

wooden you like to fold?



The story behind the new

● by PETER HACKETT

IF YOU FLICK THROUGH THE pictures on these pages you'll be thinking, 'here goes the trimaran guy with another story about a Farrier trimaran', but you'd be wrong, although this designer has spent much of his life building or playing with Farrier boats.

The designer

Bob Forster actually built his first trailertri 720 *Potboiler* in the early 80s while working as a craftsman potter. This was followed by many years of cruising and racing as well as involvement in the Trailable Multihull Yacht Association of Queensland in various administrative

roles including handicapping, the latter stimulating a keen interest in multihull design.

He worked for OSTAC Yachts in the 1990s and gained 'hands on' experience in all aspects of commercial multihull production, including the then 'state of the art' vacuum bag foam sandwich



1. (main pic left)
2. (above)

Wavelength 780

construction techniques used on the F-31 and the Mark 2 version of the F-24. Bob rose to the position of production manager for the company, no mean feat for a potter, and it is that combination of artistic and practical skills that led him to design and build his own style of boat out of composite timber and fibreglass.

Why?

You will now be asking the same question that I asked Bob: "Why reinvent the wheel?" And I'll let the man answer in his own words.

The current project is the result of a long sailing and work association with, and study of, the design and engineering



4. (above left)
5. (above right)



aspects of the trailerable trimaran concept.

This boat is intended as a very comfortable, stable, roomy and easily driven trailable tri, with a modern, stylish, eye-catching profile on the water and a clear cruising emphasis in construction and fit-out.

Fitted with a fairly conservative rig, compared with other more performance oriented tris in the general size range, the boat, although designed principally as a cruiser, is capable of exhilarating performance for club racing, with speeds of 15kts plus being readily attained in moderate winds on the prototype . The high beam clearance, a particular feature of this tri relative to others in this size range, and ample, though not extreme, float buoyancy, provides a dry boat in all but the roughest conditions, enhancing its cruising credentials.

So you can see that Bob writes well also!

Timber?

So now you can see where the title comes from, this unique boat achieves

beautiful curves, yet is constructed using timber as the substrate! Bob has always enjoyed being a home handyman and wanted a boat that could easily be built by sailors who feel more comfortable working with cedar and ply, rather than foam sandwich and the range of exotic (and expensive) reinforcing materials available. Bob's research on the building concept indicated that the boat, in this size range, could be built lighter than a composite cedar strip plank/glass vessel, and probably equal, or close to the weight of foam sandwich construction, depending on the weights of ply chosen. The bare sailing weight of the prototype, including fore and aft rig, running rigging, motor and anchor is around 1130kg. This is surprisingly comparable with foam sandwich hulls of similar size and volume.

You'll have to request more information from Bob or buy the plans to get full details, but suffice to say that frames and stringers are set up similar to other methods, then as the photographs show, 4mm 'A' Bond (marine glue bond) plywood is laid up dry in transverse strips approximately 180mm wide in a simple female particleboard/batten mould and temporarily held in place with tech screws. The strips are quickly and easily trimmed with a hand held jack plane as they are progressively laid to keep all the planks at approximately 90° to the main axis of the mould. Light cedar longitudinal stringers are then glued in position to lock the ply strips in place, and carefully prescribed unidirectional and multidirectional fibreglass binds the package into a light, strong and rigid monocoque.



678. (from top right:)

berth.

Ample locker space is provided for the usual kitchen items and cruising paraphernalia.

Performance

From outside the boat looks like a typical folding trimaran, with similar mechanism and dimensions. When you get closer, it is apparent that Bob has tried to get the beams and main hull sheer-line up high for a dry ride. The float hulls are also visibly not quite as voluminous as other recent designs, which helps make this design drive easily in light winds.

I was able to test sail in a WAGS race at RQYS and was fortunate enough to be given the tiller in a 10kt south-westerly wind, which showed me what a pleasant boat the Wavelength is. We had a start advantage on an F31, and as the winds lightened, she certainly didn't catch up to us before the finish. A bigger catamaran started ahead of us, and we easily hauled her in and our crew of newbies were most impressed. First



place, first race, a bottle of rum!

The feel on the tiller is nice and light, two fingers are enough, proof that balancing the blade on a box rudder gives good results. The full suit of GM sails looked great, and I must repeat here that multihull sails are different, and you must go to a multihull specialist for good sails.

The only big surprise on the day was the smell emanating from the cabin on one of the pleasant reaching legs. Alarm turned into relief when Bob appeared in the companionway with a tray of tea and a plate of cookies that he had made down below (well the tea anyway). I have never raced a trimaran and been

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served fresh tea before.

Plans

The plans are easily followed by the average handyman, and Bob's details are below if you want access to the reams of information and photographs needed to build a piece of floating furniture.

Wooden it be nice?

**Peter Hackett –
pha70516@bigpond.net.au**
**Bob Forster –
forster305@ozemail.com.au**

gm sails