



Whispering Jack — a bias toward cruising comfort

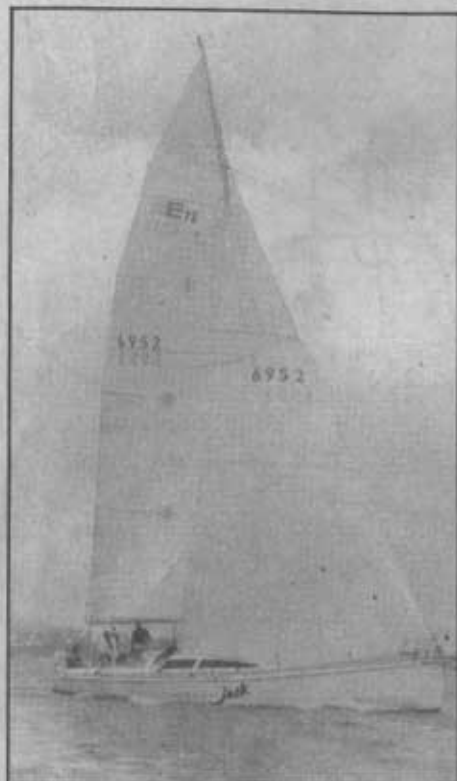
We first noticed Whispering Jack last Spring while wandering A-Pier at Auckland's Westhaven Marina. The yacht stood out as new and attractive — its design remaining a mystery until we noticed the absence of a permanent backstay.



From all angles, Whispering Jack is a handsome and powerful cruiser. She is pictured here during an enjoyable run before a freshening northwesterly down Auckland's Waitemata Harbour.



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The Elliott proved easy to handle shorthanded despite the generous sail area.

Without any of the extremes of some Elliott designs, we had been momentarily foxed. Showing the obvious signs of a bias toward cruising — big cockpit lockers, autopilot, furling headsail and wheel steering, the new 12m design was clearly not intended for the race track.

Whispering Jack was built in cedar by well-known Auckland boatbuilder, Terry Bailey, for Ross and Jill Blair. The Blairs, having owned four previous keelboats, were very definite on their design brief — they wanted a big, comfortable yacht which was easy to handle shorthanded. Racing was not a priority, although they have contested a number of twohanded events.

"We made a list of all the things on our previous boats which used to get up our noses — and worked with Terry to get rid of these," Ross explains.

It was some time after our first glimpse of Whispering Jack that we arranged a test sail. The day was overcast with a northwesterly breeze promising to freshen. We met the Elliott crew out on the water and transferred the test crew from the *Boating* photography boat.

First up is a motoring test, the Yanmar JHE44 having more than sufficient power. The yacht moves easily to 7 knots and manoeuvres surprisingly well, the main reason being the positive link steering which gives lock-to-lock with less than one turn of the wheel.

Visibility is good, even with the large dodger in place.

The sail test begins with a long spinnaker ride down harbour before the freshening northwesterly. This being a large, extensively-equipped yacht, the weight prevents lightning acceleration. Despite this, Whispering Jack achieves around 8.5 knots while beam reaching in 12-15 knots of wind.

At this speed, the Elliott felt secure enough to handle much more wind and boat speed without any drama.

