

**A** new class of cruiser racers will be established in New Zealand waters this summer. Elliott Yachts have built nine of their new 10-50s — four have been launched already, and another five are on order.

Many people are regarding the 10-50 as a production boat — which it is, with the hulls, decks and keels all coming from the same

moulds. But three of the completed boats, *Pretty Woman*, *Snap Decision* and *Backchat*, show how individualistic the interiors can be.

Different contracting for the finishing work, plus each owner's sailing preferences, have made for three boats of very different character.

But, allowing for these different visions, there's also a positive unifying force between the owners of the Elliott 10-50s, and a class

association with a strong foundation has already been established. Strict class rules have been formulated, covering everything from IMS regulations concerning minimum interior requirements, to limits on spending on new sails.

Garry Banks, managing director of Elliott Yachts is ecstatic about all these developments: "We went into a production



Sharp hull graphics set *Pretty Woman* apart.

## Unidentical triplets

By ALEX STONE



On the wind, the 10-50 looks as purposeful as any Elliott design.

boat of this size against all prevailing advice, and the design seems to have really struck a chord.

"Just the right price range — you'll get one on the water for less than \$200,000 — it's not too long and fits into a 10m marina berth and,

best of all, the 10-50 is busy changing a misconception about our boats.

"It seems all the designers of fast boats were tainted with the same brush. Anything fast was regarded as tippy or downright dangerous. But let me stress one thing — the

10-50 is a sensible cruising boat. It just happens to be fast as well.

"And the people in our owners' association — well we can't go wrong there. That's such a good thing for the future of the class."

Elliott Yachts have contracted Terry Bailey to finish the interior of a 10-50, which will be shown at the Tokyo Boat Show early next year. Irrepressibly optimistic, Banks is confident they'll sell five boats in Japan next year.

Much of the wisdom behind the 10-50 class association comes from John Wearn, owner of *Pretty Woman*, a past stalwart (and national champion) of the the Townsend 32s. With Peter Lawry, he drafted the class rules, drawing much on his experience in the Townsend class.

For years, Wearn had sailed *Delicado*, one of the most unbeatable Townsends, but felt it was time for a change.

"We wanted a fast boat," he says, "but also one ideal for two-handed cruising. I liked the look of the 10-50 — it's a much prettier boat than some Elliotts — and with the prospect of a strong owners' association, we got carried away. And here we are."

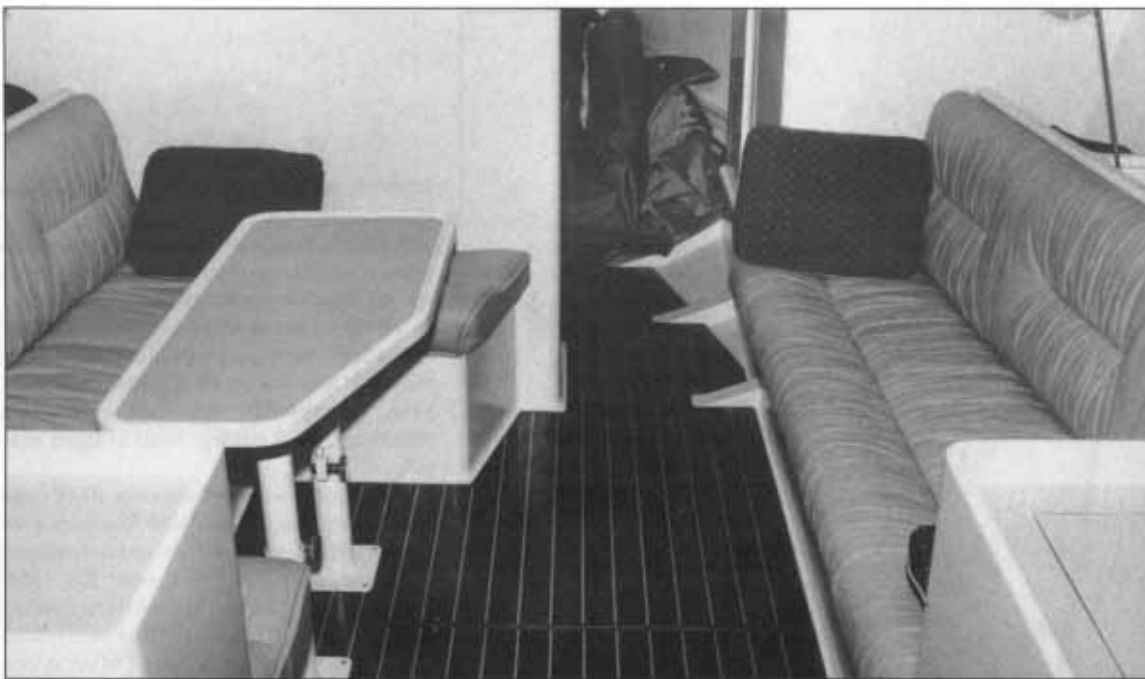
Wearn, who is a real estate agent, has been sailing all his life, with a fair proportion of his time campaigning Finn dinghies in the international arena. He and his wife Liz shifted to Auckland from Christchurch some 16 years ago.

