



RACE RELATIONS

Sydney Yachts' new race-ready 39CR has what it takes to lead the fleet, but it's still very much a lifestyle boat. David Lockwood has the story.

Sailors are a funny lot. For some, it seems, their bit is not to win the silverware but to race with the fleet and join in the camaraderie at the yacht club afterwards. How else can one explain away the abundance of slow yachts plodding around the cans like tractors ploughing down the highway?

There must be a better way, reasoned

Sydney Yachts and a motivated yacht owner tired of sailing his Cavalier 350. Nice yachts, the Cavs, but they not in the hunt with the current crop of IRC optimised cruiser-racers. A meeting of minds and the Sydney 39CR was born.

The smaller of a current two-boat line of new Cruiser-Racer yachts from Australia's

biggest yachtbuilder, the 39CR is nothing if not a fast boat. It sports the same hull as that hugely successful Sydney 38 OD. At the time of writing, 66 of the Sydney 38s had been sold and 12 were overseas.

The underwater sections of the Sydney 38 have now proven themselves on this boat, the first 39CR, which was christened *Hassy*. In



I boarded in Pittwater for the Royal Prince Alfred's Wednesday Afternoon Race with 33 other yachts ranging to the new Hanse 53-footer. Wind across the deck was about 5kt but, get this, 30kt was predicted out of the west. So we had a spare headsail sitting in its bag on the saloon floor just in case.

DESIGNS ON SPEED

The new Sydney 39CR is a philosophically interesting boat. Four-time Sydney-to-Hobart winner and yacht dealer Ron Jacobs says the 39CR isn't for Sydney 38 sailors, but rather "to get sailors out of the Euros and give them more performance and comforts". Considering how many Euro yachts sell here, there's a lot of potential buyers.

Jacobs says another part of the yacht's charter is to put the fun back into sailing. While it has a raised saloon roof for more volume, the 39CR comes race-ready. It has all the gear to get you around the track first, yet it's still very much a lifestyle boat.

The owner and his wife, an interior decorator, had grown tired of the same old same old on the race circuit in their old boat.

"A lot of people try and make race boats of slow boats, but we thought we would start with a race boat and make it comfy," the owner said.

The interior decorator had a *carte blanche* with which to work down below. The tenet was: "no blues" (read: no naff or passé maritime themes). Instead, they went for the warm hues of Sassafras timber joinery, beautifully made in-house high-gloss teak tables, and chocolate-coloured Italian fabrics for the saloon lounges and fawn-coloured faux suede for the beds.

During the building process, the eager couple visited their new baby some half-dozen times. Some changes came about organically, as the boat grew, but there were others they weren't aware of.

As the owner intended to fly a large masthead kite, naval architect Andy Dovell recommended that the yacht swing a bigger (balanced spade composite) rudder. The mast also has a chunkier midsection. In fact, it is stiffer and therefore faster than a Sydney 38.

While the sail plan is the same as a Sydney 38, which means you can buy and use preloved racing sails for at least cruising, you are not limited to One Design rules. Thus, the headsail on *Hassy* was cut to be 150mm deeper. Thanks to the setup of the shrouds, the boat still tacks like a modern yacht with a non-overlapping headsail, only it comes out with more power.

Flying just a headsail, the owner and one a crewman brought the yacht back to Sydney from Southport. Two-up, marina to marina, the delivery took 43 hours. They maxed out at 17.6kt in 38kt of northerly wind. The B&G autopilot steered 95 per cent of the time with the headsail poled out, I am told.

OCEAN GOING

While the yacht looks sexy on the outside and contemporary down below, it's what you can't see that counts for a lot too.

Like all Sydney Yachts, the 39CR has been engineered for the Tasman Sea Category 1 offshore races like the Sydney to Hobart. Yet with so much room and comfort, it's obviously right at home at home at places like, well, Hamilton Island Race Week.

A heavy-duty one-piece grid section provides stiffness to the hull. The grid incorporates the keel attachment, mast step, engine mount and rudder bearing. The mast is keel stepped and raked a fair way aft. Lift up the teak floor panel and you will see that the keel bolts are giants. The chainplates on deck are carbon-fibre sections that are an integral part of the yacht.

The hull is made using balsa- and foam-cored layup and unidirectional and biaxial glass for better compression, load bearing and weight savings than standard GRP. Compared to a fast Euro yacht, the Sydney 39 might cost about \$70,000 more — but the engineering is what you are paying for.

To save on weight, all the bulkheads are vacuum-bagged composite and ply numbers. And to help with boat speed, the yacht has a two-blade folding Briski racing prop. The 2.65m all-lead keel is the same as the Sydney 38's, though the yacht displaces

two months since the yacht was launched it has been sailed more than 2000nm — to Hamilton Island and back to Pittwater. The yacht won the IRC Division (rating at 1.108) of the Hogs Breath at Airlie Beach. It finished fifth at Hamilton Island Race week in the same division as the laidback tropical heat took its toll.

