



a boat for beetle lovers

The Finn 8 looks like a boat from another era, but in fact it is a charismatic blend of modern technology and "olde worlde" charm. We love it!

Frustration tinged with regret were the two emotions uppermost in our minds as we brought the Finn 8 back to berth after our recent test.

Frustration because we didn't have time to take the little boat out where it really belongs, among the big Pacific rollers; regret because we had to give it back before we were ready.

The Finn 8 could easily be the Volkswagen beetle of the boating world, and the people who buy it might be beetle-buyers of yesteryear, making a statement with their purchase that is anti-flybridge, anti-planing hull, and anti-extravagance of the kind associated with big power boats.

Don't get us wrong. We like flybridges, big planing hulls, and extravagant performance. But the Finn is a boat with so much charisma that it is easy to sympathise with the people who choose to own one — whatever their reasons for doing so.

According to Geoffrey Bourne of Viking Marine, no one can claim credit for designing this boat. It is based on a traditional Finnish hull that dates back some hundreds of years.

He was captivated by the "olde worlde" look of the boat when in Finland on business some years ago, and approached one of that country's biggest builders, Beaufort (no relation to the life raft and safety outfit) to provide him with a set of moulds.

Thus were born the Finn 8, and its smaller sistership the Finn 7.

Bourne told us that despite his more optimistic expectations the Finn had been slow to catch on in Australia, and was only now, after three years on the market, beginning to make worthwhile headway.

One of the measures which Viking Marine has employed to encourage sales is to offer the Finns in what they call "three-quarters finished" conditions.

That is, the boat is complete mechanically — which means that owners can drive away in it — and when the money required to do so becomes available.

ments, and when the money required to do so, becomes available.

He agreed with our analogy that the Finn was like the VW beetle in some respects, and that the people who are now buying it in increasing numbers might well have been beetle owners in their day.

"These days," he said, "they drive Saabs, Citroens, Renaults. The kind of car that suggests they think very carefully about every purchase they make, be it car or boat."

"The Finns are a very austere race of people," Bourne said. "And the original boat reflected this."

However, the Australianised version is much more comfort-oriented, and certain important concessions have been made to make the boat more "livable" under local conditions.

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These include the provision of several hatches to improve ventilation, and sliding windows for the same purpose. But in addition, furnishings generally are of a higher standard than the Finnish equivalent, and include a toilet which "the Finns omit because they don't like having women aboard," Bourne told us.

Bourne expresses considerable satisfaction with the quality of his product, while at the same time giving credit to the people responsible for its construction.

(The boat is built under contract by Setoncraft at Gosford, best known to Powercraft readers as the manufacturer of the Maxicat 427 runabout, and to yachting enthusiasts as the maker of the Careel trailer sailers.)

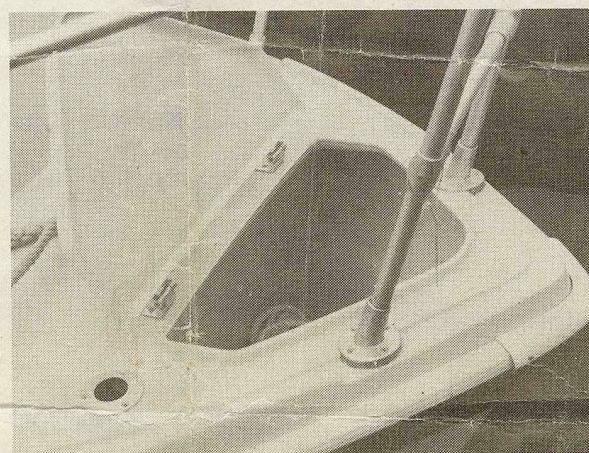
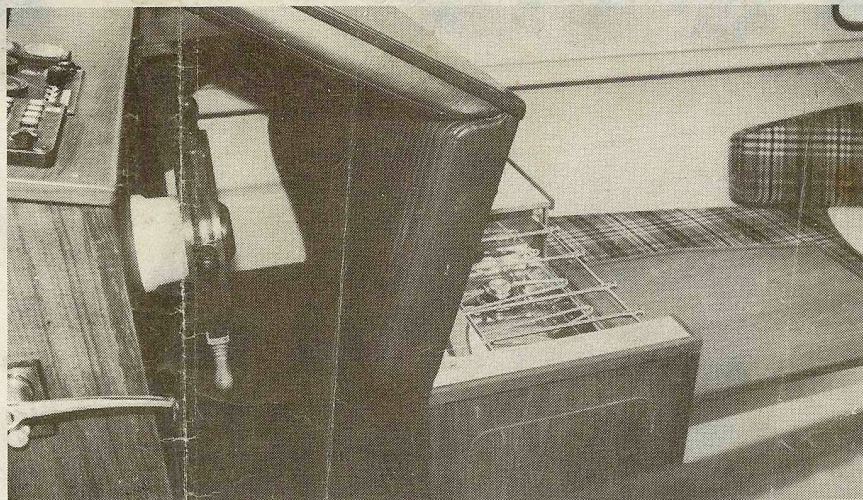
MSB Survey standards are maintained in the Finn's mechanical componentry like engines and props, while some of the chandlery used is still imported from Mother Finland, principally some deck hardware made of a particularly durable alloy of manganese and aluminium, not otherwise available.

