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Modern Boating Boat Test 1976

*James Hill tests another drop keel yacht,
the Dennis TS 600, and is impressed
with it's seaworthiness.*

quick one from **DENNIS**

A SMOOTHIE IN THE ROUGH STUFF

A rough day on Port Phillip Bay is where I'd usually rather not be, but in something like the new Dennis TS 600 feelings of concern at the short, steep, white capped seas whipped by a 35-knot southerly soon disappear.

The little swing keel trailer sailor was beating to windward under reduced gear in such a fast, confident manner that I soon found myself wishing we were taking part in a Joggie race.

We may, in fact have been in one of the Victorian JOG races on Port Phillip for the new

6.12m (20ft 1in) long Dennis Yachts trailer sailor is aimed quite squarely at this type of racing. In the short time she has been on the Port Phillip small yacht scene she has made quite a name for herself, winning six out of her first seven starts in fleets of mixed Joggie typed boats

Those she has whipped in the light weather sailing she excels in have nick named her: the white whale", because of her large, chunky appearance, but then they are probably

envious of her boat speed.

To me her short ended big dingy-like hull made her look not unlike the super fast, world champion quarter-tonner Farr 727, which, if I remember rightly, also won some derogatory comments from those she beat.

While the Dennis TS 600 is not quite the all out racing boat that the Farr 727 is, the little swing-keeler is not unlike the famous quarter-tonner in that she is a simple, clean light-displacement type with a strong emphasis on performance.

She does not have the same fancy, bunk filled interior of some of the other maxi-trailer sailors, but she still has a comfortable four berth cabin layout under a sensible flush deck.

While she is a swing-keeler that happily slips onto a Brooker 16 tilt trailer, the Ts 600 is a seaworthy little mini-yacht which should be able to look after herself in the often wild waters of Port Phillip Bay.

Even if we had flattened her down the front of a wave in a spinnaker broach she would have recovered and not got a drop below. Her buoyant hull form and 1:3 ballast ratio take care of the first problem while her deck layout, with small companionway hatch and no leaking pop-top takes care of the second problem. Any water that would come aboard may end up in the cockpit but would soon exit through the stern drain.

With her sophisticated IOR-style masthead rig the TS 600 struck me as being the ideal type of boat for the new international mini-ton class except that her hull-though fairly

refined-was not IOR orientated.

Dennis Yachts sales manager, Dick Underwood, who was my crew on the day, said between chattering teeth the company had kept the concept of the mini-ton class, or more precisely the mini-offshore racer in the backs of their minds when designing their new trailer sailor.

But the company felt that it should aim first at the local Joggie sailors and if it could do that it would have the practical trailer sailor which could sell anywhere in Australia..

Said Dick: "The Port Phillip Joggie sailor was our man, and what he required was a small yacht that is not only fast but also seaworthy. It has to pass a special knockdown test before it is allowed to do Joggie races and then it has to survive happily in the nasty weather that the bay regularly kicks up. Not only does it have to do all that, but as well, has to be able to be towed home to the family backyard because you just don't have a place to moor it on the bay."

They have that in a boat that can cruise four as well

The other side of the coin is price, and in this department Dennis Yachts have kept the sail-away figure down to a very low \$6800.

Sure there isn't any teak trim and plush interior finish, but this means there is no compromise in construction. She is solidly built by anyone's standards and adequately rigged, compared with some other more expensive trailer sailors.

It is the old story of getting what you pay for and in this case you get a fast , seaworthy trailer yacht first and then fill out the interior-flush decks make it seem spacious-to suit your own cruising needs..

The fin keel is easily raised or lowered by a manual reel winch down in the cabin while the rudder is transom hung with a simple dagger arrangement for the rudder blade.

Dick Underwood gave me a fairly convincing example of one-man launching and rigging. Standing the mast on its tabernacle is quite easily done

without resorting to any leaver devices. The mast is well supported for a boat of this size with forestay, backstay, cap shrouds and lowers. An experimental adjustable inner forestay was dispensed with in later models. All the standing rigging which is in stainless steel, is adjustable and the backstay is adjustable under sail with a simple block and tackle arrangement. Our test boat was fitted with along shaft 8 hp. Mariner outboard, and with this unit we had

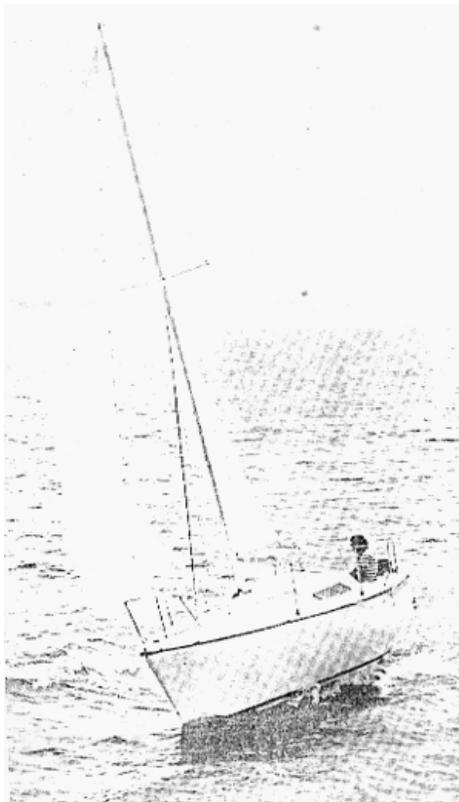
enough power to thump our way off a lee shore as we came out of St Kilda marina.

Features I like about the design were it's flush working deck and the open foredeck cum-anchor well, both of which made working on deck a lot easier.

I also liked the outboard sloping cockpit coamings which afford a comfortable seating position for the helmsman or crew. The actual cockpit seats ere below deck level which helps to keep one in the boat in rough weather.

Even under mainsail the TS 600 was able to beat to weather, and tack in rough conditions which I thought was an excellent attribute for a boat that may often be sailed short handed.

Those who are keen to do even more themselves can buy the boat in a basic stage with the hull and deck bonded, the interior fitted, with keel and a few deck fittings. For \$4600.



Dennis TS 600 shows her pretty lines as she Reached along in a light breeze on Port Phillip Bay

Specifications Dennis TS 600

Length Overall.....	6.12m (20ft1in)
Length Waterline.....	5.4m (17ft9in)
Beam.....	2.25m (7ft9in)
Draft, Keel Down.....	1.37m (4ft6in)
Draft, Keel Up.....	0.03 (1ft)
Ballast (all in cast iron keel).....	249.48kg (550lb)
Displacement.....	762.04kg (1680lb)
Approx ballast to displacement ratio.....	33%
Working sail area, with main and No 1 genoa.....	18.1 sqm (195sqft)

Prices:

Stage 1.

Basic hull, deck and interior bonded together
with swing keel fitted and some deck fittings
included.....\$4600

Stage 2.

Basic sailing with interior fitted
out, all rigging, two working
sails and deck fittings.....\$6880

Stage 3.

As tested with 8 HP Mariner outboard
And Brooker 16ft tilt trailer.....\$7780