



Pig Hunter — right on target

By PHILIP MACALISTER

Steve Thompson's Elliott 10.5m Pig Hunter has made an indelible mark on the Auckland racing scene.

The yacht's outstanding performance on the water and her crew's outlandish antics ashore have made Pig Hunter one of the most-talked-about racers.

She competes regularly and has won or placed well in most of her races, beating many larger yachts over the line.

Pig Hunter is unmistakably and distinctively Elliott — with her plumb bow, reverse sheer and flared topsides along with a fully battened mainsail and swept-back spreaders.



The helmsman has nobody behind him, he is close to both trimmers and space abounds around all controls.

Thompson, an engineer who confesses to have "dabbled in design", built himself a 24-footer, Little Feat, 12 years ago. After Little Feat came a Ross 830, Rosschild,

For his next and latest boat, he went to Greg Elliott with an extensive design brief which included interior layout and specific ideas for the deck.

They discussed the design and Greg drew "just what I wanted," says Thompson.

Pig Hunter is a harbour, gulf and coastal racer/cruiser. Some performance has been sacrificed for safety.

To Thompson, she is like a Formula One race car, designed specifically to be fast and to test his ideas. He considers her a prototype.

He says: "I like winning and I only ever go racing when there is a chance of winning."

Elliott says: "Pig Hunter is performance-orientated. If you do not get results, you have not achieved what you set out to do.

"But contrary to popular belief, Pig Hunter is not what I call a racing yacht. I describe her as a racer/cruiser since she has all the concessions of a cruising yacht such as pressurised water and shower.

"Her results have proven her to be a good boat."

The name Pig Hunter is already engraved on enough silverware to ensure she is remembered as a results achiever.

Craig Partridge Yachts, in East Tamaki, built the boat over an eight-month period and she was launched in late February, 1988.

Construction was simple and cost effective.

Without extensive use of exotics, Pig Hunter's weight was kept down through design features and strip-planked cedar construction.

The deck is built of Zyron foam panels with 3mm ply either side. Generally the foam is 10mm thick except in high-load areas where it is double thickness.

The narrow waterline beam gives Pig Hunter much of her speed downwind while the flared topsides get the crew weight well

out and provide stability when sailing hard on the wind.

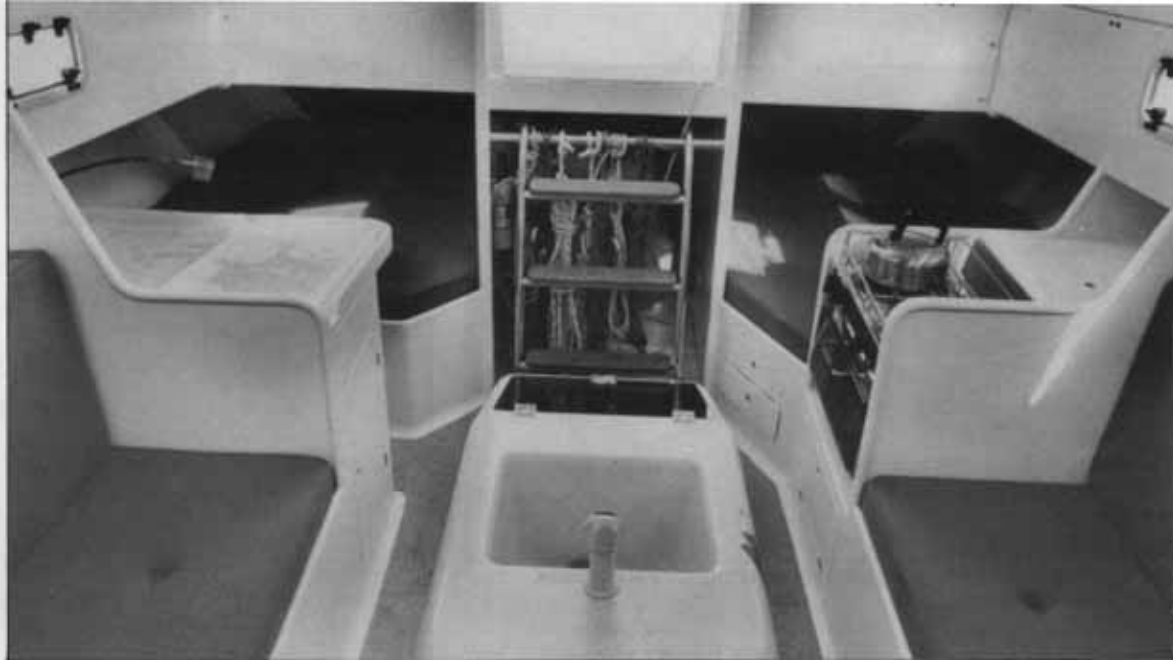
To further optimise upwind performance, an effort has been made to reduce weight in the ends especially down aft which was kept as empty space. The reverse sheer assists the effort to keep weight down though less material use.

