

AUSTRALIAN *Boating* Test No 91

The Sunmaid 20 Trailer-yacht

Top performance, lots of comfort, excellent handling — it's easy to see why this is Victoria's top selling T/S.

No-one who knows anything about boating trends will argue that the greatest movement in the family boating field is towards trailer-sailers. Similarly, no-one will disagree that this movement is gathering momentum and, following the same trends that appeared in the U.S. and Europe a few years ago, more and more boat owners are looking at the T-S as the best value for his boating dollar.

This may seem strange since, from time immemorial, the trailer-sailer has, like the trimaran, been a craft that is talked about in hushed terms and only then by those who "know nothing" about boating. Probably no craft has suffered from greater misrepresentation or is surrounded by more myths and fallacies than the T-S. Purists scorn it as a half-breed while the uninitiated, having picked up all kinds of unfounded rumours from all kinds of unfounded sources, often regard it as the fastest form of maritime suicide.

Time and experience have proved that not only are these fallacies untrue, but that this hybrid boat is in fact the most suited sailing craft of all to general use, and in fact in all useage except perhaps performance racing and extended cruising. Since neither of these latter

*Text and Pictures by
Jeff Toghill*



are a great part of the family may scene, it is easy to understand the new enlightened outlook on the trailer-sailer, and the remarkable upsurge in popularity it has experienced of late.

Providing the T-S is sailed within its capabilities — and this surely applies to every boat — there is no reason why it should not be as safe as a keel yacht, and there is no reason why it should not achieve the popularity it is achieving. Apart from its trailerability it has so many cost-saving facets for the average family — elimination of mooring fees, slipping, anti-fouling, and weather problems — that it must surely go from success to success in an era of spiralling costs and expenses.

Of course, there are trailer-sailers and there are trailer-sailers just as there are Mercedes and Mazdas, Holdens and Hondas in the car world. And like cars, there are good trailer-sailers and there are bad. So to say that T-S's are safe, are a good investment, is only a very broad generalisation.

The secret, obviously, is to buy a reputable brand, and one which has been carefully designed and manufactured to be as close to a safe seaworthy boat as possible. That way you not only insure the safety of you

SUNMAID 20

sailing family, but also of your investment, for well-designed, well-built boats will always be a good investment.

Just such a boat is the Melbourne-built "Sun Maid", a 20 foot trailer-sailer which is making a strong impact on the market in Victoria and will without doubt do the same in this State. By way of checking that this little boat meets the requirements I think are vital in a trailer-sailer, we took her out in a strong Southerly and sailed her hard through all points of the compass. The result — as close to one hundred per cent as you could go.

I was very impressed with this neat little boat in many ways. She is trim and neat to look at, with none of the 'Humpty' type cabin aimed at gaining accommodation space at the expense of appearance. She is comfortably fitted out for family use. And she sails well.

I had just one criticism of the "Sun Maid", so let's get it over with right at the beginning. With a load of four adults (admittedly that's a fair load for a 20 footer even though there was plenty of cockpit room) the cockpit self-drainers allowed water across the floor of the cockpit. A pity, because it meant that we had

wet feet for much of the trip, and although granted the large load and the heavy weather, this is, in my view a valid criticism and a feature which should be corrected.

