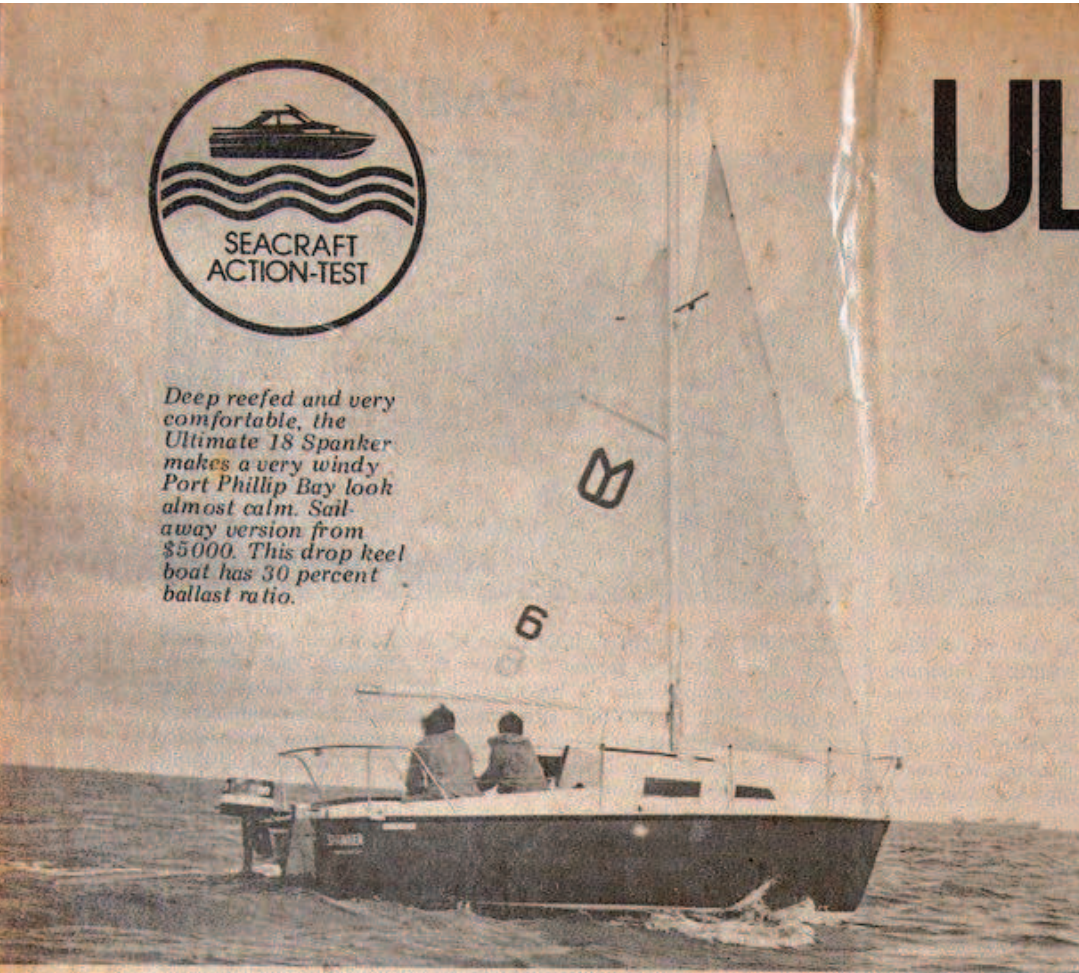




Deep reefed and very comfortable, the Ultimate 18 Spanker makes a very windy Port Phillip Bay look almost calm. Sail-away version from \$5000. This drop keel boat has 30 percent ballast ratio.



ULTIMATE

PAUL HOPKINS looks at a brand new TS — Ultimate 18 — and an older one — Explorer — which are selling well in Victoria. Prices range from \$3515 to \$5000 and both yachts fill a particular need.

