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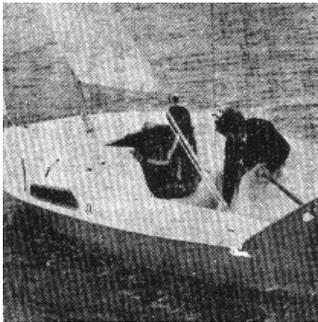
CRUISING AT LOW COST

THE AMBITION to own a cruising yacht has often been put aside because many people believe the price is too high.

But this is not always the case, and the Dennis Yachts TS 500 is a good example of a low priced cruising yacht suitable for family sailing.

Keeping the cost down is only a part of Glen Dennis's attitude towards family yachting.

He believes that most trailer-sailors type yachts are dearer than the average family man can afford.



Roomy

It is also his opinion that layouts could be improved to give a 16 foot yacht as much useable room as an 18 footer, and the ballast ratio of trailer sailor's could, and should be high giving

the craft a good righting momentum.

The TS 500 was introduced to the market only recently and is new in every concept.

The extensive deck area, large cabin and spacious cockpit have been made possible by raising the foredeck to give a flush deck from gunwale to gunwale above the cabin.

Heavily patterned with a non skid surface, this area is ideal for sunbaking and handling sails, while below deck the cabin takes on enormous proportions, making it difficult to believe that she is only a 16 footer.

The deep cockpit with wide seats has ample room for four people and there's room to spare. It is self-draining and is divided from the cabin by a high coaming

The hatch way is wide enough to permit easy access below decks

and is closed by panels and a removable hatch.

Below decks quarter bunks extend beneath each cockpit seat and are large enough for a tall heavily built man to lie full length and turn over in complete comfort.

Other bunks run each side of the cabin which is 10ft 7in (3.17m) long. Between the bunks on each side is a flat space almost 3ft long (.9m)- a more than adequate area to locate a galley, chart table, head or any other piece of equipment the owner may wish to add.

This idea of adding to the boat is an important aspect to the cost structure. The manufacturer has decided than rather than load the cost with compulsory extras, the basic boat will be fitted with the minimum equipment.

This leaves the owner free to add extras when he is ready to do so, and gives him a chance of owning a

yacht with a custom built interior.

Cheaper

Also the price of approximately \$2,798 is well below the cost of some other comparable trailer sailers and will give many people the opportunity to own a trail able cruising yacht.

Externally the TS 500 has pleasing lines. The round bilge hull measures 16ft 6in (5m) overall and has a beam of 7ft 1in (2.16m) With the plate up she has a draft of 10in, and in the plate down position it draws 39in (1m).

The total weight is 317.5 kilograms and the drop keel weight is 72.5 kilograms giving a ballast ratio of 22.8 per cent- a high ratio for this type of craft. The keel locks into the down position.

Freeboard is also good and water seldom gets into the cockpit. In fact she is a stiff little yacht and reef points on both jib and main make it possible to sail her in heavy weather.

The transom has been strengthened to take an outboard motor bracket and foam

sandwich construction has been used in both the deck and cockpit. The rudder box is of alloy and the tiller and timber trim is of teak.

In two outings in contrasting weather, the boat handled with ease, responding quickly when tacking. On a recent heavy day with winds gusting to 40 knots, sail maker Frank Hammond sailed her and commented that she handled as easily as a dingy.

Unfortunately on our test day the weather was at the other extreme with winds varying from 1-5 knots. Surprisingly the boat ghosted along even when there appeared to be no breeze at all.

After leaving Patterson's Marina at Williamstown, we had to wend our way through the moored boats before reaching open water and at no tome did we loose steerage way.

Potential

In the few brief bursts of wind the TS 500 quickly settled down to a comfortable speed and gave every indication of good acceleration.

It should be interesting to see, as the season progresses, how she fares in racing fleets for even though the test boat hadn't been prepared for racing, she showed every potential and could cause a few surprises.

Dennis Yachts also build the new Olympic class- The International 470. With this expertise behind them, it's easy to understand why the TS 500 performs so well.