The rig is one area where safety and durability have played an important role.

Elliott says: "The rig is designed to stay in the boat, giving the crew a second chance if they make a mistake."



Pig Hunter under light-airs masthead spinnaker. This bow-on view shows the narrow waterline and flared topsides.



The aft end of the main saloon. A sink is built into the top of the engine casing.

Pre-bend is maintained with two sets of swept-back spreaders which negate the crucial role that runners play during manoeuvres on a traditional in-line racing rig.

Pig Hunter has runners but they do not carry tremendous loads — just enough to provide some headstay tension.

That is one of the two disadvantages of swept-back spreaders. Applying too much runner load increases headstay tension but compresses the rig thus producing fall-off.

So sailing with a soft headstay is inevitable. Also, when running or reaching, mainsail shape is distorted by the spreaders.

Pig Hunter is such a fast boat that her performance is not unreasonably hampered.

In Elliott's continued search for improved stability, Pig Hunter's rig has been kept short, lowering her centre of effort.

To compensate, the headsails are larger

than normal on an Elliott yacht of this vintage.

Although she is fractionally rigged, Pig Hunter can carry a masthead spinnaker for light airs downwind.

One of the most unusual features on the boat is a bumpkin for the backstay. This is used to keep the topmast backstay clear of the mainsail leach.

The backstay is used to help flatten the main and checkstays are attached to the

Trademark Elliott features include the forward-extending cockpit which provides a secure position for trimmers to operate the cabintop-mounted winches while standing.



runners when the wind gets over 20 knots.

The boat has two fully battened mainsails — a kevlar for racing and a dacron model for cruising.

All the racing sails are Sobstad.

The keel has a bulb and is described as being "very good to windward and reaching."

What I considered an unusual but handy feature is the ease with which the keel can be inspected for weed foul-ups.

When sitting on the rail, the flared topsides put the crew that bit further out over the water where not only is it dry, but the bulb is clearly visible.

Racing is a serious business on Pig Hunter. The same crew has raced her since her launch, putting in many hours training. They are dedicated to the boat and winning.

"Everybody's had their heart in it," says Thompson.

Thompson has used his knowledge of computers to help analyse and predict boat performance. Using Ockam instruments and an NEC computer, data is recorded then graphed and analysed after a race.

Thompson comments: "It has helped us a lot. I know my targets and how fast we should be sailing."

Helming Pig Hunter is practical and comfortable. Wide webbing straps at the aft end of the lifelines provide good support. Three Ockam displays mounted on the mast are within the natural line of sight forward.

The rudder seems very well-balanced and light, making me wonder if on a tight spinnaker reach there was a tendency to spin out. I was assured the sail trim is so good that this occurrence is rare.

Pig Hunter is very quick reaching and running. She sails low and fast upwind, particularly in heavy air and a seaway which has its advantage in reducing pounding.

In keeping with his ideals, Thompson chose to put "only the best deck gear on the boat."

All the working area is centred on the aft end of the cabintop.

