

**BOAT  
TEST**



**Elliott  
770 -  
true  
Real  
Deal**



**G**boat success was an attractive seven metre keelboat called Outsider, which was very quick and turned a lot of heads as it consistently beat considerably larger boats across the line. His latest release, the Elliott 770, follows a similar theme and has already begun to rack up the victories over larger opposition. To put this new yacht to the test *Boating* editor Bill Barry took the helm on a Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron Friday afternoon race to see how well it (and he) fared.



*Despite the lack of breeze the Elliott 770 is an enjoyable boat to sail.*



*The Vee berth for 'ard has an insert to create a double to rival a boat several metres larger.*



Arriving at Westhaven Marina an hour before our designated start time we find all of the surrounding yacht clubs' flags dangling limply from their poles as the usual "summer stills" envelope the downtown Auckland area. This pre-start time was to have been used to get some spinnaker photos prior to the race, but instead have a closer look at the deck and interior layouts and get some more background on this new design as we patiently wait for wind (and for a fashionably late Bruce Elliott, the owner of Elliott 770 Real Deal).

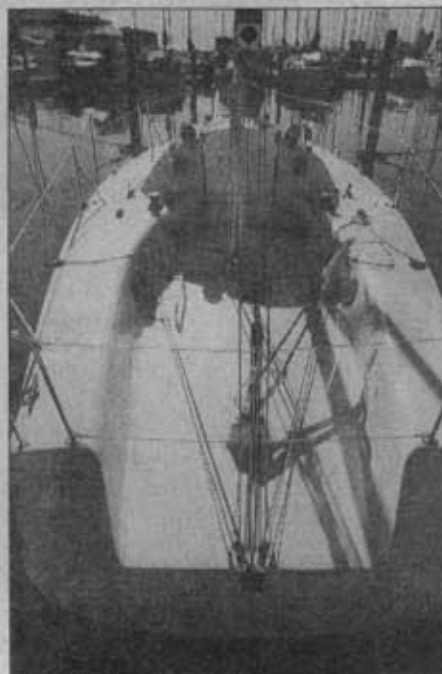
"The E770 has been created as a versatile all-rounder," says Greg. "It is a boat a small family can comfortably, and more importantly safely, cruise, but it can also be taken out onto the race track and perform well. Hopefully we'll get some wind and you can see that for yourself."

He tells us of the success of a sister ship to Real Deal at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron's Kawau Island race weekend.

"The fresh reach to Kawau saw it beating a lot of considerably larger boats. At a little over half-way up the course (Tiri Passage) it was fourth on the water."

(In that same race the radical schooner Elliott Marine broke all existing keelboat records for the event, completing the race at an average speed of around 16 knots.)

The cockpit layout of the Elliott 770 follows the general layout of the Elliott seven metre trailer sailer, purely a result of using the same moulds with an extension in the aft cockpit sections. This produces a wide, shallow and easily operat-



*The Elliott has a huge cockpit.*

yachties.

Looking more closely at the general layout, we see the cockpit is designed with a small crew (in numbers) in mind. The helm position is a long way for'ard, putting the helmsman immediately aft of the traveller. There is enough space on the side deck to seat a mainsheet trimmer, and also cross-sheet and trim the jib.

All of the primary mast controls are located across the aft end of the cabin top, and are easily reached by the mainsheet hand. It is a bit of a stretch for the helmsman though.

On the coaming beside the low-profile mainsheet traveller there are four cleats:

The Lewmar 18 primary winches have a footblock with integral cleat which allows the genoa and spinnaker sheet to be unloaded from the winch. A tail bag immediately below the winch keeps the cockpit spaghetti to a minimum.

Wandering around the sidedeck we find the Elliott remarkably stiff for a small boat. The available deck space for'ard would be a bowman's dream.

There is a moulded fibreglass for'ard hatch which is in scale with the rest of the boat - not huge, but adequate for sail handling (the sails are not that big).

With the deck now familiar and the chances of pulling the wrong "string" eliminated, we fire up the Yanmar diesel and head out onto the harbour. Fortunately the breeze has now built up to five knots.

