolutely delighted with the quality and finish they have delivered."

Base specifications price \$285,000 ex. GST, sails and instruments

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— *Simon Kent*



Top Left: The stiffness of the design is immediately apparent off the breeze.

Left: A highly polished settee table softens the look and compliments the wood panelling that lines the yacht's interior.

Below: Abundant natural light helps to create a bright and airy feel below.

