



CLUB MARINE

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ALL CARBON FLYER

The Marten 49



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New Sail

Crafty carbon speedster

This lightning-fast carbon fibre creation doesn't so much sail as fly...

By Barry Tranter





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A friend of mine, an engineer with experience in gliders and aeronautics, once refused to believe me when I told him how multihulls could exceed the speed of the true wind.

I drew him diagrams – those parallelograms of forces which we learned in high school physics – to show how it worked. Still he refused to believe. A decade or two later here I am, on a 49ft yacht, which the builder labels as a cruiser, and we are sailing faster than the true wind. Upwind.

To tell the absolute truth, we are not quite sailing at true wind speed. The polar diagrams, those curving lines which show how fast a yacht should go, indicate that at 40 degrees to the true wind, the Marten 49 should do 6.04 knots in 6 knots of breeze.

We are not far off, but we are not trying very hard – in fact, we are not trying at all – but on the wind we see 6.4 knots in 7.3 knots of breeze. And to beat the breeze by a fair margin, we have only to ease the sheets a little; at 50 degrees we should see 7 knots of boat speed in 6 knots of

If you haven't been paying attention, yacht design has come a long way



The photographs tell the story of the layout below decks: simple and sophisticated.

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TRANS-TASMAN HISTORY

The Marten 49 was originally built in New Zealand by Marten Yachts, whose founder, Steve Marten, built, among other things, the first fibreglass 12-Metres, helping to kick-start New Zealand's superyacht industry in the process.

When Marten Yachts closed its doors, the 49 moulds were bought by Azzura Marine in Australia, the boatbuilding group run by Iain Murray, and the moulds were transferred to the Azzura factory in Nowra, south of Sydney.

The 49 was designed by John Reichel and Jim Pugh, the American team responsible for a huge portfolio of yachts, including double Sydney Hobart winner, *Wild Oats XI*. The 49 was conceived as a fast cruiser – she has a lifting keel for that purpose – in the style of the Italian Wally yachts; boats whose clean deck lines are corrupted by the absolute minimum of unsightly additions.

Construction is all in carbon fibre, including the mast and boom. Right in the bow is a full-depth lazarette; a black cave of carbon. You can

climb down on a ladder formed by carbon tubes glued into the structure. The anchor swings out of its locker on a carbon fibre arm. The hatches are carbon. The prodder (optional) is carbon. The bits I like best are the massive chainplates, set into the gunwales, which look as if they are machined from chunks of an exotic black metal.

BLIGHTY-BOUND

The boat we sailed, hull number six, was headed for a racing career in the UK, and her role had influenced the accommodation detailing. On the

Below left: The anchor is deployed on a carbon fibre bowsprit.

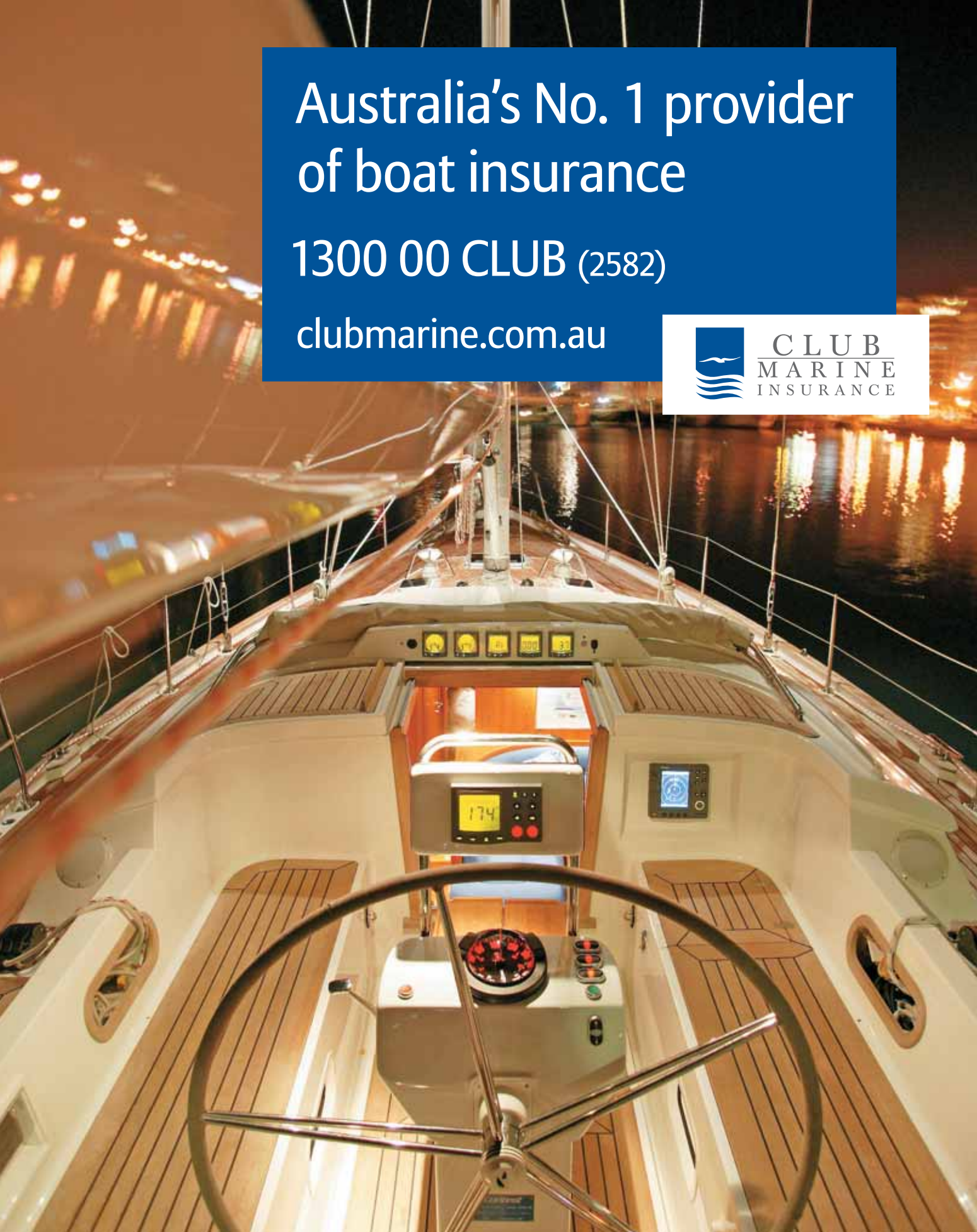
Below: The massive chainplates are set into the gunwales.