The little single cylinder Yanmar powers the Elliott at a comfortable six knots, the inboard engine being an option within the class rules. Real Deal has a conventional shaft set-up with a Briski propeller - a standard saildrive would be far too large.

One of our opposition on the racetrack today is to be sister ship Division Bell. The primary difference between the two boats is that Division Bell has only three aboard compared to our six, and it has an outboard motor in lieu of a diesel engine. These differences will be interesting.

#### *On The Racetrack*

When first taking the helm of any boat the first thing we generally do is give it a good waggle from lock to lock to see

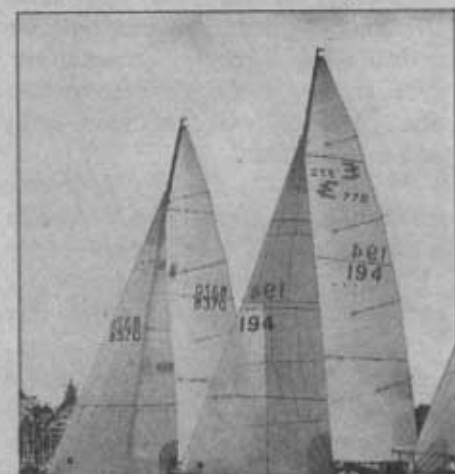
88s and we slowly begin to pull ahead. The only boat in our division staying with us is Division Bell.

The two-sail reach from the start takes us toward Devonport Wharf and through a huge "hole". Add to this a number of ferries and a fleet of IMS yachts heading toward us and the decision where to go next become more like a lottery.

Our decision sees us lose the lead to our Elliott counterpart but we both continue to pull away from the fleet, tight reaching in the light airs at a fraction over six knots.

The extra body weight aboard Real Deal does impede our very light airs performance, but as the smaller "gustettes" come through we have a definite stability advantage and accelerate a little quicker. Division Bell gains more heel and loses a fraction of its available power.

The mainsheet system, accessible to both the helmsman and crew, would be ideal for short-handed cruising and rac-



cockpit with room for quite a team - which is just as well as we have more than the boat would usually be raced with, as Bruce Elliott arrives with two children in tow. As a very good example to all the first thing they do is don their lifejackets.

"The large space aft of the helm is a great place to leave them," quips Bruce. "I can sail the boat from the middle of the cockpit and the kids can 'help' while keeping safely within the confines of the lifelines and pushpit."

Looking at the layout we would have to agree. On most yachts three or four adults can easily fill a cockpit and small passengers are generally told to go below and stay out of the way - hardly a good way to encourage the next generation of

topmast backstay, running backstay fine trim, running backstay coarse trim and traveller. The mainsheet falls for'ard of the traveller, which could make it a bit difficult for the helmsman to operate if tacking a lot - it would be easy to sheet-tail around the entire purchase system.

Because of cockpit's beam the helmsman is provided with a pair of stainless steel foot braces - the trimmers have to rely on the good non-skid and effective boat shoes - but as the cockpit narrows toward its for'ard end this is not quite so important.

There are two headsail tracks, one on the cabin top for the blade and another around the cabin side. There is also provision for outboard sheeting, with a system of barberhaulers and dead-eyes.

how it turns, just in case we have to dodge something. Heading out to the starting area we execute standard manoeuvre number one. We inadvertently neglect to forewarn the crew, and Greg Elliott only narrowly avoids stepping where the deck used to be and having an afternoon swim. These little Elliotts (the boats, that is) are definitely big on cornering; it spins easily within its own length.

With the start gun about to go we head up and shoot a gap which has opened to leeward and ahead of a gaggle of Young 88s. Thinking we were about to be rolled by these larger boats we continue to head further up to ensure a continuing supply of clean air. Much to my surprise the Elliott 770 accelerates well clear of the



*Sensible class rules should ensure the racing is always this close.*

ing. The traveller is cleated on the inboard edge of the coaming and is again easily operated by either crew or helmsman.

Just for'ard of the traveller is the topmast backstay cleats. Split and run to either side of the cockpit, these are all tiny six millimetre braid, used to help reduce block friction. This small cordage takes a bit of getting used to but once the breakage phobia is overcome, the ease with which things can be adjusted is

great.