So far we've spoken only of the Finn in powerboating terms but in fact it has a second string to its bow. A seven metre mast is an optional extra, and along with a sail of 12.4sq m, gives the owner the ability to turn off the motor and do a little gentle sailing.

We say "gentle" advisedly, because the makers warn that while the sail system works efficiently downwind, and when beating, it will not work well upwind.

Nevertheless, it's nice to know that the option to haul up some canvas is there.

Standard motivation comes from a 22hp three-cylinder Yanmar diesel, which provides more than adequate performance. However, the test boat was fitted with a BMW of somewhat different configuration — two cylinders, and 35hp. This gives the Finn the ability to poke along all day at nine or 10 knots, and when the occasion demands, put in a "burst" up to 12 knots.



ABOVE: Cooking top is cunningly concealed beneath tilting helmsman's seat. RIGHT: Anchor well. BOTTOM: Forward vee-berth is nicely finished, concealed toilet under centre cushion.

Incidentally at a steady nine knots, the boat uses only three litre/hr.

The Finn 8 has two separate cabins, a "cuddy" arrangement up forward and a proper "house" located at the opposite end. It's this house more than the traditional lines of the hull — with its canoe stern — that gives the Finn its characteristic profile.

The forward cabin contains the usual full length V-berths which can be converted to a double, plus a toilet.

The tall aft cabin contains the other essentials — steering station, galley with two burner stove and stainless steel sink, and dinette which converts into a double berth in the normal fashion.

From behind the wheel, which is the traditional six spoker, all round vision is excellent. Windows are large and with the cabin set well back on the hull forward vision is not at all restricted.

Instrumentation is well laid out, with the throttle lever "auto-

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matically" limited by being set fairly close to the cabin wall so that it cannot be pushed any further forward than it should be.

When seated, the helmsman has everything in reach and if he wants to get some air the cabin hatch is directly above.

The main cabin will seat five or six in comfort and sleep two with ease and the galley fitted behind the helm station is revealed by tilting the helm seat forward.

The Finn's motor is located just forward of the cabin and while its housing intrudes somewhat into available deck space, it also provides temporary seating in this area.

The deck area is nice and deep — ultra-safe for the kids — and leads directly to the forward cuddy cabin.

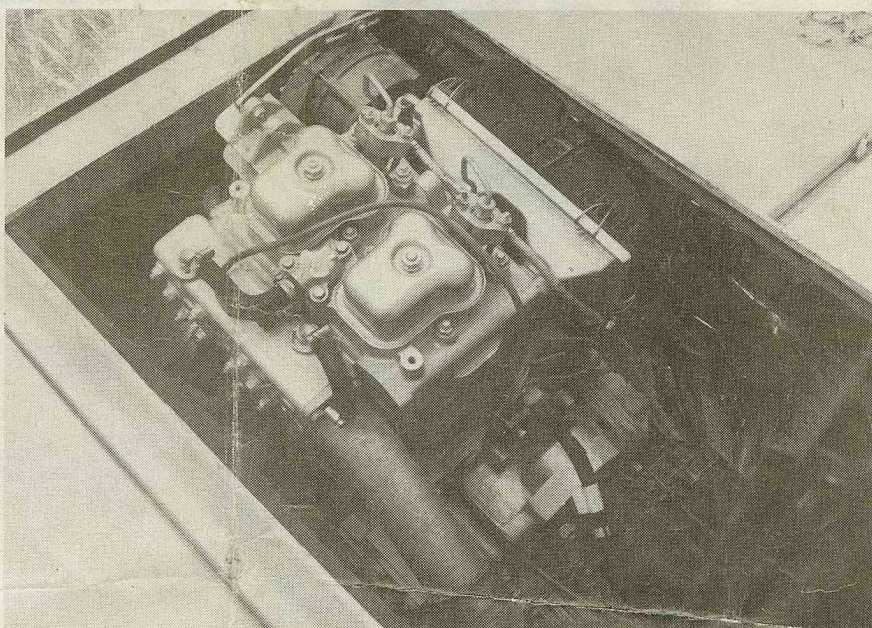
Atop this cabin, which also forms part of the foredeck, is enough room for the sunbaker and plenty of non-skid and railing for safety. The anchor well is right forward, with mooring bollard set directly behind the well.