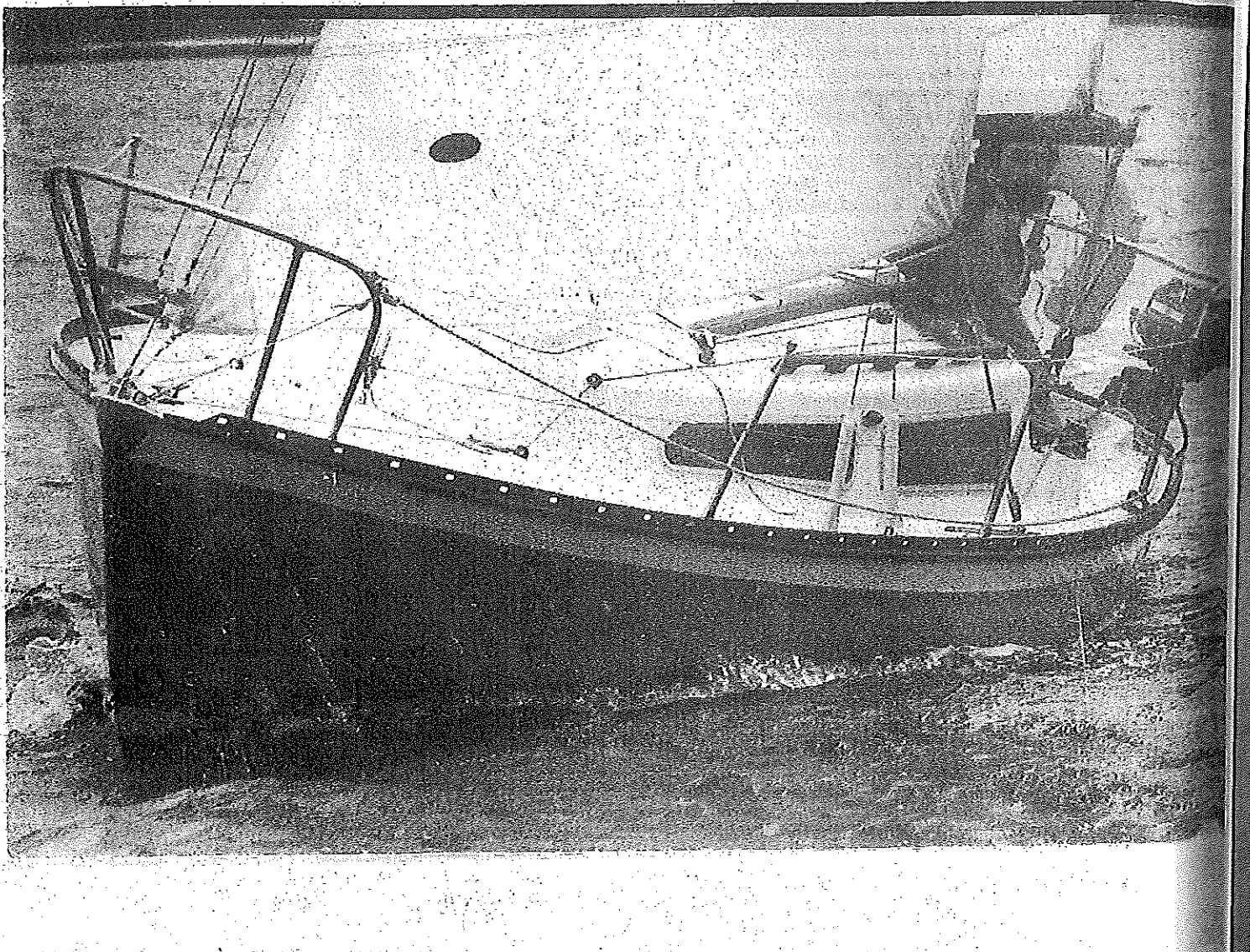
But that was it! Outside that, it was hard to fault the "Sun Maid" and after sailing her, and watching her sail with everything from No 2 Genoa through to Spinnaker and "Blooper", I would give her top marks as one of the best T-S's I have handled in a long while. But let's take a look at her in detail:

HULL DESIGN

As mentioned, she has a very neat line of hull. While being fairly classic styling overall, she has some neat design features, not least of which is the nice way in which the cabin blends into proportion with the rest of the hull, and with two elongated windows, gives the boat a "big yacht" appearance. I saw this boat out of the water at the Boat Show and was taken even then with her lines. There is nothing sensational about her appearance, but there is nothing offensive, either; she is just a nice eye-pleaser and one that must appeal to all but the most radical minded yachtie.

She is fairly flat-bottomed, and

Jeff Toghill set a cracking pace for the Sun Maid 20 in a good Southerly wind — and enjoyed himself immensely!



should come off the trailer fairly easily. A drop through centreplate offers lateral resistance rather than a great deal of ballast, the latter being fitted to the keel on either side of the centreplate and extending well fore and aft. The total of ballast and plate give her 317 kg under the boat which adds up to a 48% ballast ratio and that is a good figure for a sail boat, even if it is only a foot or so below the CG. The test was later to prove that she is very stable and the ballast quite effective.

ACCOMMODATION

The interior of the "Sun Maid" is again fairly standard in design (let's face it, most families are "standard" anyway!) with twin berths forward, toilet under, galley and icebox on either side and normal side berths running back under the quarter area to give sleeping for four adults without any crowding. She does not have full head room, but then what T-S of this size has full headroom? To attain 6' headroom in a trailerable boat where the deep keel cannot be employed, is to create a structure the size of a tank, and probably as manoeuvrable.