During the tight reach the Elliott remains responsive to the helm, and also responds quickly with extra boatspeed to any trim or helm corrections. The narrow sheeting angle on the headsail does cause a lot of backwinding and consequent oversheeting of the main, but once the headsail is barberhailed to the gunwale the resulting speed gain is significant.

During the reaches we stretch our lead on the Young 88s and even catch the backmarkers of the A division which started five minutes ahead of us. We got some surprised looks from the crews of a Stewart 34 and Farr MRX.

These boats are very impressive for their size!

Once we come back onto the wind we expect to slow a bit but we find the Elliott able to point very high. We lose virtually no speed and are able to climb out of trouble with ease, staying at slightly over six knots.

Heading toward the last mark Division Bell gains a lot of time on us but we haul the deficit back to a mere 20 seconds. The gap back to third in our division is considerably larger - more easily counted in minutes.

The Elliott 770 is joy to sail, more reminiscent of sailing a large dinghy than a keelboat. The response to helm, trim and crew weight are just as rapid but it has the added advantage of being a very stiff performer.

After the race we line up against Division Bell again, except this time it is with spinnakers. Unfortunately the

breeze decides to call it a day and after drifting around for an hour or so we do too.

The Elliott 770 is fully female-moulded right down to the keel and rudder, all the engineering being done by High Modulus.

The hull is designed to carry the extra displacement necessary for a versatile racer/cruiser,

and the deck moulding comes straight from the Elliott 7 trailer sailer with an extension at the aft end. This double-up in tooling use helps the Elliott 770 be a very cost-effective little yacht.

From a lesson learned from the fleet of E5.9s used in many yacht club training schemes, Elliott has chosen a rolled gunwale rather than a moulded lip which projects clear of the hull line. This not only makes for a stronger hull/deck bond but it eliminates the possibility of tearing this vulnerable join. This helps when boats are clashing gunwale to gunwale, as often happens in close class action.

It also has the added advantage of making the weather rail a very comfort-



Tucked away under the cockpit is a Yanmar single cylinder diesel inboard. The quarterberths alongside are sizable.

able place to sit for extended periods.

The interior is also fully moulded. A structural grid incorporates the bunkfronts, mast bearer and keel supports. Also built into this is a galley sink and vanity module for the for'ard cabin.

Starting our interior inspection at the bow there is a large V-berth which has a moulded space for a chemical toilet. A squab above this, combined with an inset, creates a double berth to rival any you would find on a 10m keeler.

The main saloon has sitting headroom and space for an entire family to live

without feeling claustrophobic. The saloon berths extend aft and form long quarter berths.

Under the for'ard end of the cockpit we find the Yanmar JGM diesel. Located virtually in the centre of the boat, this is an ideal location to concentrate the weight. The drag from the shaft and propeller are far outweighed by the reliability.

Bruce Elliott has finished the interior off himself. With his business being Mast and Spar Services Ltd it is no surprise to find he has built the mast, rigged it and also made all of the stainless steelware, pulpits, etc.

There has been a lot of initial interest in this boat, despite the fact Elliott Marine Ltd hasn't actually begun to "push" the class. It is fielding a lot of enquiries, and building them as quickly as demand dictates. Thus far two have been sent to Australia, four are sailing here, one has gone to Hong Kong - all in less than a year.

A class association has been formed, class rules are already in place and a marketing plan is swinging into action. This class is a delight to sail and is sure to thrive, as there are few other keelboats that offer as much for the \$50,000 price tag. We will continue to monitor the progress of this class and are waiting for the opportunity to take it around the race track again. Next time, hopefully, there will be at least 20 knots of breeze.



The Elliott is very clean through the water, its light airs performance suggest it will be a rocket in some more breeze.

## The vitals

LOA.....	7.7m
Beam.....	2.55m
Draft.....	1.6m
Sail area.....	29.5sqm
Ballast.....	360kg
Displacement.....	820kg
Builder.....	Elliott Marine Ltd
Designer.....	Greg Elliott
Mast.....	Mast and Spar Services Ltd
Sails.....	North Sails
Deckgear.....	Ronstan
Winches.....	Lewmar
Engine.....	Yanmar 1GM
Propeller.....	Briski
Cordage.....	Kinnears