

Unitec Launches Yacht

On 28 March at Westhaven, *Unitec 1* was launched, the first in a fleet being made for the proposed Unitec sailing school.

The Greg Elliott designed 7.8 metre (27 foot) harbour racer was made entirely by students in the boat building course in the Marine Technology Department at Unitec.

"I'm sure the yacht will make a real impact on Auckland harbour. The hull and sails are emblazoned with the Unitec logo and we think it will draw attention to the quality of work being produced by our students," says the Head of Marine Technology Ashton Dempsey.

The boat building course has always had a strong practical focus, but in the past the boats have been sold once the hull is complete. For the first time students have had the opportunity to complete the project and will be able to get some hands-on sailing experience. As the boat builders and designers of the future, practical boat testing provides opportunities to determine possible improvements.

Boat Building student Roger Woodbury has already been able to put the experience he gained working on the boat to good use. After completing year one of the course Woodbury took a full-time position with Cookson Boat Builders and is completing the course at night school. His involvement with *Unitec 1* included fitting out the completed hull and building the ballasted centreboard.

"This practical side to the course is really good in seeing how things go together. The drawing and theory is also excellent. The two parts mesh together really well and you learn a more than you would with just one or the other," says Woodbury.

Production of the rest of the fleet is underway for what will be the first tertiary institute based sailing school in the country. Currently the school's curriculum is being developed and Maritime Safety approval is being sought.

In the meantime the yacht will be used by Unitec for corporate events and functions as well as giving students practical sailing and racing experience.