SYDNEY 39CR

HIGHS

- Great performance and ease of handling
- Proven hull is already winning races
- Built tough for the Tasman Ocean
- High-quality construction and components
- Very comfortable above and below decks
- Wonderful contemporary lines and modern apartment-like interior
- A crowd pleaser for captains and crew

LOWS

- Terribly small sink and fridge
- Galley bench could do with a garbage bin
- Using the single head for'ard might be tough going in a seaway
- Contemporary interior might not appeal to everyone

700kg more and weighs in at 6230kg.

All the running rigging is concealed cleverly below decks, leading to a clean, clutter-free and easy-to-sail appearance. The running rigging is high-quality Vectran, Spectra and braided polyester. The spinnaker braces are Dyneema.

The rig is a fraction double swept-back spreader number with a custom alloy boom, lazy jacks, Selden telescopic solid boom vang and adjustable backstay with hydraulic pump midships near the companionway. Roller furlers might be fitted to other 39CRs, but not *Hassy*.

But in keeping with the cruiser-racer approach, an electric winch was fitted to *Hassy*. This gave effortless hoisting of the mainsail (or crewman up the stick) and trimming of the mainsheet. Two sets of buttons either side of the big composite steering wheel let the trimmer adjust the main from the high side on either tack.

Incidentally, the 2:1 mainsheet — whose traveller is just ahead of the wheel — leads along the boom and back aft under the deck to the electric winch. All winches are two-speed self-tailing Harken jobs, including the 46 primary winches, two 44 self-tailing mainsheet (one electric) winches and two 40s for the halyards.

OUTDOOR FITTINGS

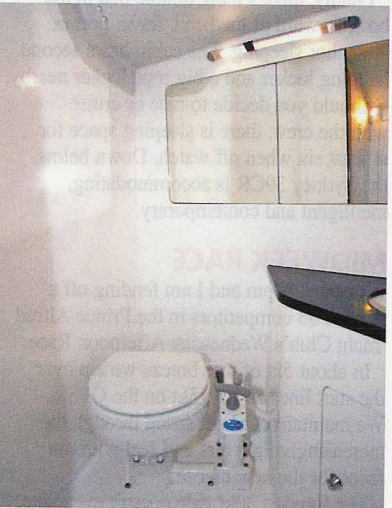
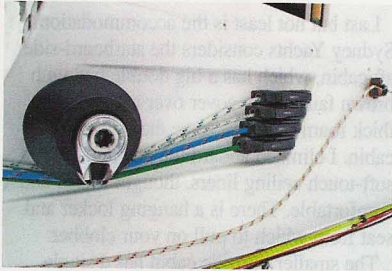
Compared to the Sydney 38, the 39CR has its steering wheel some 18in farther aft. It also has a shorter cockpit.

But like most Australian-built yachts, it is accommodating for skipper and crew. Ditto the rail, which has a nice rounded edge — not a tough toerail like you find on some Euro yachts. This way, crew can camp to windward and not whinge too much.

The concealed sheets and halyards, which lead back to Spinlock jammers, and broad non-skid saloon roof make for an easy yacht to scramble around. The sidedecks, where there are Harken pin-stop jib cars



While it has a raised saloon roof for more volume, the Sydney 39CR comes race ready.



for changing headsail sheeting angles, are similarly wide and accommodating for the foredeck hand. Sail changes can be performed swiftly and safely at sea.

There was a designated gas-bottle locker in the cockpit as well as storage lockers. The ignition panel (starboard) and throttle (to port) are within reach of the wheel. The motor is a freshwater-cooled 30hp Yanmar with saildrive and 80amp alternator. The moulded stairs down the companionway lift out for engine access. The stainless fuel tank holds 120lt.

A Simrad colour LCD GPS chartplotter repeater is recessed near the wheel, and the boat has a B&G autopilot for hands-free

couple of Snickers minis and then searched for the amenities.

The yacht has a three-cabin layout with a single head forward of the mast. The moulded easy-clean head comes with a manual loo, handheld hot/cold shower (there's also a hot/cold deck shower), Corian counter over the vanity, headroom and a hatch for ventilation. There is a trendy slimline fluoro light and, more importantly, 200lt of water. You can add extra bladders under the saloon lounges if you want to carry more.

The galley on the port side, conveniently near the companionway, is an L-shaped space with groovy stainless-steel veneered

“Down below, the Sydney 39CR is accommodating, intelligent and contemporary.”

sailing and B&G racing instruments within a glance for'ard of the helm. There are repeaters below decks at the nav station.

INTERIOR GLOSS

Down below, I stumbled on a designer interior with stainless-steel-fronted galley cupboards, warm sassafras timber joinery, suave Italian mocha-coloured fabrics and, what have we here, a drinks cabinet — and, what a find, a lolly jar! Confession: I stole a

cupboards, industrial-looking grey Corian counters, a big icebox, small sink, gimbaled two-burner stove/oven/grill and room to fit a top-loading garbage bin.

