

ULTIMATE 18' – Swing or Drop Keel.

Review by Jeff Togill featured in his book "Trailer-Sailers."1977.

This snappy little trailer-sailer has found greatest favour in its home state of Victoria. However, its fame is rapidly spreading to other states, and there is no doubt that before long the distinctive appearance of this boat will be seen on waterways across the country.

It is distinctive in many ways. It has less of the modern, streamlined appearance of most yachts, preferring the solid, seaworthy look of older-style boats. This is enhanced by the firm lines of the hull, the low cabin and the straight transom which have a flavour of tradition about them.

However, it is only in appearance that this boat is traditional; for her performance in light to moderate conditions is up to the best of the more modern, racing-looking craft. She is designed principally as a cruising boat, and as such is ideal for a small family, particularly in the summer climate, for the designer has given a certain amount of cabin room for a superbly wide, long cockpit. In good weather most boat owners spend a greater proportion of their sailing time in the cockpit, and the cabin is purely for sleeping or for when the conditions are bad. The cockpit on the Ultimate 18 is almost the full width of the boat giving wide seats and even wider leg room.

She is simply rigged with normal sloop jib and main, thus making her easy to prepare prior to launching. And with regard to launching, her 850 kilogram displacement is no hassle either when being towed behind the car or rolling on or off the trailer.

Accommodation is extremely well organised, using the space under the big cockpit for quarter berths either side, the forward area as two berths, with toilet between if required and table and galley alternately on port and starboard side. The rudder is transom- hung and thus does not clutter the cockpit, and winches are not necessary. All of this adds up to a delightful little boat, with a very attractive appearance, comfortable accommodation and an excellent cockpit. Without doubt, an ideal family trailer sailer.

* * * *

Excerpts from the Test Sail Review of the Ultimate 18 Drop Keel by Peter Campbell, 1977.

The Ultimate 18, a sturdy fibreglass 18-footer designed by Melbourne Designer, Gerry Fletcher and built and sold by brothers Harry and John Twikler of Ultimate Yachts, Frankston.

The size, weight and price of the Ultimate 18 will undoubtedly fill an important niche in the market – for dinghy sailing families who want to get into a yacht with reasonable overnight accommodation, good sailing qualities and keelboat stability.

The hull has a fine entry and deep forefoot which give it excellent windward characteristics, firm bilges and a wide beam which is carried well aft to give it good stability. The hull has a deep skeg running aft to the transom where its large rudder is mounted. The retractable keel is of hollow fibreglass with 450lb of lead in a shoe at the bottom. Stainless steel bolts run through the fin itself to the top, where a special windlass lifts it up into the centre of the cabin

The Ultimate 18 D/K is a very sturdy boat, with the hull built up from 8oz. Chopped strand mat fibreglass, ranging in thickness from 5/16in to 5/8in along the keel line. The gelcoat finish is topgrade and hulls are available in almost any colour. The hull and deck are separate moulds, joined at the gunwale, with solidly reinforced deck, cockpit and high coamings. An anchor well with a large hatch on the foredeck.

Below decks design has been well tailored to make full use of every square foot of space with moulded built-in furniture. Two quarter berths, a large V-Berth, galley with sink, metho stove, a table, space for pota-potti, water tank and battery.

Sailing qualities of the Ultimate are quite impressive. She is obviously a fast little yacht, while her fine entry and overlapping genoa give her excellent pointing ability. Well tuned and well crewed, the Ultimate 18 obviously has potential for round-the-buoys racing.