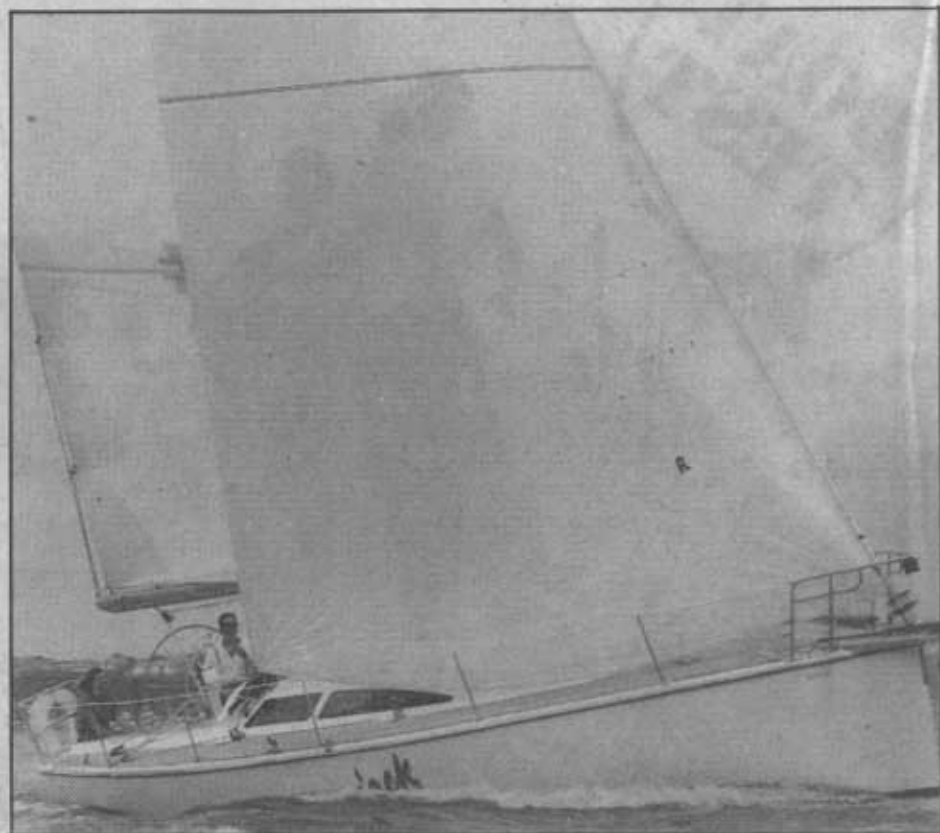
Throughout the spinnaker run, the helmsman enjoys plenty of positive feedback through the wheel — but at no stage is there any overload.

After a few enjoyable miles under spinnaker, the No 1 genoa is hoisted and the spinnaker sent below. Hardening up on the wind, the Elliott begins to show its real power — solid upwind performance.

Whispering Jack quickly reaches 7.2 knots through a slight chop, the power of the yacht suggesting that even in much heavier conditions, the performance will be impressive.

Again there is no weight on the helm, the wheel giving tiller-like control.

Being geared up for shorthanded sailing, all the mainsail controls are readily within reach of the helmsman



Whispering Jack flexing her muscles — a real powerhouse on the wind.

— although we feel the double-sided sheeting system is more suited to a much larger yacht.

After some hours sailing this Elliott cruiser, it is time to head back for a more detailed inspection.

