



Flojo — this cruisy lady one hot performer

Flojo, the new Elliott 44, like the elegant track star, turns a lot of heads when performing. Yet despite her impressive race debut, Flojo was not designed as an all-out racer. Built for Roger Manthel of Wellington, the new Elliott will also be used for extensive cruising in the Marlborough Sounds and off-shore.

ABOVE: Flying Flojo — the Elliott 44 at 16 knots toward Rangitoto Island. Once fully on the plane, she was happy to stay in top gear.

LEFT: Upwind performance was equally impressive under full main and No 2 kevlar/mylar genoa.

BOTTOM: Flojo thumps aside the harbour chop as the yacht climbs out onto the plane.



Just back in Auckland after the Noumea race, where she finished third over the line behind the big 17m Elliott Future Shock and the 20m Longfellow, Flojo was still in showroom condition when the *Boating* crew stepped aboard for the eagerly-awaited boat test.

First impressions are of a large volumed, handsome yacht, perhaps the most attractive yacht yet from the Elliott drawing board. As we stow our gear we note that this volume certainly continues below decks.

But with excellent sunlight for photography and a solid 20-knot south-southwesterly, there is no time to dally below — all being keen to get underway.

Easily manoeuvrable, Flojo is rapidly extricated from her Westhaven marina berth and motored at a surprising 9 knots out onto Auckland's Waitemata Harbour, the 43hp turbo Volvo saildrive providing more than sufficient grunt for Cook Strait crossings should the wind be absent.

Before setting sail, we played for a while with the new Autohelm autopilot, a unit designed for much larger vessels and therefore easily able to control Flojo's course — even with just the mainsail set.

Bearing away under mainsail, having reverted to human control, the spinnaker gear is broken out. Under main alone, Flojo is achieving 9.5-10 knots, but with the spinnaker breaking open, the acceleration is instantaneous — the log climbing immediately to a constant 13.9 knots, lifting to 16 in the gusts.

At pre-planing speeds, Flojo pushes up a moderate stern wake but this disappears quickly once she breaks out. With her complete cruising interior, the Elliott 44 requires some extra wind power to get her to fully burst on the



Upwind, Flojo is a powerful performer, tracking nicely at 7.7 knots.



With the sheets eased a touch, the yacht's speed improves rapidly.

about 7.7 knots, requiring little or no helm adjustment to keep her in the groove.

Helm loading is minimal, an obvious cruising advantage. While we have seven people on the windward rail for the boat test, there is no question that this yacht has enough stability to sail happily without this human ballast.

Bearing off onto a two-sail-reach, Flojo's speed quickly climbs to 8.8-9 knots, the helm load remaining light but the main requiring a little more sensitive trimming.

From that point, it is a long beat back to Westhaven, a distance achieved surprisingly quickly — and comfortably, despite the chilly southerly.

Throughout her sailing evaluation, Flojo impresses as a well-conceived performance cruising yacht. On all points of sail, she is predictable, easily

plane. Once this is achieved, she happily stays in top gear, at one stage dragging off the camera launch.

Control is very easy, there being no hairy moments on this blinding charge downharbour, the yacht being entirely predictable and light on the helm — despite having wheel steering.

With Rangitoto Island zooming toward us at an alarming rate, it becomes apparent that we have two choices — take the spinnaker down or become a permanent fixture on that volcanic landmark. As the owner is not aboard, we prudently vote on the former.

The big blast over, it is time to see how Flojo performs two-sail reaching and hard on the wind, the kevlar/mylar No 3 genoa being the obvious choice. Upwind, the Elliott 44 tracks nicely at

controlled and well suited to either shorthanded or fully-crewed sailing. From the photography launch, she has no bad camera angles, impressing all as an efficient and attractive sailboat.