They ordered *Pretty Woman* in May 1990, and their hull was the 8th out of the mould. The project has leapfrogged many others, and *Pretty Woman* became the third 10-50 in the water. She was launched on October 11, one day ahead of schedule.

Custom boatbuilder David Pringle managed the entire project, once the hull and decks had been delivered, and has displayed some astute sub-contracting skills. All of the input into the boat is of a consistently high standard.

Brett de Thier designed the hull graphics, and conceived the colour scheme for the cool, crisp and uncluttered interior. Vern Newlove did the signwriting; Steve McCabe the rigging. Grant Billingham of Fosters designed the deck layout. Spars are by Bruce Elliott, and sails by Rick Royden.

Wearn comments that throughout the job, Pringle "has been brilliant." Wearn is proud as



**LEFT:** Pretty Woman's clean interior is evident in this view of the saloon, with its dancefloor expanse in the middle.

**BELOW:** The navigation area ... as clean-looking as the rest of the boat. Under the chart table is a fridge.



Punch of his Pretty Woman, and it's easy to see why.

The deck layout especially is a joy to work with, and one is surrounded by the reassuring rustle of the roller bearings in top-of-the-range Harken blocks. Everything works well on this boat, and all the experience that has gone into its setup is immediately apparent.

Wearn has opted for a mainsheet traveller across the centre of the cockpit, with a fine adjustment system that can be played with one hand in any wind strength. Indeed, all the purchase systems on Pretty Woman make any adjustment of any sail an immediate and easy possibility. I don't know of many boats this size where you can flatten the foot of the mainsail, or move the genoa car forward, on a beat, with one hand and a nonchalant smile.



Looking aft on Snap Decision's starboard side shows the double quarter berth and the fridge under the chart table.



Snap Decision's jazzy interior of strong colour contrasts. Note the stowage space above the settee going right out to the hull and contained by a net.

The 10-50s have neither backstays nor runners, which cleans up their cockpit area. For extra security downwind, the topping lift can be led down to the transom to serve as a temporary backstay.

In her few race outings so far, Pretty Woman has proved to be pretty quick, especially in light airs. Which is gratifying to Wearn, as he had secretly thought that might be a weakness of the design.

During our sail, Pretty Woman was making 7 knots to windward towing a small inflatable dinghy. She showed that she could be an exacting boat to steer, punishing bad helming with an immediate drop in speed. She seemed to prefer being held slightly off the wind, rather than feathering. "Very different to the Townsend," Wearn remarks. "This will take some getting used to."

Pretty Woman's sails are interesting: Wearn has decided on a very flat mainsail, flatter than anything I've seen on a boat of this size before. He is convinced the other 10-50 mains might be too full, and anyway prefers sailing with a wide open slot. Time will tell who's right, but in the light of his previous racing success, I'll put my money on Wearn.

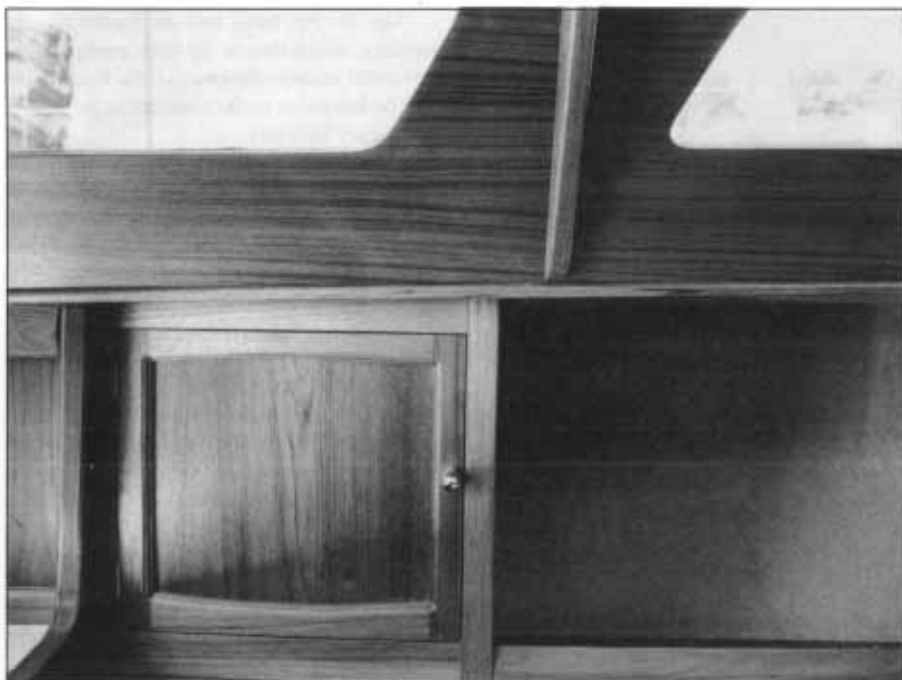
Some trial and error is still required though. In a breeze, a vertical crease appeared in the aft third of the mainsail. Wearn's first thoughts were that there was too much pre-bend in the mast and he was experimenting with rig tensions to overcome the problem.