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cruising boats, the owner's cabin and bathroom are forward. On this boat, the forward cabin was fitted with pipecots and the bathroom area would become a wet locker. There are two cabins aft on this boat; again they have pipecots and split cushions so the race crew can sleep to windward.

The layout belowdecks is simple; in fact, the whole boat is simple in that modern way where simple is arrived at by sophisticated means. The furniture below is painted timber, which looks moulded. The locker doors are an aluminium honeycomb skinned with 'glass, then veneers. The galley is amidships; a straight-line arrangement on the starboard side, with hooks provided for a strap to support the cook. The photographs tell the story of the interior:

The case for the lifting keel, a cast-steel fin with a 3.5-tonne lead bulb, doesn't intrude on the interior as it is integral with the forward bulkhead and bathroom structure. Azzura's Jason Rowed shows us the control buttons, which are mounted on the keel case. "We mounted them here so you can hear the keel in operation and know what it is doing. We could easily put in an electric gauge," he says. The keel's hydraulics are by Central Coast Hydraulics – "the best guys in the world", says Jason. The keel draws 3.6m when lowered; 2.1m raised.

CLASSY LADY

The interior trim timber on this boat is called *anigre*, a light-coloured African hardwood. An earlier boat was done in teak with cream fabrics – "formal, elegant and classy," says Jason. This boat, too, is elegant. The interior and some details can be customised to a degree, but the Marten 49 is a production boat in a custom boat's body. "It has the fine finish of a one-off," says Jason, "but as a one-off it would cost \$3m."

Who will buy it? This boat was commissioned by a British couple, who want the challenge of a racing programme, including the Fastnet Race. The next boat has been ordered by renowned Sydney yachtsman and former ocean racer, Norman Rydge, who says he will add an electric mainsheet winch and cruise the boat with his wife. Jason would like to take a 49 to Hamilton Island Race Week and compete with a full crew. So, apparently, the boat's role is what you make it.

Norman Rydge is onboard for our sail. He pulls up the mainsail manually to the halfway point on its 2:1 halyard, and then uses the starboard-



the Marten 49 is a production boat in a custom boat's body

From the carbon fibre bow down to the chrome mooring cleats, the Marten 49 maintains a minimum of unsightly additions.



side electric primary winch to finish the job. The headsail is easy to unroll as the sailplan shows short, non-overlapping headsails. In a few minutes, we are sailing upwind at somewhere near the speed of the true wind.

Ullman Sails' Bruce Hollis is also onboard. He will build the sails for Norman Rydge's boat and will make a fully-battened main instead of the soft IMS-style sail on this boat.

FAST AND FURIOUS


The 49's steering is perfect. You can't help feeling good when you're steering this boat to windward, as she is light to control, but has the sense of



purpose of a fast boat. And she confers on everyone onboard the harbour cred, the reflected glory, the arrogance, that comes with a fast boat of high style.

She is easy to handle, partly because that short-footed jib is so easy to tack. The breeze builds and we see 8.7 knots in 12 True, at around 45 degrees to the wind – a figure which matches the polars exactly. By now the mainsheet traveller has been eased down its track for the gusts. As she heels, I am aware that the helmsman needs foot supports. Jason tells me the teak chocks have been prepared, but they will be shipped to England with the boat so the owner can decide on position.

The sails are lowered, we motor home. The 49 peaks at 9 knots under power when the 75hp Yanmar turbo is spinning at 3200rpm. An easy cruise is 7.6 knots, around 2750rpm.

Tomorrow Jason will start packing up this 49 for shipping. Shame to see her go, really. 

SPECIFICATIONS: MARTEN 49	
LOA:	15m
Beam:	4.17m
Draft:	2.1-3.6m
Displacement (lightship):	9500kg
Displacement (sailing):	11,229kg
Price (sailing):	\$1.4m to \$1.5m

For more information, contact Jason Rowed at Marten Yachts, Pyrmont, NSW, tel (02) 9552 1133 or go to: www.martenyachts.com.

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