Eight RC Forespar jammers are used for halyards, reefing lines and outhaul, with two lighter Spinlocks for the spinnaker topping lift and downhaul.

Three Bariant ultralight self-tailer winches mounted either side of the companionway provide plenty of power.

The smaller 21s are used for halyards and the four 27 self-tailers (primary and secondaries) are used for genoa trimming, runners and spinnaker sheets and braces.

Different cars are used throughout to suit various functions. The smaller headsails (100% or less) sheet through Gibb tri rollers mounted inside the shrouds on the cabintop.

Larger headsails sheet through Fico cars further back on the deck.

Both sets of genoa cars are linked to a block and tackle system for adjustment and trimming. Provision has been made to change this to a more efficient setup using a Harken Magicbox.

Braceblocks are Sparcraft.

One of Thompson's design requirements was to have no crew working behind the helmsman.

Large quarter deck sections give the helmsman excellent space. Forward of his position is the Harken traveller with mainsheet trimmer on the opposite side.

Sturdy aluminium footrests keep him in place and are also take-off points for three jammers controlling the traveller, topmast and fine tune.

The boat is wide with all the controls seemingly well aft. By extending the cockpit forward along either side of the cabin, a trademark Elliott feature, ample working space is provided in a confined area.

The topmast backstay, although only used in heavy air or with the masthead spinnaker, runs through a sheave on the bumpkin and internally under the deck until it exits at the trimmer.

Wide beam aft allows for a long traveller with plenty of scope with which to control the large powerful main. The mainsheet is quick to use and efficiently set up with ratchet blocks and fine tune.

The forward extended cockpits give jib trimmers a secure, comfortable position from which to trim. The cabintop-mounted winches are ideally placed for the trimmer to operate while standing in his cockpit.

The foredeck and mast area are large and uncluttered.

Standing rigging is Riggarna rod and the

headstay is an exceptionally good Tuff Luff foil which is light and an integral unit.

Down below Pig Hunter's cruising features follow the trend in racer/cruiser designs to keep it basic and simple.

A large open saloon dominates the interior. Accommodation is for eight in a double berth in the forepeak, large quarter berths either side beneath the cockpit and two settees either side in the saloon.

Forward on the port side of the mast is an enclosed electric head with sink and shower.

Opposite is a hanging locker and electric fridge.

The interior finish is simple and low-maintenance. Painted off-white, the corners have been filled and faired producing pleasantly rounded radii.

In the saloon's centre is the 18hp marinised Kubota engine with a sink built into the top of the housing. On the aft end is an electrical control panel and engine ignition.

Under power, Pig Hunter quite happily motors along at six knots although, as I discovered when docking, is not so responsive in reverse.

The simple galley consists of a two-burner Mariner Prince gas stove and oven. On the port side between the quarter berth and settee is a lift-up chart table and VHF radio.

Storage is scattered throughout the boat



An insert fits into the berth up forward to make a double bunk. To starboard is a fridge and hanging locker. Opposite is the enclosed head.

with the majority being above and behind both settees. Also under the cockpit, behind and between the quarter berths, is tons of space.

The companionway ladder is hinged, lifting upward to provide ready access.

Everything below is electric, including

the fridge and head. A big alternator keeps the two six-volt in-series batteries fully charged.

The "most important" feature down below, of which many yachties would already be aware, is an AWA cassette recorder with graphic equaliser, pumping music out through speakers both above and below deck.

When Thompson, his wife Jan and three children go cruising, they are assisted by a Autohelm 1000 which he describes as "brilliant".

Pig Hunter is exceptionally responsive to the helm and can manoeuvre with precision. Her turning circle can be less than her length so do not tangle with her on the startline.

PS: A second Elliott 10.5, named Pork Chops, is about to be launched.

PIG HUNTER

LOA	10.5m
LWL	9.40m
Beam	4.00m
Draft	2.00m
Displacement	3400kg
Owner	Steve Thompson
Builder	Craig Partridge Yachts
Designer	Greg Elliott