THE ULTIMATE 18, a fibreglass drop-keel yacht built by John and Harry Twinker, and designed by Gerry Fletcher, has put up some good performances with the Canadian Bay Club of Victoria and is said to be at home in the most rugged Port Phillip Bay conditions.

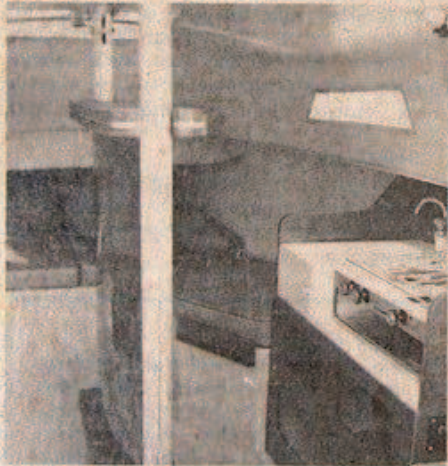
Time prevented us from finding out just how well this yacht handled all conditions, but we had time to try her out under deep reef and storm headsail. Under that rig she could possibly sail to New Zealand, so we were unable to get a true indication of her real sailing ability.

However, she was easy to steer and did what she was asked without a fight. Her 204 kg (450 lb) ballast (displacement 680.4 kg; 1500 lb) gives her about 30 percent ballast ratio which is said to be the cut off point of self-righting ability.

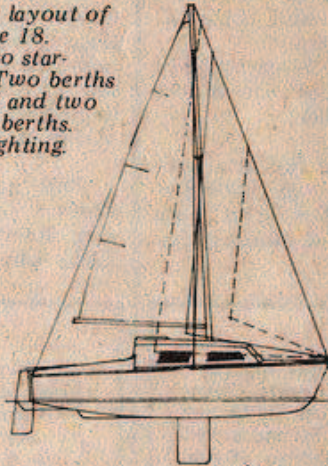
Her cockpit was roomy with a wide mainsheet traveller dividing the skipper's section aft and non-skid well positioned. Her heavy drop keel lifts and divides the cabin where sleeping for at least four adults is available plus galley to starboard.

The Ultimate 18 looks and feels rugged. Spring price was \$5000 in sail-away trim. Launching and retrieving was easily accomplished at the St Kilda Marina ramp, mast raised and sails furled.

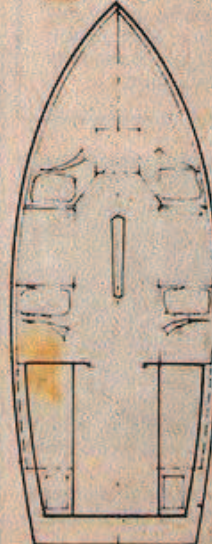
Although this yacht has not made its way north, its acceptance in Victoria will certainly see its migration up the eastern seaboard.



Homely layout of Ultimate 18. Galley to starboard. Two berths forward and two quarter berths. Good lighting.



Spanker on the launching pad. Mast and sails were set ashore and outboard auxiliary pushed boat out of the marina.



FACT BOX

Boat: Ultimate 18, GRP drop-keel family trailerable yacht built by Ultimate Yachts Pty Ltd, Unit 2, Bray Court, New Street, Frankston 3199. LOA: 5.54 m (18 ft 2 1/4 in.). LWL: 5 m (16 ft 5 1/4 in.). Beam: 2.12 m (6 ft 11-3/8 in.). Max draft: 1.19 m (3 ft 11 in.). Keel up: .31 m (12 in.). Ballast: 204 kg (450 lb). Displacement: 680.4 kg (1500 lb). Working sail area: 14.49 m² (156 sq ft). Spinnaker: 18.58 m² (200 sq ft). Accommodation: Four adult-sized berths. Dinette, galley unit, recessed toilet, anchor locker, gas and ice boxes and freshwater tank are included. Test boat carried extras such as cushions, toilet, stove, safety lines, lights and outboard motor. Price: from \$5000 sail away plus trailer, outboard and extra gear and safety requirements.