A small 12V fridge is mounted under the navigation station across to starboard. Its primary features are a great big teak chart table, flush-mounted electronics and easily-understood 12V control panel for the battery system (separate twin house batteries). There is also a 240V outlet for when you are connected to shorepower.

However, the highlight is undoubtedly the warm and welcoming saloon. The sassafras timber, big picture windows (borrowed from the Warwick 66 that Sydney built) and windows around the raised deck — which has a white stippled fibreglass finish — lift the light levels. That means the mocha soft

From top left: Deck gear is all high quality; Nav station has a huge chart table and an easily understood control panel; Moulded easy-clean head is linked to 200lt of water; Groovy galley is conveniently located next to the companionway.





furnishings and teak tables and flooring don't look dark or sombre.

The U-shaped lounge to port could seat, say, five people and has room for a couple more on loose chairs if you have to seat them. Across the way are a couple of terrific built-in armchairs facing the table — the owner's favourite spot — allowing social discourse with guests.

Between the seats are the aforementioned drinks cabinet and lolly jar. All that was missing was a LCD television on the saloon bulkhead, alongside the funky retro-looking clock and barometer.

Last but not least is the accommodation. Sydney Yachts considers the starboard-side aft cabin, which has a big double bed with brown faux suede cover over a 100mm-thick foam mattress, to be the owner's cabin. I climbed aboard the bed and, with soft-touch ceiling liners, thought it nice and comfortable. There is a hanging locker and seat from which to pull on your clobber.

The smaller portside cabin has a single berth, which is ideal as a sea berth when on starboard tack, and room to stick another mattress on the floor if you have to. You could also sleep on the settee in the saloon.

The owner was using the floorspace in the portside cabin as a wet area for stowing fenders, safety gear and so on. Both aft cabins had eagle-eye-shaped windows, opening port lights, and red night and white reading bunk lights. Thus, the yacht is designed to be sailed at night at sea.

Finally, there's a big double bed in the bow, forward of the head, for in-port or at-anchor sleeping. The cabin has a second hanging locker and a big rope locker nearby.

Should you decide to race or cruise with the crew, there is sleeping space for at least six when off watch. Down below, the Sydney 39CR is accommodating, intelligent and contemporary.

MIDWEEK RACE

It's now 2.30pm and I am fending off a fleet of 33 competitors in the Prince Alfred Yacht Club's Wednesday Afternoon Race.

In about 5kt of true breeze we zip over the start lines at, hey, 5kt on the GPS. We maintain our boat speed through the increasingly light airs and feel with our faces for the new breeze.

The forecast 30kt gale doesn't eventuate, but a 20kt change delivers plenty of thrills. Off Stokes Point, three Euro yachts sailing astern are hit by a bullet and simultaneously broach as though performing a choreographed exit stage left. Too much headsail out, lads. Furl away.

Feeling the new breeze, we have already performed a headsail change. As such, we suffer no such fate. The Sydney 39CR is now powering along at about 7.4kt upwind, which is a whisker faster than a Sydney 38 because of its slightly stiffer rig.

The spiffing Sydney 39CR finishes midway through the fleet on handicap. The average results are due to its being sailed this way and that for the photographer. Some prospective buyers were also testing the boat.

I return at 5.00pm, sun-kissed, salt-splattered and satiated on the owner's Snickers. But don't just take it from me — the sail of this yacht was convincing enough for a couple aboard to sign up for a Sydney 39CR back on dry land.

The new 39CR owners are coming out of a 36ft Euro yacht. Which, as I said, is the objective of Sydney Yachts. Start with something fast, make it comfortable and you have a winner.

SYDNEY 39CR

PRICE AS TESTED

About \$395,000 excluding sails and instruments

OPTIONS FITTED

B&G instruments and Simrad chartplotter, electric winch, custom interior, full sail wardrobe and more

PRICED FROM

\$395,000

GENERAL

Material:Balsa- and foam-cored composite hull
 Type:.....Monohull
 Hull length:..... 11.73m
 Waterline length:..... 10.75m
 Beam:..... 3.75m
 Draft:... 2.65m (deep-draft lead keel)
 Displacement:..... 6230kg (dry)
 Ballast: Deep-draft lead keel 2100kg

CAPACITIES

Berths:..... Five + one
 Fuel: 200lt
 Water:..... 200lt

ENGINE

Make/model: Yanmar
 Type:... Three-cylinder diesel inboard
 Rated hp: 30
 Drive:..... Saildrive
 Prop:..... Folding two-blade prop

SAIL AREA:

79.55sqm, main and genoa

SUPPLIED BY

Performance Boating, Church Point, NSW, tel (02) 9979 9755; for more information, also contact Sydney Yachts, tel (02) 9979 0765