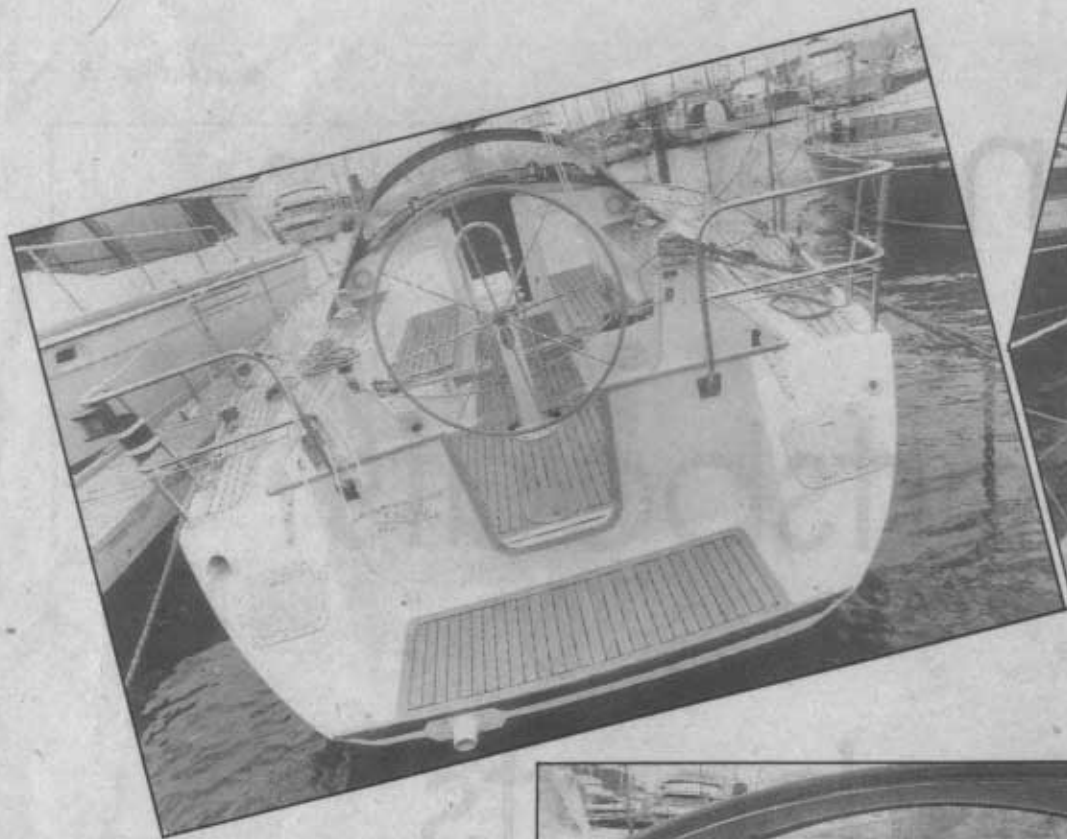
Deck

Common to the Elliott family line, Whispering Jack has a near plumb bow — and to avoid attacking the paintwork with the anchor, this yacht has a spareman protruding from the bow to keep the pick in its place.

A windlass, mounted on its side in the large foredeck anchor well, does the donkeywork while the profurl headsail furling system further emphasises the owners' leaning toward comfortable cruising.

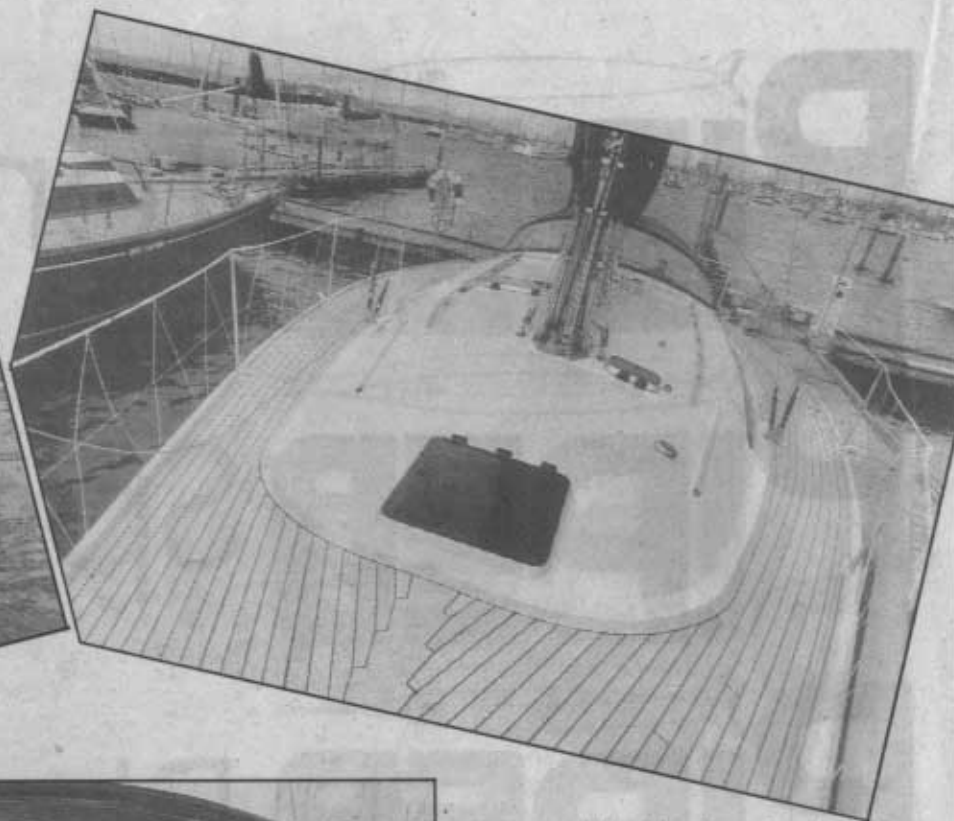
Whispering Jack features teak on her side decks and throughout the cockpit while Epiglass Reaction Lacquer and Epigrip provide foot traction on the cabintop.

