

The Elliott 5.9

Length Overall: 5.9 metres (19ft 6")
Length Waterline: 5.6 metres (18 ft 4")
Beam: 2.45 metres (8 ft)
Draught: 1.3 metres (4 ft 2")
Displacement: 896 kg (1971.2 pounds)
Sail Area: 24.6 square metres (264.69 square feet)
Designer: Greg Elliott
Year Designed: 1981

The 5.9, somewhat strangely, has no lines drawings as such. So we have to make do with the lines of the 6.5, a near sister to Greg Elliott's first trailer yacht. Elliott, a qualified boat builder, has been schooled in the formal aspects of yacht design, and when he had the inspiration to design this fleet-footed trailersailer, he lofted the lines full size on his boat shop floor—just as it was done in the old days.

Like so many designers, both formally educated and self-taught, Greg Elliott had to design and build himself a boat to display his newly developed talents. He first designed the 26 foot *Outsider* in 1978 and sailed her with outstanding success until selling the boat in 1983. However, and contrary to his reasonable expectations, success did not bring acceptance or, more importantly, orders for more designs.

The 5.9 was the Elliott drought-breaker which produced a flood of orders. Its appearance carries the now familiar Elliott design style, a straight stem, fairness of form, flattish under body and an absence of hard angles or chines and, above all, a generous beam on a light displacement with narrow waterline beam.

For these reasons and others, I see the Elliott boats as having typically New Zealand origins, even down to the low aspect rig—with a long footed large roached mainsail reminiscent of the mullet boat. In fact, Elliott can now justifiably take his place in the succeeding, (and successful) generations of New Zealand yacht designers,

Elliott 5.9s at their moorings at Smelting Cove, Kawau. The Youth Scheme not only teaches youngsters to sail expertly, but to maintain and rig their craft. Photo courtesy Harold Bennett.





The crew of *Lion Nathan* have everything under control as they begin to gybe the spinnaker in a full breeze.

beside names like Stewart, Spencer, Farr, Davidson and Holland.

The Elliott 5.9 could loosely be described as a trailersailer but, to be honest, she is not the boat for the novice family sailor—nor was she intended to be. She is purely a sports boat—a big dinghy with barely room for her crew to sleep. About 20 of the 80 boats built have been exported to Australia, with a growing market opening up in Japan. The fleet here now boasts an extremely competitive national championship.

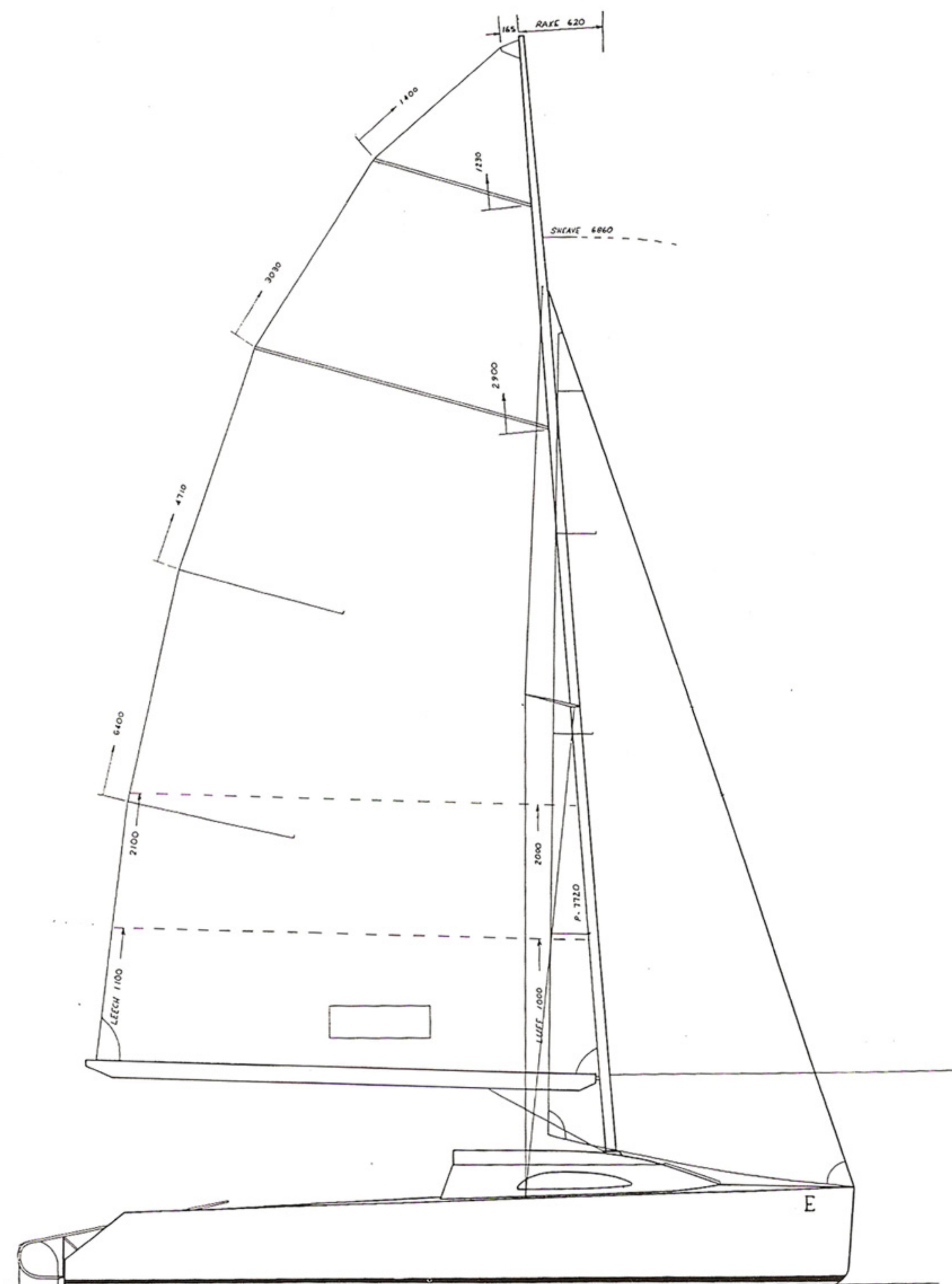
A three man boat, her lively performance delivers an exciting ride and can be demanding on crew. Under spinnaker she provides exhilarating downwind sailing and will get on the plane on a

reach or run without any difficulty.

The 5.9 won ready acceptance with younger sailors keen to own a high performance trailerable yacht that had low maintenance GRP construction, little on the demands of time by way of maintenance and in which cruising accommodation was not a high priority.

If luck eluded Elliott in the first years of his career, he was in the right place at the right time with the 5.9. Observing the popularity of the 5.9, the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron saw it as the ideal craft for use in its newly developed youth training scheme.

The scheme evolved from discussions during the 1987 New Zealand America's Cup campaign in Fremantle when the need was recognised to provide skilled sailors for an increasingly com-



Full roached main evocative of the mullet boat, but the tiny foretriangle and light weight makes this little flyer a test of ability and reflexes rather than brute strength.