Accommodation

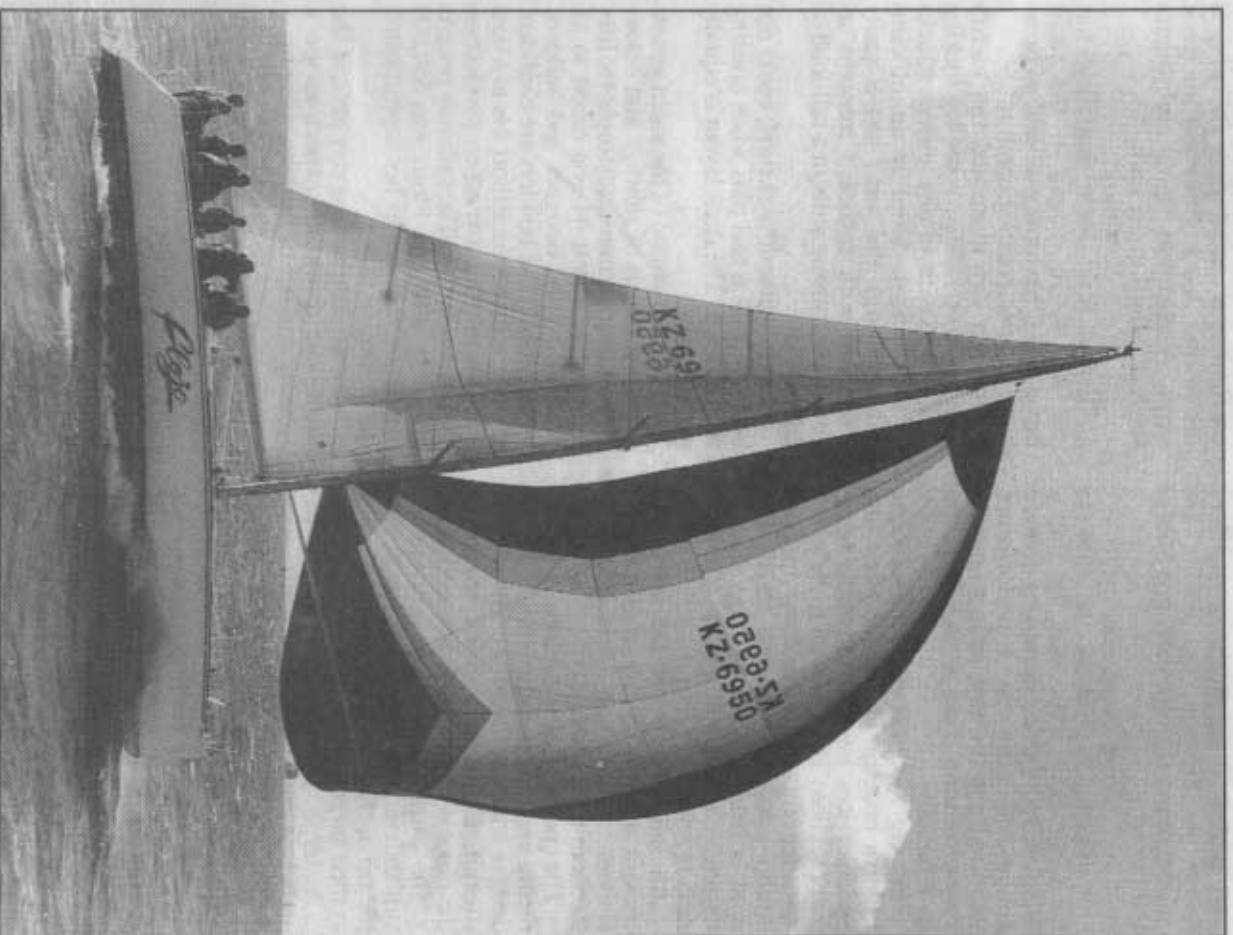
Back at the marina, it is time to closely inspect the deck and interior accommodation. Stepping below we are taken by the huge and well set-out interior.

At the bow there are two pipe frame berths which fold up against the hull to create an immense sail stowage area. Also in the bow is the vacuum pump unit for the toilet.

The toilet compartment is a particular pride to the owner, the Sealand vacuum toilet a most impressive throne. This compartment also houses the



One-handed steering on a traditionally difficult two-sail reach. The log climbed to 9 knots on this point of sail.



