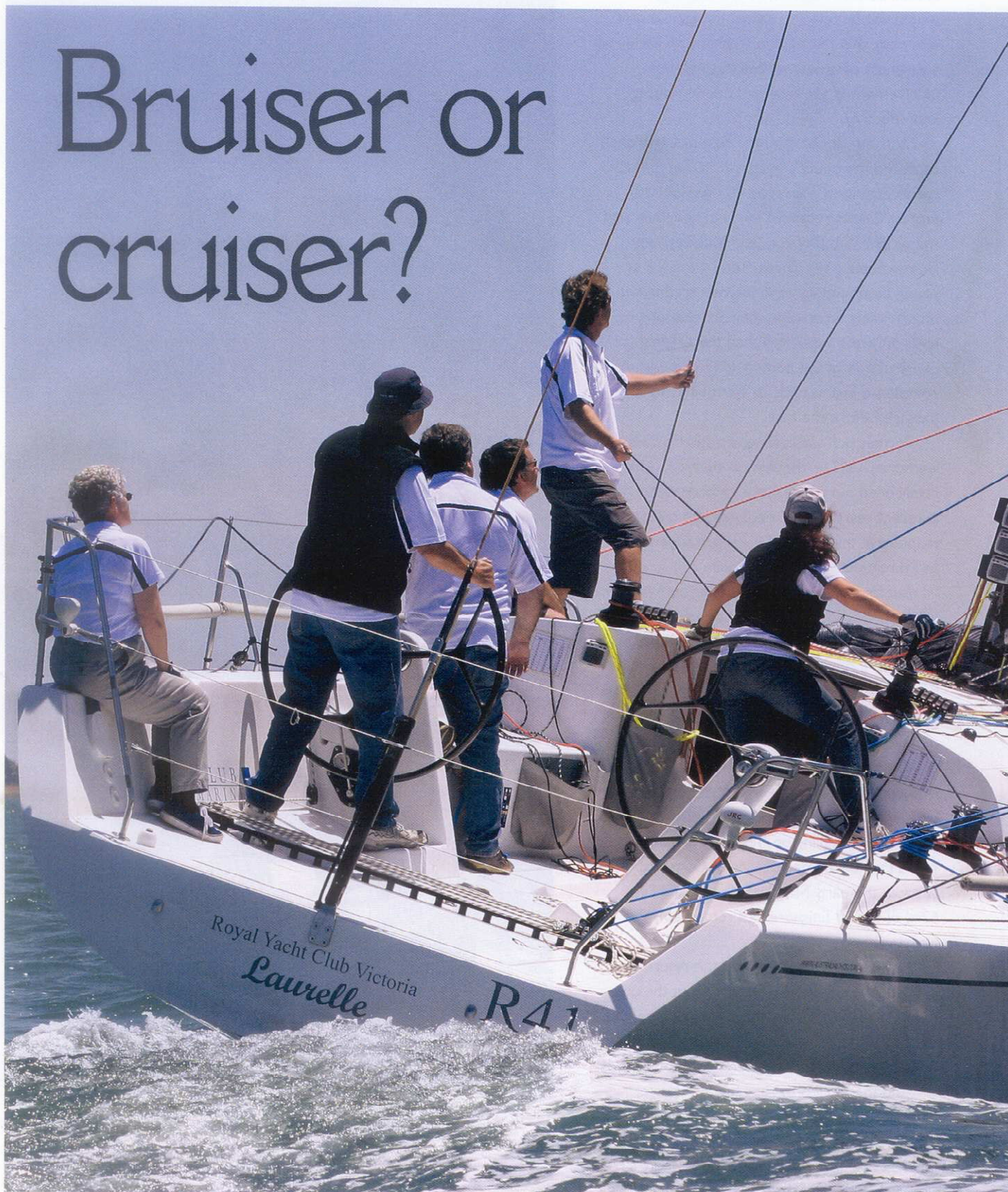




New Sail

# Bruiser or cruiser?







Can a seriously competitive race boat double as a fully-equipped cruiser on its days off? Ray Borrett asked the question and *Laurelle* provided the answer.

Ray Borrett has been around performance cars for most of his life, so when he describes his new boat *Laurelle* as a cruiser/racer you could well imagine him portraying his pride and joy to his wife in the way a man might insist that his new Audi TT is an ideal family saloon.

The reality, however, is that this brand new Farr 42 does, indeed, seem to be a fair compromise between speed and comfort; even if the pedantic might argue that she is more racer/cruiser than cruiser/racer. In any case, only a purist would argue that performance is a handicap when cruising, and few racing yachtsmen would complain at having access to any creature comforts whilst at sea.

*Laurelle* is the most recent in a long line of Ray Borrett's yachts that have borne the hybrid name of his daughters Lauren and Michelle, with the origins and the outcomes of this latest boat saying much about Ray's systematic approach to any project he undertakes.