Being loose-footed, the main can be made as rounded as you like off the wind. Royden's work on Pretty Woman's sail wardrobe is impressive — especially the spinnaker.

For auxiliary power, Wearn chose a 27hp Yanmar diesel with a saildrive unit. "Maybe it's an overkill," he admits, "but it's hardly more weight than the 18hp model, and I'd rather err on this side."

The transmission seemed to be unusually smooth, with vibration through the boat almost unnoticeable.

It's the interior that gives Pretty Woman a special dimension. The clean combination of white painted surfaces with leather upholstery



Back to tradition ... Backchat's interior is fitted out in the warmth of teak.



in "haze", a kind of pale Wedgewood blue, creates an amazingly light space. Modern too — looks like the living quarters on the Starship Enterprise. Liz plans to personalize the interior a tad by hanging graphics by her son.

Upholstery in Pretty Woman was done, and done well, by Beedie and Hoyle on Auckland's North Shore.

The Wearn's have left the forepeak bare for sail stowage, so for berths, Pretty Woman has the two settees and two double quarter berths. The head is in an enclosed cabin around the mast base.

She has a surfeit of cool storage, boasting both a freezer and fridge, the latter under the chart table. The two-burner Mariner stove with oven is a distinct improvement on their galley arrangements in the Townsend, Liz says.

Snap Decision, by contrast, has a much bolder visual approach to interior decor. It is a combination of brilliant white painted panels, teak trim and grey upholstery mottled with flecks of pink and mauve. The areas of light and dark compete in almost equal measure and the result is a jazzy-looking mix with sharp, well-defined edges.

The dark areas in Snap Decision's interior are all confined to below waist level and, with a white vinyl headliner, an airy atmosphere is achieved.

This clean approach is continued in the recessed smoked perspex sliding cupboard doors.

The owners of Snap Decision have opted for a vee-berth in the forepeak with only one door between the saloon and the heads, which leaves the heads exposed to the front cabin.

Like Pretty Woman, a fridge is located under the chart table. Unlike Pretty Woman, Snap Decision has the mainsheet traveller mounted across the transom, which further clears the cockpit space. The sheet is led forward along the boom and returns to a winch on the coachroof.

While Pretty Woman and Snap Decision emphasise modern, bright interiors, a third 10-50, Backchat, finished off by owner Trevor Martin, goes all the way in recreating a more traditional style. Although she was not quite finished at the time of going to press, her all teak interior is a marked contrast with the other two versions.

"I like wood," says Martin. "The other interiors are just too modern for my liking. If boats were meant to be like that, fibre glass would grow on trees," he quips.

Despite the teak interior, his choice of light pastel squabs (not delivered at the time of this report) would keep the interior bright and attractive.

Quite clearly, as much as these boats will



**A clean and functional galley ... note the lockers without doorknobs. They open with a double push.**

generate keen competition on the water, there will also be a touch of rivalry over what interior choices are made — a flexibility that gives each one its own individual flavour.

Another innovation for owners wanting to do their own thing with 10-50 interiors comes from boatbuilder Ted Mitchell who is supplying kit-set interior modules especially designed for the new range.

Like most Elliott designs, the 10-50s seem somewhat ahead of their time. But they may become future classics — in a sense a repeat of the Townsend 32 story.

#### 10-50 STATISTICS

LOA	10.5m
LWL	9.7m
Beam	3.7m
Draft	2m
Displacement	3300kg
Headroom	1.9m
Designer	Greg Elliott
Builders	Elliott Yachts