Up and charging toward Rangitoto Island, Fiojo remained predictable and light on the helm.

shower, basin and bench, complete with hot and cold pressurised water and even a soap dispenser. The exit pump for the shower also doubles as a scavenger pump for the bilge.

Directly opposite the toilet compartment are a series of crew gear cut-out lockers and one large hanging locker.

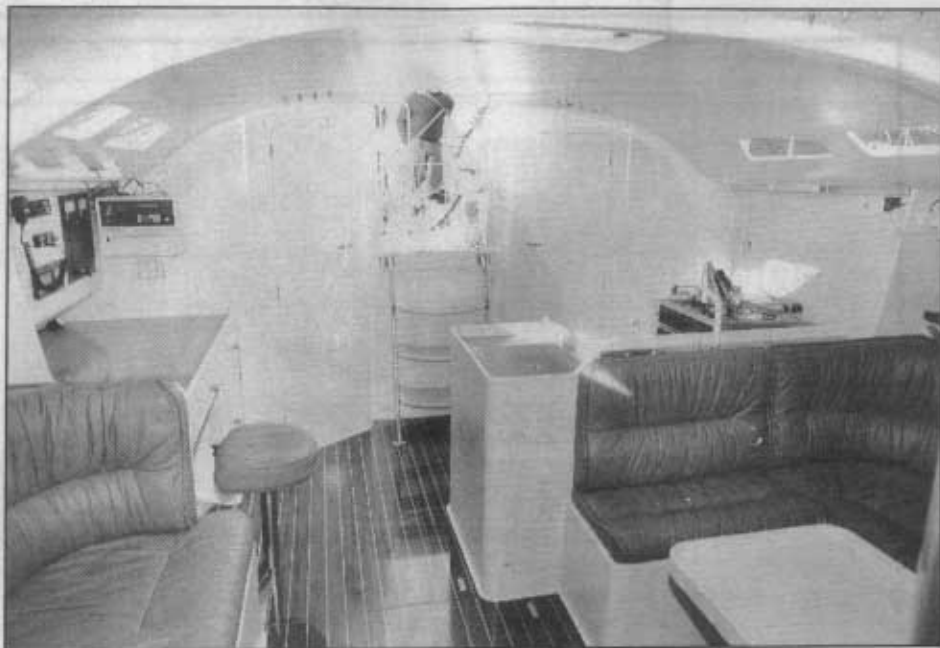
The main saloon is resplendent in green leather upholstery, a brave colour selection which works well, complementing the teak and holly floor. A removable table enables the vast saloon to become a spacious entertainment centre.

Stainless steel water tanks holding 272 litres (60 gallons) are fitted beneath

the main saloon settee berths. As well the saloon boasts ample stowage under the berths, behind the backrests and beneath the side decks.

The navigation station, to starboard, is one of the few we have come across that hold a full-sized chart. The navigator's haven also accommodates an impressive array of electronic equipment — a Navstar satnav, Furuno SSB, GPS, VHF and weatherfax. As well the Autobel Multi sailing instrument repeater is housed at the nav station. A removable leather-bound navigator's seat makes the fore and aft chart table easy to work at.

Also in the entertainment depart-



Flojo boasts a large galley with doors behind leading to the huge quarterberth "bedrooms."

ment are an Alpine stereo with a Pioneer CD stacker, there being Alpine speakers below decks and Pioneer waterproof speakers in the cockpit. The custom electrics switch panel, by Roy Shingles, tops off this electronic collection.

To port is the commodious galley, featuring a striking kauri benchtop (as used in the nav station). The cooker is a four-burner Lido oven featuring a large grill. The single galley basin, like the toilet, enjoys hot and cold pressurised water and a soap dispenser.

The yacht's fridge and freezer are both built into the galley bench, the freezer being top access next to the basin and the fridge front-opening aft,

and both reflecting the yacht's volume.

The galley is equipped to accept generous provisioning, there being ample stowage both beneath the bench, in slide-lockers beneath the side decks and in a bench-top food bin. A neat feature is the slide-out rubbish bin.