But she has good headroom,

and sitting below leaves no claustrophobic feelings or even feelings of crowding, for with no forward bulkhead, the interior gives an air of spaciousness which is accentuated by the long windows and big hatchways. Incidentally, these hatchways can, by undoing a pin, be completely removed — a great feature for opening up the boat and making her airy and roomy when not actually sailing hard.

The most striking feature of the interior is the virtual lack of centreplate casing. One tends to look for this space killer instinctively as I did. To my surprise, it extended but a foot or so from the companionway, where in fact it virtually formed part of the step-down and was in no way obtrusive. It then tapers down to a height of only a couple of inches for the rest of its length. It hardly seemed to protrude above the cabin floor and thus added even more to the roomy feeling one had sitting down below.

RIG

The rig is simple, basic trailer-sailer with uppers and lowers, fore and backstays! You need that sort of simplicity for T-S's which have to be

rigged and de-rigged each time you go sailing. The test boat was fitted with a lot of extra running gear which is optional extra as are the halyard winches on the cabin top. The sheet winches, of course are standard as is the aluminium toe rail and a number of other useful, and not normally standard fittings.

The main sheet is horsed onto a standard track right aft of the cockpit, thus keeping everything nicely out of the way. The tiller is solid and has a good heavy feel about it, but I would have liked it to be "tiltable" so that it could be raised out of the way when not in use or when sailing light. Maybe I am just used to tillers which tilt up out of the way, and admittedly it would be difficult to do with the "Sun Maid" as the tiller comes through an aperture in the transom, but in the cockpit of any yacht, space is always at a premium, and being able to tilt the tiller up out of the way gives those extra few inches that can make quite a difference.

The motor is outboard on a bracket, and again well out of the way, yet easy to get at when required. The test boat was fitted with full pulpits and rails which gave a snug, closed-in feeling to the cockpit. Rigging the sails took a matter of minutes, and there is no doubt that this boat is easy to rig from trailer upwards — an important point since you don't want to spend half your sailing day rigging her in the car park prior to launching.

SAILING

If I could have ordered a special day for test sailing a trailer-sailer, this would have been it! From the basic light airs of Neutral Bay through to savage 20 knot gusts out in the open harbour, we had it like MacDonaldis! The "Sun Maid" thumbed her nose at the lot, slipping through the water with delightful ease in the light to moderate stuff and holding her own beautifully through the gusts.

Under pressure, she heeled only to her gunwale, and rounded up somewhat, but this is a characteristic of fin keel and centreplate yachts, and is perhaps not a bad one for if a really savage gust hits and there is no time to release the mainsheet, she will round up and luff thus giving you time to collect your thoughts. Most T-S's do this and as I say, this is perhaps not a



bad thing, for lying down with a press of canvas can invite trouble, whereas rounding up spills the wind and the trouble at the same time.