The rear deck is strictly for berthing/casting off activity, but there is another sunbaker's spot on the rear of the main cabin roof. Again plenty of non-skid.

The Finn feels solid and exudes an air of confidence.

Walking about the Finn's topsides is done with reasonable ease. All rails and hand holds are situated in the right places and footway around the cabin is surprisingly generous.

While being a little frustrated at not being able to try out the Finn's sea legs, we later heard an interesting tale of one man's experiences of the craft's seaworthiness. This fellow was bringing his Finn 8 into Pittwater and on the way into Broken Bay was completely pooped by a following wave. According to him the Finn went completely under, rose like a cork, then seemed to shake itself like a dog before calmly carrying on into the Bay. By the time the boat was tied up, the self-draining cockpit had taken care of all the water! Even allowing for an owner's natural pride in his boat, that's a pretty



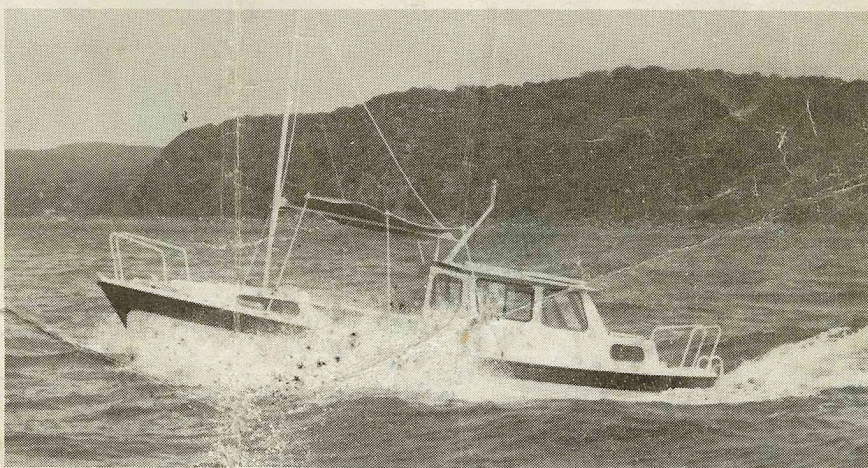
good indication of the Finn's ability at sea.

The Finn is not every man's boat but as a safe and reliable family cruiser/sailer there would be few to pull too far ahead of this easy-going craft.

It's the kind of boat you either love or hate.

I'll bet that if you're like me — a Volkswagen lover — you will also fall head over heels for the Finn 8.

ABOVE: Test boat, owned by builder Seton Reynolds was powered by husky 35hp twin-pot BMW. Standard motor is smaller Yanmar or Sole. BELOW: Finn — bred in the stormy waters of the North Sea — is most at home when the going is rough. Unfortunately the weather calmed when our test was conducted.



SPECIFICATIONS	
Finn 8	
LOA	8m
Beam	2.5m
Draft	1.05m
Displacement	1500kg
Ballast	500kg
Sail area	12.4sq m
Mast height	7m

Inboard power	Sole or Yanmar 22hp diesel
Water tankage	100 litres
Fuel tankage	135 litres
Construction (hull)	Fibreglass
Deck	Fibreglass
Internals	Timber
Price range	\$26,500 (complete)
Boat supplied by Setoncraft, 232 Manns Rd, Gosford, NSW 2250.	



POWERCRAFT
Boat Test
FINN 8