The yacht also features five Weaver hatches on the cabintop — a large one over the forward cabin, a small one over the head, a medium hatch over the saloon and another two small hatches aft, one over the galley and the other over the starboard quarterberth.

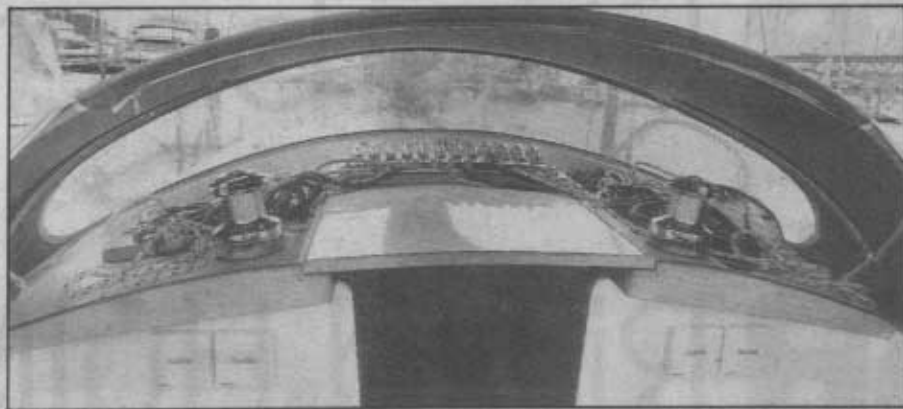


Right from the rubbish bins set into the transom, Whispering Jack is a well-conceived and constructed cruising yacht.

The mast, by Matrix, has a twin swept spreader and jumper arrangement with no masthead backstay. Running backstays, which can be fitted for hard reaching and running conditions, are taped out of the way during our test. The mast is supported by rod rigging and Graham rigging screws.



The big, clear foredeck is ideal for sail handling — or sunbathing.



Rope clutches for Africa — and an opening window in the dodger to munn air down the vent hatch

A novel "problem solver" block fitting, manufactured by Terry Bailey, is attached at maximum beam on the deck to take the place of a jockey pole in keeping kite lines off the stanchions.

The smart green dodger, a real must for comfortable cruising, was built by Marine Trimmers.

A fair cluster of mast control lines lead aft to a custom-built stainless steel unit containing block turning blocks and 12 RC Marine rope clutches. All

halyard lines run through centre blocks so they can be worked from either of the two cabintop mounted Bariert 24 self-tailing winches.

The two-sided mainsheet system leads aft down the cabinside to Bariert 24 self-tailers mounted on the cockpit coaming — an arrangement which allows the helmsman to operate the main when sailing shorthanded.

The Elliott 12's primary winches are Bariert 28 self-tailers, also mounted on the cockpit coamings. The yacht's deck blocks are by Ronstan and Gibb.

The cockpit bulkhead is home not only for twin Pioneer waterproof speakers but also the array of Autohelm Seatalk instruments — which include wind, depth, speed and fluxgate compass.

Whispering Jack has a large comfortable cockpit, boasting an impressive number of stowage hatches and compartments for all the cruising gear.

