

E5.9 Trailable



AN EIGHTEEN FOOT skiff with a deck — that label bestowed on the Elliott 5.9 trailer yacht by Matt Short, who has been crewing on the first of the breed to reach Sydney, is a good one but not completely accurate for this exciting little boat.

The E5.9, great fun to sail, is both surprising and unconventional. It was designed in New Zealand, where the yachting scene does not care a fig for convention, anyway. And, although the plumb stem, narrow waterlines with widely flared topsides aft are reminiscent of some of Jim Young's designs, the E5.9 is different again.

The big surprise to me was, although it sailed with dinghy-like feel and response in a puffy winter westerly on Sydney Harbour, it had the stability of a keelboat.

We sailed, three aboard, in 12-15 knots with the mainsheet cleated off, traveller cleated about 15 degrees off the centreline and the boat just stood up and powered away without a hand needed to ease either traveller down or sheet off, through the puffs.

Upwind, we were able to pace a well-sailed Peter Cole *Shenandoah*-type Half Tonner, with equal height and speed.

Downwind, we planed, readily. We also broached after I wondered what would happen with the keel wound right up and the crew obligingly showed me. But although I lost her, the boat did not make us suffer for the embarrassment. She just slid out sideways until the boom vang was released. The long jumbo boom then lifted out of the water and we were able to square away and sail on without getting wet.

The boat upwind, too, is incredibly dry for the crew sitting out comfortably on the broad side decks. At first, I felt the need for toe straps to swing from.



Crew sits high and dry on the wide side decks.

But after a while came the realisation that the big bulb of lead on the bottom of the fin keel was really doing all the work and no great physical exertion was demanded of the crew to keep the boat upright.

The E5.9 was designed by Aucklander Greg Elliott, about two and a-half years ago, initially for home construction in plywood from a kit. About 15 of them race as a class, regularly, with the Ponsonby Cruising Club.

Morris Short, who is now the Australian agent for the boat, saw them in action when he went to Auckland to sail in the Cavalier 28 Interdominion championship. "It was the most dreadful weather, blowing about 45 knots, and these things were skidding around the harbor untroubled, sailing rings around the other boats out there," he said.

Morris and his father Bob bought an Elliott 5.9, now in fibreglass production by Gary Banks, and imported it in time for the NSW Trailable Yacht

Association's Pittwater race. Morris — whose previous boats were Manly Junior, Cherubs, Leader, Cole 23 — had not sailed the E5.9 before but was fifth to finish and 13th on handicap. Since then, his boat, *Moroccan Roll*, has been giving competitors and the handicapper nightmares in F division of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's winter series.

She has proven to be very fast, in all conditions and certainly loves a big breeze. Morris tells me reefing the main is considered only in 35 knots.

The hull is very fine in the bow, with hollowed topsides back to the mast, but with flattened U-sections right forward, for buoyancy. Aft of the mast, the waterlines remain fair to the stern but topsides flare widely to get the crew outboard. Right aft, she is as flat as a dinghy underneath with the lines pushing out again to a firmly turning section, at the transom.

The rig is part of the upwind stability story. The big main is set on a nicely-tapered mast, supported by caps and

Lines turn out to flat, firm-turn transom.



Outboard is mounted on slides in a well.





She planed readily under the big spinnaker.

lowers over long spreaders swept well aft (so a backstay is unnecessary). It bends off in response to the gusts, dinghy fashion, to open the upper leech.

About the only thing I didn't like about sailing *Moroccan Roll* was the lack of a window in the big main — flying port-tack blind on Sydney Harbour, even in mid-winter, is a nervous experience.

The keel is simply a dinghy-like fibreglass centreboard with a torpedo-shaped bulb of lead, weighing 204kg attached to its bottom. It is wound up and down by a spindle arrangement in the cockpit; a laborious-looking operation, complicated on the day by the fitting for the handle on top of the spindle breaking through a welding fault. Rudder box for the swing-up blade and tiller are one fabrication, a very strong-looking unit, in stainless steel.

The outboard sits in a well through the cockpit floor and is raised and lowered on slides. A fibreglass plug covers the hole when the outboard is raised. This arrangement means short-shaft motors can be used and the outboard is always available in the right place, for ready use, without detriment to weight placement.

The open-ended cockpit is 3.15m long. All deck surfaces have non-skid pattern. The forehatch in the cabin-top is well situated to be useful in flying and retrieving the large spinnaker.

The cabin has sitting headroom and contains four berths. The forward vee-berth is extended aft, port and starboard, by two quarter berths, for an unbroken length of 4.45m. There is stowage inside the berths and in the area under the cockpit between them. It's all fairly spartan, but neatly finished with flow-coat. — **Bob Ross**



No great physical effort is needed.

SPECIFICATIONS

Overall length.....	5.9m
Waterline length.....	5.6m
Beam.....	2.45m
Draft (board down).....	1.3m
Displacement.....	896kg
Ballast.....	204kg
Sail area — main.....	16.44sq m
No. 1 headsail.....	6.50sq m
Spinnaker.....	15.5sq m

Accommodation: Sleeps four; two quarter berths, one double vee berth.

Standard equipment: Mooring cleats fore and aft, all turning blocks, cleats and jammers for halyards and spinnaker gear, spinnaker pole, all halyards, two No. 15 Barlow winches, headsail tracks with cars, boom vang, Cunningham for mainsail, mainsheet traveller, mainsheet block with ratchet, ratchet blocks for spinnaker sheets. Raise/lower mechanism for keel; raise/lower mechanism for outboard.

Mainsail, No. 1 headsail, spinnaker. Sheets for all sails. Trailer, with mast-carrying crutch and electrics.

Spars and rigging: 8.35m long mast made of 76mm light alloy tube with 50 per cent taper in top 2m and incorporating bolt-rope groove. Single spreader rig with upper and lower shrouds and forestay. Internal outhaul and reefing lines in boom.

Auxiliary power: Built-in outboard well takes all standard-shaft small outboards; 4hp suitable.

Construction: Solid fibreglass hull; deck, fibreglass over Klegecell core.

Price: \$16,000 approximately.

Plus options offered: No. 2 headsail.

Designer: Greg Elliott.

Builder: Elliott Type Yachts, PO Box 8504, Auckland, NZ.

Australian agents: Elliott Type Yachts, 263 Storey St, Maroubra, 2035.