Ray describes himself — unconvincingly, at the age of 58 — as "retired", but as the former manager of Holden Performance Racing, you might well imagine that thorough research would be a hallmark of his approach to any project. No surprises, then, that the design and build for this boat proves the case.

After years of successfully sailing and racing a range of yachts around the country, Ray was looking to upsize and sought the help of Michael Keough, of Austral Yachts, based in Adelaide. Michael had sold Ray a Clubman 30 in 2004 and after some discussion about optimising a Clubman 36, Ray was persuaded to 'supersize' and consider a 42-footer; a niche in the cruiser/racer market that Michael considered unexploited in Australasia.

Ray's objectives for the new boat were simple and practical; she must be fast, but seaworthy,

By Crosbie Lorimer



be good looking, have a comfortable interior, be easily sailed short-handed and be suitable for coastal cruising.

## A CAR BY FARR

After Ray and Michael had held discussions with a number of design offices around the world, Michael commissioned the new Farr 42 from the Farr Design Office, gaining the building rights in the process. Farr clearly shared their enthusiasm for the project and its future prospects, with the commission setting in train a detailed three-month design performance program, with up to 16 people working on different parts of the boat design; a process described by Ray as "like designing a car."

Austral Yachts built the plug and the boat over an eight-month period in its Adelaide yard, using quad axial foam core construction in e-glass (a product almost as strong as carbon, but without incurring the rating penalties). The weight of the yacht was thoroughly engineered in the design phase and monitored during construction to meet displacement criteria, ensuring that actual performance meets design parameters.

Out on the water, the first impressions are of a boat with evident racing pedigree. With an open stern, twin wheels and dark Horizon Racing sails, only the long coachroof, the scale of which is cleverly disguised by the window design, suggests she has intentions other racing.

A short test sail in light winds does little justice to any review of a boat's performance, but in 11 knots of breeze and a flat sea, she held a steady eight knots upwind with a firm wheel, seeming similarly comfortable at nine knots on a close reach under spinnaker in 11-12 knots true breeze. Although *Laurelle* sports a regular masthead spinnaker, the option for an asymmetrical spinnaker set on a bowsprit would seem likely to provide some exciting downwind performance in a breeze.

## IMPRESSIVE PREDICTION

The Velocity Prediction Program (VPP) for the boat also seems promising, suggesting that she will outpace the grand prix one design Farr 40s for speed upwind in breezes above 12 knots and downwind in wind speeds below 20 knots; an impressive prediction, given that the Farr 40 is 1.5 tonnes lighter.



She is also predicted to hold her own on all points of sail against the equivalents of the highly-optimised Beneteau 40.7 *First National*, overall handicap winner of the 2004 Sydney Hobart race, and the later Beneteau 44.7.

In reality, the 40-45 range in IRC performance cruiser racers is not well represented in Australia and this boat could well fill a niche for those seeking more cabin space and an earlier shower at the club than might be had with the very popular and successful Sydney 38s or the ubiquitous Beneteaus and Bavarias.

*the thoroughbred good  
looks on deck are  
also reflected below*



Top: Ray Borrett (left) with boatbuilder Michael Keough of Austral Yachts.

Above: The interior is modern and uncluttered, comprising polished carbon worktops, with timber confined to the floorboards.

Below: The galley is well laid out and should prove functional and comfortable, even in a seaway.





Coincidentally, the new one design ClubSwan 42 from Nautor Yachts, developed in collaboration with the New York Yacht Club, fills exactly this slot and appears very similar in its design objectives and outward appearance – but at a significantly greater cost than the Farr 42.

Given the boat's long cabin, it might be expected that the cockpit area would be rather confined. The reality seems to be quite the opposite, with ample room and comfortable bracing positions for headsail and spinnaker trimmers and the mainsheet winch and track controls, which are readily to hand for the trimmer in racing mode, as also for the helmsman when short-handed.

The small, but important details have been well thought through, as might be expected of Farr Design. By way of a few examples, the double steering wheel has the foot brace built into the pedestal itself; the non-slip deck is integral to the mould, producing excellent grip underfoot and a long lasting finish and the forehatch is recessed into the deck, reducing the chances of spinnaker snagging during hoists and drops.

As it transpires, the thoroughbred good looks on deck are also reflected below, with a very generous height for the full length of the very long cabin and a simple and efficient layout of galley and navigation station that seems functional and comfortable when the boat is heeled.

Timber is confined to the floorboards, with the double-fold dining table and all worktops constructed in polished carbon for light weight and ease of cleaning; smart and crisp in appearance, if more contemporary than cosy. The two-door entries to the forward head allow the option for the forecabin to be used as a double berth with en suite.

Ray may have strong racing inclinations, but he clearly enjoys his creature comforts, too, describing his main requirements for life below-deck as "keeping the hot water service running and the fridge cold." A large alternator on the engine ensures that such service will be maintained at all times.