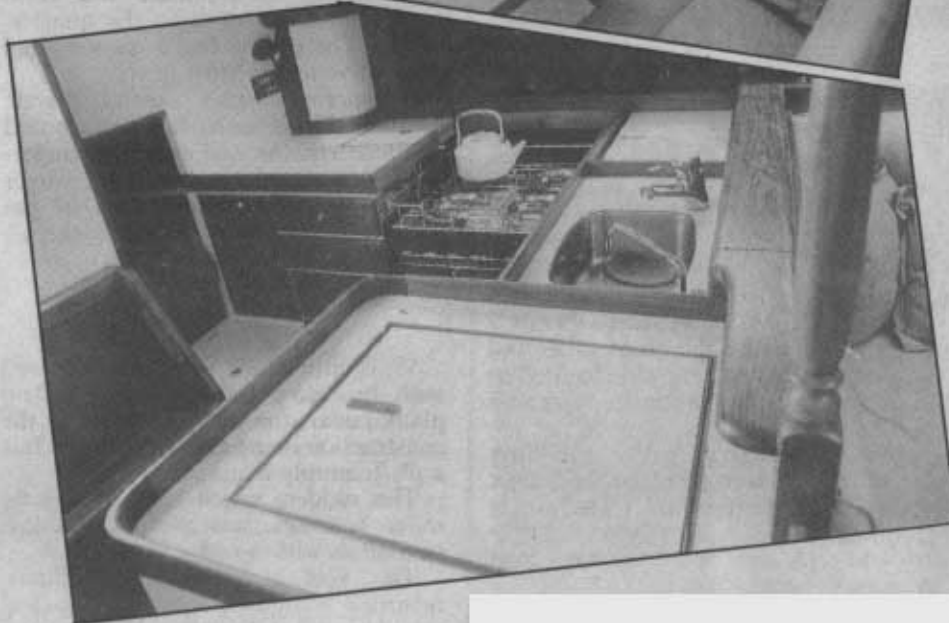
The wheel helm position is just forward of the walk-through transom and boarding platform. The wheel and steering pedestal are by Whitlock and feature a positive link system. An Autohelm 7000 autopilot is fitted atop the pedestal, a repeater on this unit giving the compass course from the fluxgate compass.

Neat cruising features include self-contained rubbish bins, accessed through transom hatches, and the massive "junk" locker to port. This locker takes the place of what would have been the port quarterberth — and also can be accessed from the galley.

An Ultraflex throttle/gear control lever is set into the port side of the cockpit within easy reach of the helmsman while the control panel for the Yanmar JHE 44 diesel is also fitted on the port side of the cockpit, set behind a perspex cover.



The big, comfortable saloon features solid teak joinery, pink leatherette squabs — and a sound system to deafen the neighbours.



The galley is chocker full of innovative ideas — and boasts one of the biggest freezers encountered on a 12m yacht.

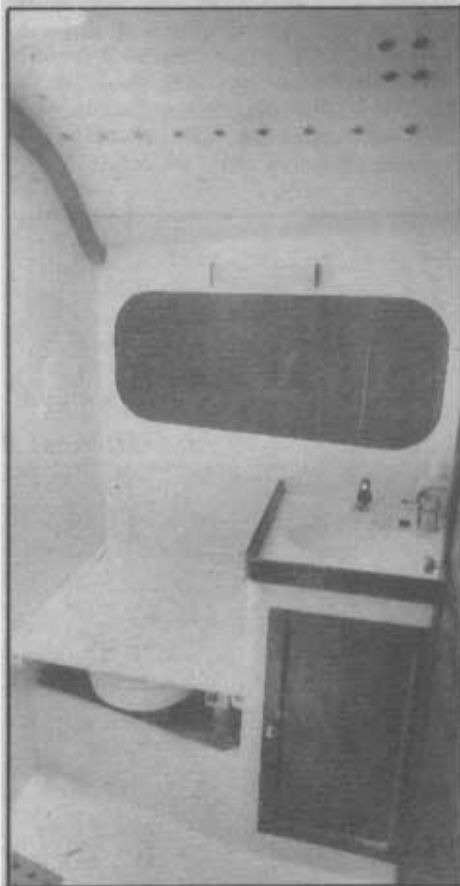
changing. A moulded basin has a Brio mixer and liftout shower head.