Next aft are the quarterberths, a description which is really inadequate. These are "bedrooms", shut off by doors from the rest of the yacht, and complete with proper double berths, wardrobe-type lockers and plenty of drawers.

Engine access is either under the companionway stairs or through side panels from the "bedrooms". The Volvo is neatly installed, all plumbing

and wiring a credit to the builders, Geary and Sherson. The 180-litre (40 gallon) diesel tank is positioned behind the motor.

Deck inspection

Wandering for'ard to the bow to begin the deck inspection, we find a Simpson-Lawrence capstan, a feature not usually seen on a performance yacht. Also at the bow, in keeping with Flojo's cruising concept, is a large anchor locker.

The rig was built by designer Greg Elliott's brother, Bruce, of Mast and Spar Services, being based on an Inter-mark section. The mast is a triple swept spreader rig with masthead jumper struts — and no backstays at all. The mast is held in place by Riggana rod rigging, terminated with Graham rigging screws.

All sail controls are led aft to the cockpit where they are controlled by Bariant self-tailing winches, via Ronstan rope clutches.

The cockpit is well equipped for both racing and cruising, there being a large dodger which extends well aft over the cockpit. Centrepiece of the cockpit is the large wheel on an Edson pedestal.

The Autohelm sailing instruments, although mounted above the hatch, well for'ard of the wheel, are easily read due to their large and bright display.

A large self-draining well in the middle of the cockpit floor houses both the liferaft and two gas bottles. Lockers built into the side of the cockpit provide plenty of space for cruising gear.

Other cruising features include a hot and cold fresh water shower in the cockpit and a simple walk-through transom with neat step mid-way between cockpit sole and waterline for easy boarding.

The mainsheet traveller and self-tailing Bariant winches are mounted right aft, an unconventional layout

configuration, rather than the winged appendage that had become his trade mark. A steel and timber stub secure the lead ballast to the hull.

Summary

There is little doubt that Flojo has met her design criteria — the yacht being a real performer as well as providing genuine cruising comfort.

Our test day illustrated the yacht's power and versatility — the log flicking to 16 knots without any anxiety attacks in the cockpit. Flojo is an efficient mover through the water and is easily controlled with sufficient inherent stability for cruising without a rail-load of crew ballast.

The rig, without backstays, could not be simpler — a real plus when cruising shorthanded. The deck layout is equally user-friendly.

The sheer volume of the yacht guarantees truckloads of stowage and below-decks space for non-claustrophobic life.

The new Elliott 44 is a credit to all involved — the designer and builders, in particular. The builders are confident of producing future Elliott 44s at a cost well below that of other production yachts of this size. The sailaway price is \$330,000, although Flojo was \$50,000 more than this due to her sophisticated electronics.

After an exhilarating day aboard the yacht, our test team expect to see a growing number of Flojos appearing.



tailing Barent winches are mounted right aft, an unconventional layout which seems to work well. All winches are slightly over specification, which makes working the boat relatively effortless.

Construction

Flojo is built of 20mm cedar strip planks, glassed each side. From the cockpit bulkhead aft is a ply-foam-ply composite to better cope with knocks, such as dropped winch handles, and also to provide a frame-free quarter-berth interior.

All main bulkheads are plywood, the frames being laminated timber. The keel is securely attached with 12 25mm keelbolts, which extend through the floors.

The keel is a departure from Elliott tradition, featuring a compressed bulb



The navigation station is one of the few with a chart table able to handle unfolded charts.

The vitals

LOA	13.41m (44ft)
LWL	12.3m (40ft 4ins)
Beam	4.42m (14ft 6ins)
Draft	2.5m (8ft 3ins)
Ballast.....	2950 kgs (6500 lbs)
Displacement.....	7030 kgs (15,500 lbs)
Design	Elliott
Builder	Geary and Sherson
Rig	Mast and Spar Services
Instruments	Autohelm
Winches	Barent
Sails.....	North
Engine	Volvo 43hp
Paint system	Epiglass
Price as tested	\$380,000