The 40 horsepower diesel engine has been located wholly under the cockpit, permitting the entire companionway stairs to be moved away for an unusual degree of accessibility to the engine. This location also generates additional space in one of the most crowded intersections on any boat



– the area between the companionway, the galley and the navigation station.

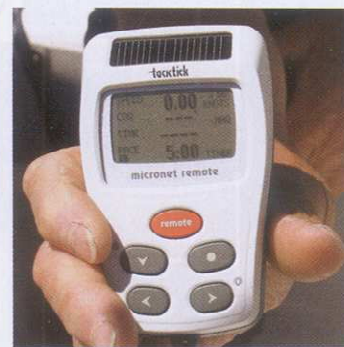
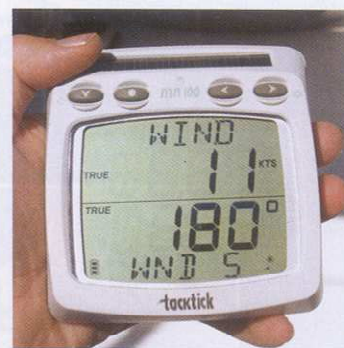
When you lift the floorboards in the cabin, the first thing that strikes you is the extent of the e-glass grid frame that stretches for most of the cabin length; a sight that would inspire confidence in anyone wanting to cross Bass Strait.

Builder Michael Keough seems well-pleased with the result on the water, citing only the lack of a foot brace in the deck for the guest crew or tactician perched behind the helmsman as a shortcoming. But it could, presumably, be easily remedied in what is, indeed, often the liveliest part of the boat in a seaway.

Wireless technology is fast becoming commonplace on yachts and one of the most effective applications on *Laurelle* can be found in the instrumentation supplied by Tacktick. Located on the cockpit bulkhead and on the mast, the instruments can be easily moved during racing (and, as importantly, can be removed from any temptation for the light-fingered after racing), with the menu being accessible from anywhere on the boat by a small remote control that can be hung around the neck. That means that weight stays on the rail when it's needed.

*Laurelle* fared well in her shakedown race, taking first in PHS in the Melbourne to Port Stanley race shortly after her launching in October; but her first serious offshore test was the 2006 Rolex Sydney Hobart – a first for Ray Borrett, too.

For that campaign, Ray took a crew he knows well, mixing youth and experience, including



Top left: The rig comprises a simple two-spreader carbon mast.

Top right: The instrumentation supplied by Tacktick is wireless.

Above: Instruments can be adjusted remotely with a hand-held control.



Above: The substantial e-glass grid below the floorboards inspires confidence in the strength of the boat.





Mainbridge

seasoned Hobart campaigners Frank Hammond and Geoff Vercoe; a crew Ray expected to drive the boat hard, day and night. Michael Keough also got to see his project perform first-hand as a crew member and was confident that his skills as a boatbuilder would not be needed.

## SO CLOSE, BUT...

Being parked in no wind, 500 metres short of the finish line and within sniffing distance of that first beer, while watching the four yachts they had overtaken in the Derwent sneak past them, summed up some of the frustration for Ray Borrett and *Laurelle* in their first Sydney Hobart contest.

"It's not a race that really showed off the boat or the crew," said Ray. "It's all about strategy and our strategy just didn't pay off," he added, alluding to *Laurelle's* move to close Green Cape in the hopes of picking up the forecast westerlies that failed to endure into Bass Strait.


Much of the rest of the race was spent overtaking a number of yachts down the Tasmanian coast and across Storm Bay, before the wind fell away at the top of the fickle Derwent River.

"On the upside, the crew was great and the boat performed beautifully," he said. "She's dry, she's stiff, nothing broke despite some heavy seas, and the sails were excellent: so on the whole I'm pretty happy."

The Hobart campaign will be followed by the boat's participation in Sailing South Week, the

Docklands Invitational Grand Prix, Geelong Week and the summer's club racing on Port Phillip Bay.

As for cruising, the true test of the boat's capabilities will be proven within its first year on the water as Ray plans to enjoy a month's sailing with his wife in the Whitsundays after partaking in the 2007 Hamilton Island Race Week.

Maybe at that point Ray's wife will be able to confirm whether *Laurelle's* sports car looks really conceal a family friendly saloon. 

## SPECIFICATIONS FARR 42

LOA:	12.75 metres
LWL:	11.34 metres
Beam:	3.94 metres
Displacement:	7050 kgs
Sail Area Upwind:	111 square metres
Sail Area Downwind:	215 square metres
Draft:	2.55 metres
Design:	Farr Design
Builder:	Austral Yachts
Sails:	Horizon Sails
Mast/Rigging:	Applied Composites
Engine:	40hp diesel
Fuel Capacity:	200 litres approx
Water Capacity:	200 litres
Instruments:	Tacktick
Deck hardware:	Harken
IRC Rating:	1.151
Cost ex-sails/instruments:	\$A565,000

*Laurelle enters the Derwent and has a delayed finish in the 2006 Sydney Hobart.*