The compartment has plenty of stowage in lockers under the basin and side decks. A two-way door alternatively provides privacy to the head or forward cabin.

A very civilised hanging locker and drawer area to starboard opposite the head provides all the room needed for sea and shore clothing — and other personal gear.

As would be expected in a yacht of this size and quality, the saloon is large and comfortable. The teak dining table to port can seat six or seven comfortably without making use of the settee berth opposite. This table drops down to form a third double berth should it be required.

a perspex cover.



The head compartment is large and functional — from hand piece shower to a toilet lid which serves as a seat when changing.

Stern seats either side of the walk-through transom cover further lockers, the port one containing the yacht's gas bottles.

A Whale bilge pump is fitted to starboard while the yacht's liferaft has its own bin beneath the cockpit floor. There is central access on the cockpit floor to an emergency tiller fitting atop the rudder stock. Fuel filling is through the cockpit floor to a 180 litre (40 gallon) tank beneath.

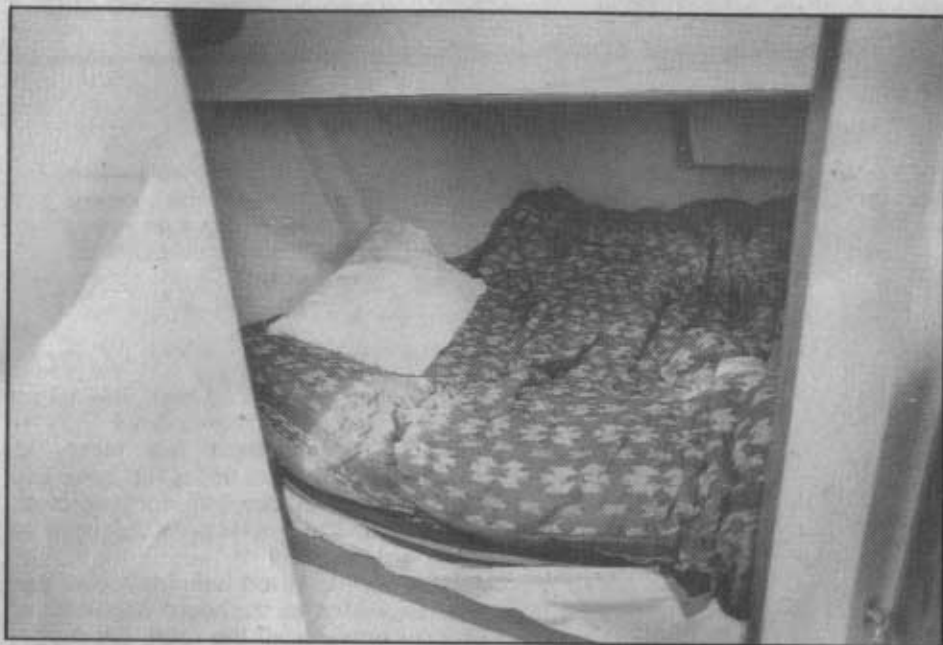
Accommodation

While Whispering Jack boasts a number of cleverly-conceived features above decks, it is below that the combined experience and ideas of owners and builder really shine. Between them they have devised a number of ways of eliminating annoying problems encountered with previous boats, as will be discussed during our below-decks tour.

The mixture of pink leatherette squabs, Epiglass cream lacquer (with a hint of pink), teak joinery, clear-covered cedar and Fronrunner produce a very luxurious and restful interior.

The for'ard cabin contains just about the biggest double berth we have seen in the foc'sle of a yacht. Ahead of this is a watertight collision bulkhead separating the berth and anchor well. Copious stowage is available beneath the for'ard berth — including a spare 136 litre (30 gallon) stainless steel water tank.

The head/shower compartment to port is large and well appointed. The toilet is a Brydon manual pump unit which has a drop over cover which can be used as a seat when showering or



Stainless steel water tanks beneath the settee berths each side contain a total of 240 litres (80 gallons). Also installed here is a 28 litre (6 gallon) hot water cylinder. Further stowage is provided behind the settee backrests and in three gear lockers under the side decks.

