

JAPAN

Elliott sailing into Japan

BY DAVID READE

Greg Elliott has been building sailboats all his working life. He's a builder turned designer, producing a style of racing craft that seems to suit Japanese yachtsmen.

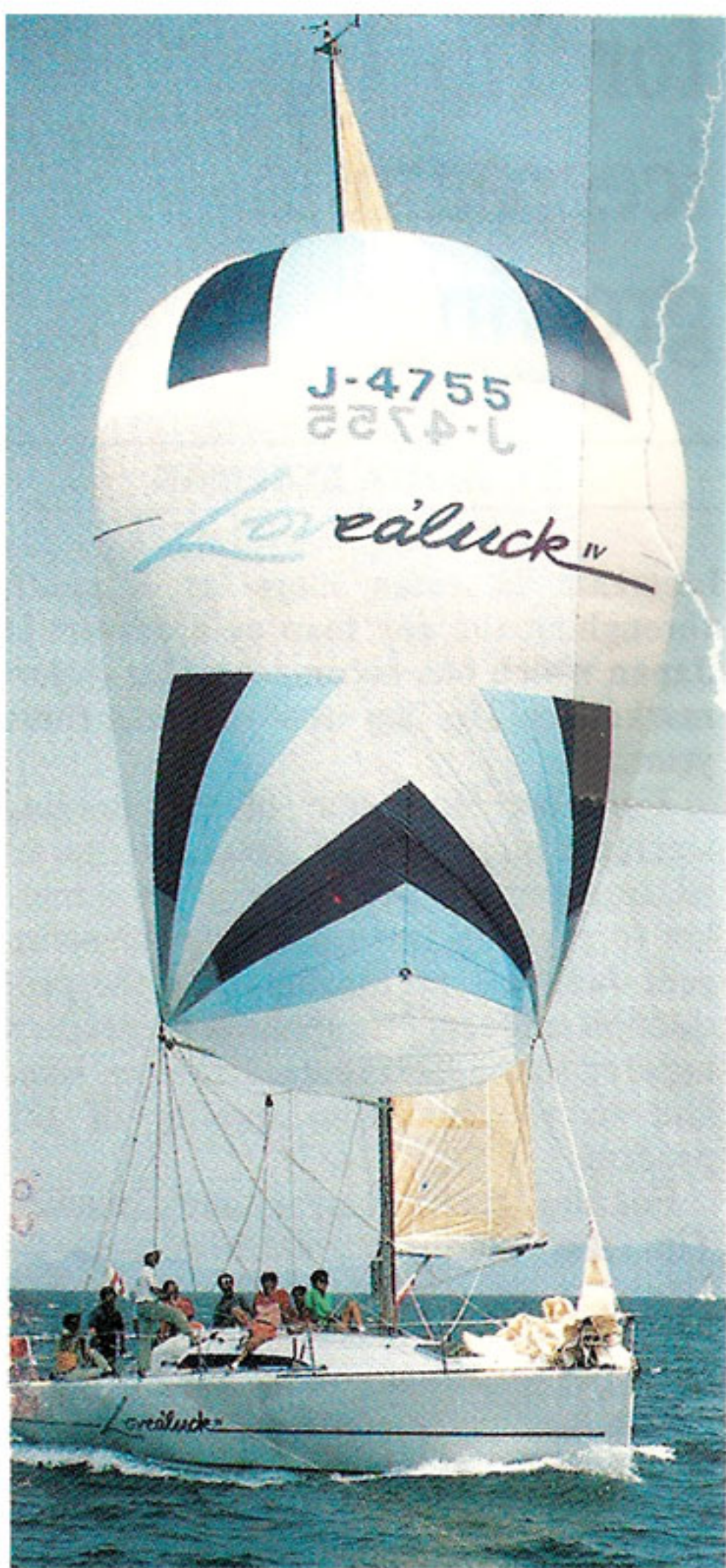
Elliott believes in "hands on" marketing. He spends a lot of time in regattas in Japanese waters, sailing boats he's

designed and sold, for their owners. Usually he wins, or wins the class, thereby effectively promoting his business.

Soon after completing his apprenticeship with Jas Bailey in Auckland, Elliott designed and built a 25ft sloop Outsider in wood. She was very successful on the Waitemata. He was encouraged to build what has become something of a stan-

dard, the Elliott 5.9, in wood, but not for long. He teamed up with Bill Andrews, formed a company which invested in the moulds to put the 5.9 on a more commercial basis.

They've sold more than 100 sailboats, many of them as training boats, reflecting good seakeeping, as well as performance characteristics appreciated by yacht clubs on both sides of the Tasman.



Lovealuck, a 12m Elliott design, goes through her paces.

Designing bigger boats, now all in GRP, which have had racing success offshore, built an international reputation and he saw the opportunity to address the Japanese market. The 17m Future Shock and Peacemaker (12m) picked up wins in offshore racing, with Peacemaker becoming Elliott's first sale in Japan.

Named Raika, she was crewed by an all-women Japanese crew in the Melbourne/Osaka race.

Trained by Elliott they gained second in class and were fifth boat to finish, and first Japanese crew home. Five Elliott 12s have been sold, three of which went for export.

Greg Elliott runs two companies: Elliott Boat Design, which designs sailboats and offers a build-supervisory package, while Elliott Marine builds boats, all of Elliott design.

Sales in unit numbers may not be high, but each Elliott 12 is a \$400,000 boat. Elliott Boat Design may design and source keel, rudder, sails, mast and even deck locally and send the package almost in a CKD condition to be assembled and finished in Japan.

Spending time sailing boats in Japan has paid off in knowledge about the market. Although Japanese cities are not endowed with too many marinas, Japan's coastline is dotted with small harbours and moorings are plentiful.

The E935 is a one-design keeler which fits the new IMS racing rules and suits short-handed sailing. Seven have been sold to Japan. Even more popular there is the trailable E7 with 18 sold, and Elliott is working on the E770 fixed keel version.

One Japanese yachtsman, a doctor from Kyoto, has bought and races two Elliott craft — a 7m and a 12m.

Recently, Elliott Boat Design has been joined by naval architect Julian Smith, bringing staff up to nine. It is seeking additional agents in Japan. ■