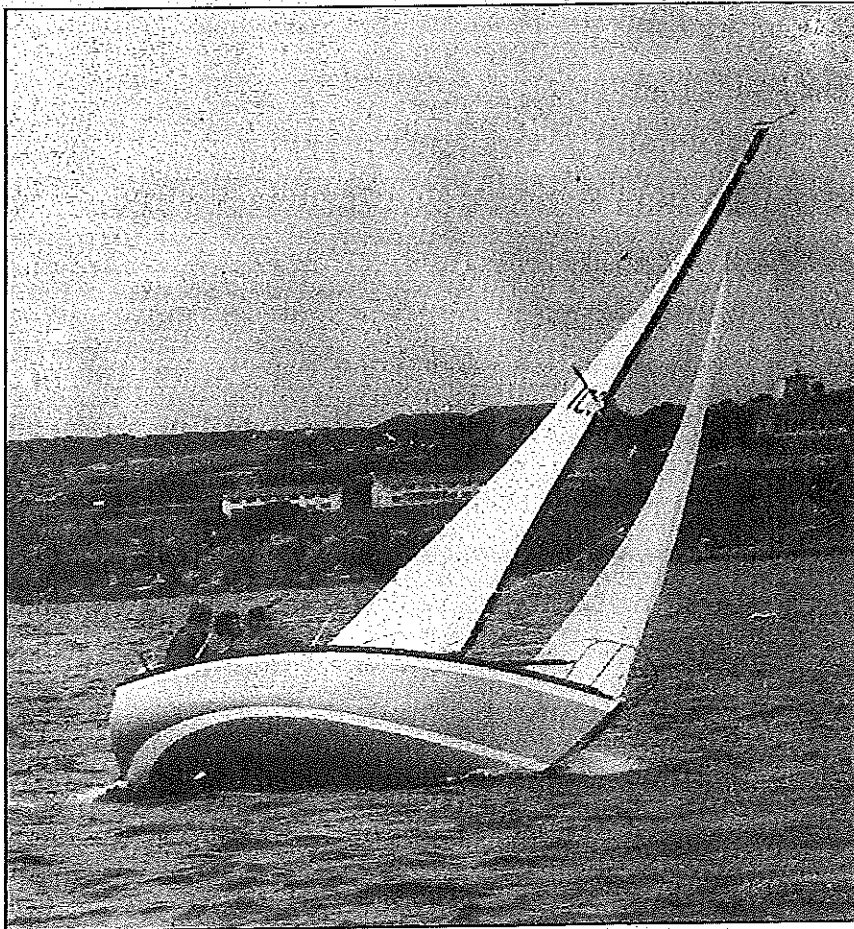
Leaving the Basin at Neutral Bay, the sailing was (pardon the pun!) a breeze. In the moderate winds the boat slipped along with virtually no weather helm at all. Indeed, she would virtually sail herself in these conditions and only the occasional gust would worry her. Light on the helm and light on the gear, there was just no hassle about sailing this boat and she responded quickly to every moment of the helm and sheets.

As mentioned, she takes on the characteristic heavy helm when she is over canvassed, but then, of course, she shouldn't be sailed like that, and sheeting the traveller down to leeward, or easing the mainsheet a little took care of it. No boat, however large, or small, will sail well or respond to the helm if she is over-canvassed, and the "Sun Maid" is no exception. She rounded up in the savage squalls, but as soon as the sails were re-set or adjusted for the weight of breeze, she settled back and sailed like a charm again. Only when we deliberately tried to lie her on her ear did she pull out of control, but then she quickly righted herself, shook her sails as if to scorn our bad handling, and resumed her pleasant sailing as though nothing had happened. Incidentally, we found it impossible, during this exercise, to lie her on her ear!

Setting the spinnaker is easy on the quite roomy foredeck, and raising and lowering the plate was so easy I actually overwound it, not realising it was right up. She is easily handled by one person since the cockpit gear is ready to hand and, as mentioned, she virtually sails herself in anything but the gusts anyway.

SUMMARY

With my one criticism in mind, I found this little trailer-sailer to be absolutely tops for family use. She is well designed, she is comfortable, she handles well, is safe as any boat of her size could be and is a delight to sail. She is cruisable, beachable, trailerable, raceable ... in short a very "able" craft! But seriously, I could happily recommend the "Sun Maid" as one of the better trailer-sailers to appear in the recent boom and one that should not be overlooked when a good, fun sail-boat is next on your shopping list.



SUNMAID 20

BASIC SAILING:

Includes; hull deck and interior bonded, aluminium toerail — gunwale, teal handrail and interior trim, lead ballast and centreplate with winch fitted. Hatches self-draining anchor well. Rudder and tiller, water tank, pump, sink and outlet 4½ cu.ft. ice box, bunk locker tops, interior gel coat, cockpit drains, anodised aluminium mast and boom, all quality deck fittings, standing rigging, sheets halyards, Barlow 15 winches. Mainsail and working jib.

Ready to sail away ... \$6770

Additional equipment available

No. 1 Genoa	\$210.0
No. 2 Genoa	150.0
Storm Jib	85.0
Spinnaker	230.0
Spinnaker Equipment	195.0
Stove — Spirit Gimbled and Fiddled	80.0
Bunk Cushions 3" Vinyl	160.0
Lights — Nav., Cabin — Battery and Switches	120.0
Porta Potti	120.0
Outboard Motor Bracket	7
5 HP L/S Mariner Outboard	400.0
8 HP L/S Mariner Outboard	550.0
Pulpit	9
Pushpit	95.0
6 - 18" Staunchions and Lifelines to Comply JOG	150.0
VDO Sumlog w/angle drive	145.0
Trailer — Tandem axle with brakes	970.0

All prices ex Sydney and subject to change.