Whispering Jack has an entertainment centre capable of a lot more volume than a mere whisper. The Alpine system includes separate amplifier, CD players, graphic equaliser, radio/cassette and speakers to match — Alpines below deck and waterproof Pioneers above.

The navigation station includes a repeater for all the Autohelm Seatalk instruments as well as a complex BEP switch panel and GME VHF radio. This nav station faces aft, the navigator

The fore-ard cabin boasts a massive double berth.

using the aft end of the port saloon settee as his seat. The table top is large enough to accept a folded chart and has a small chart stowage bin beneath.

This Elliott 12 boasts massive refrigeration capacity — there being a huge fridge under the chart table and an even larger freezer, with baskets to divide off the volume, under the galley bench.

While not a large galley, the cook has all the tools to produce top tucker aboard Whispering Jack. The single stainless steel sink has a Brio mixer for hot and cold water and a saltwater inlet with foot pump.

A gimbaled four-burner Mariner oven is fitted to port with a large food locker, complete with sliding bins, just fore-ard. Further stowage can be found in perspex-doored lockers under the side deck, in lockers under the bench and five teak-faced drawers and locker just aft of the oven.

If this isn't enough, Whispering Jack features a small "box" locker which divides the galley from the huge stowage area that would normally have been the port quarterberth. This locker, as well as being an ideal pot bin, also doubles as a seat for those changing in preparation for or after their watch duty.

The port quarterberth, as mentioned during the deck inspection, is the cruising "junk" locker, yet it does have a pipe berth should an extra bed be required.

There is good access to the Yanmar diesel either from under the companionway stairs or from the quarterberths. The engine has a conventional shaft drive and a Maxi prop.

Whispering Jack's second private double cabin is found in the starboard quarterberth. As well as further underberth stowage, this cabin has a mirror and small bench just fore-ard of the berth as well as twin stowage lockers.

Construction

Whispering Jack has been very well built by Terry Bailey's yard of strip plank cedar, the only exception to the construction being the cockpit which is a ply/foam/ply laminate.

The rudder, which runs on needle roller bearings, has a solid stainless steel shaft with a cedar blade.

The keel is a standard Elliott, featuring a fin/bulb attached to a steel



The Yanmar JHE44, with access from the companionway and both sides, provided impressive motoring performance.

Despite this, Whispering Jack carries her weight well — the large volume hull not appearing overburdened either in appearance or performance.

The combined brains of builder and owners to eliminate annoying aspects of earlier yachts have come up with a superbly thought-out and constructed

This nav station faces aft, the navigator with foot pump.

The keel is a standard Elliott, featuring a fin/bulb attached to a steel structure which is enclosed in a glass shell.

Summary

With an unashamed emphasis placed on cruising in comfort, Whispering Jack is well over design displacement — not surprising when you consider the solid teak joinery, the huge refrigeration, tankage and other accommodation luxuries.

superbly thought-out and constructed vessel. There would be no excuses for failing to have a comfortable and stimulating voyage aboard Whispering Jack.

Performance both under sail and motoring was impressive — particularly upwind — and will serve to bring desired cruising spots to reality faster than most. As well, this 12m Elliott is easily-enough handled to contest twohanded (or fully crewed) races — and probably quite successfully.

The vitals

LOA	12.15m (39ft 10ins)
LWL	10.9m (35ft 9ins)
Beam	4.03m (13ft 3ins)
Draft	2.45m (8ft)
Ballast.....	2500 kgs (5500 lbs)
Displacement.....	6500 kgs (14,330 lbs)
Designer.....	Greg Elliott
Builder	Terry Bailey
Rig	Matrix
Sails.....	Rick Royden
Winches	Bariant
Sailing instruments	Autohelm Seataalk
Engine	Yanmar JHE44
Steering	Whitlock
Paint system	Epiglass
Propeller	Maxiprop
Water	500 litres (110 gallons)
Diesel	180 litres (40 gallons)
Dodger	Marine Trimmers