

COLE 43: THE LONG, LEAN, LOVELY LOCAL

MODERN boating BOAT TEST

Several seasons old now, the Aussie Cole 43 class continues to hold its head high in IOR competition against the latest and greatest. Bob Ross reports on the newest, Minna

WHILE the rule-makers have pushed and pulled at yacht shapes, and designers in the search for more speed have produced boats that take superhuman effort to hang onto downwind, an Australian class has glided swiftly and easily onward.

This is the Cole 43 — forty-three feet of beauty, comfort and sea-kindliness in a quiet, light, balsa-cored fibreglass hull. There are seven of them sailing and the builder, Fairlite Plastics of Gosford, have two more under way.

While they were designed before the intricacies of the IOR Rule became fully apparent, the Cole 43's have remained competitive. The Lake Macquarie Cole 43 Polaris (Les Savage) earned her place on her merits in the 1972 Southern Cross CCup team.

Currently, Taurus (Geoff Lee), Bacardi (Peter Hankin), Polaris, and Minna (Daryl Isles) are working up for the Admiral's Cup trials in Sydney. Taurus and Bacardi, in particular have been consistently well

placed.

And all have been enjoying great informal "class" racing against each other. Their IOR time correction factor (YA of NSW system, including age allowance) ranges from .8237 for Minna to .8293 for Polaris.

Designer Peter Cole says: "Mark III has treated them fairly kindly — I think the rule is a pretty reasonable one now, and the 43s will continue to fill the role I originally saw for them.

"When I designed this boat, I felt it had to do many things. It had to be a good, fast boat, pleasing to the eye, but still rating well for offshore racing.

"As a stock boat, it had to appeal to people other than dedicated ocean racing types — the interior had to appeal to women; the wives of owners who perhaps wanted to go cruising with children, as well as the hard-racing crews.

"Before I designed her, I researched ideas used by American stock yacht designers — at the time, the best on interiors. The one that pleased me most, was the Ericson 41. But I did give more attention to the comfort of the navigator, and the cook on the Cole 43 has a more practical layout for working in a seaway.

"The hull, I suppose, could be described as long and narrow. That is a relative description. When I designed the boat a few years ago, I didn't think of it as long and narrow, but the IOR rule has changed boats and ideas on beam.

"The 43s are of fairly light displacement — you could have a 43-footer of almost twice the displacement — and this helps make them fairly easy to handle. They are easy to steer downwind; they have a lot of lateral plane aft and the vee configuration aft makes them sit in 'the groove'.

"My main idea in the hull design was to produce a boat that would go upwind in the sort of sloppy sea conditions encountered off the east coast of Australia. If that had not been a consideration, I might have gone for a beamier boat.

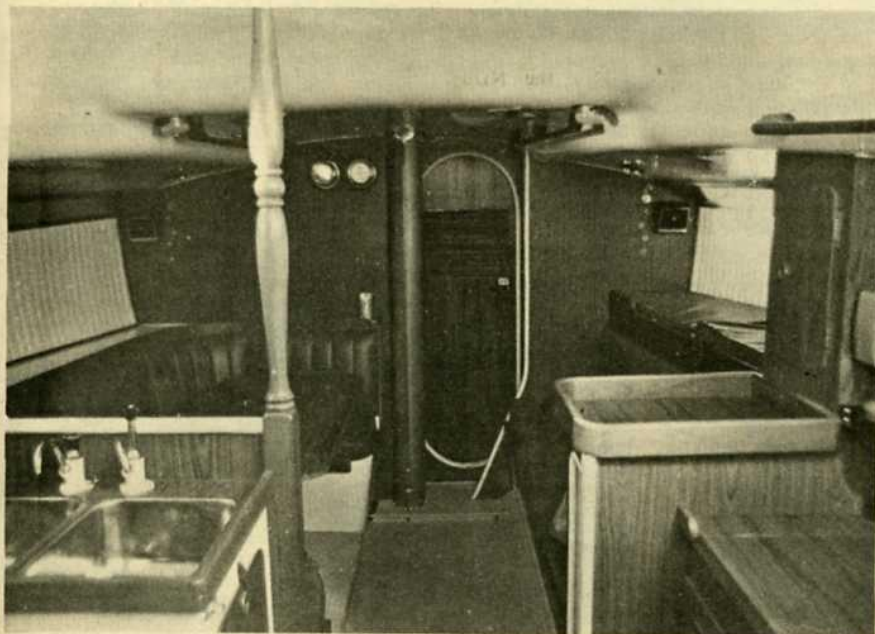
"They do go fairly quickly to windward in a slop. I was very pleased with my own boat, Bacardi (since sold to Peter Hankin) both as a racing and a cruising boat. The 43s have a very soft motion at sea.

"And they are big enough for four or five people to live aboard without getting in one another's hair. One Cole 43 owner, David Beer who has Mandalay, has fitted a self-steering device and has cruised off to Lord Howe."

Builder Bruce Fairlie says the construction method is mainly to make the hull strong and rigid. Because the fibreglass-balsa-core sandwich is so stiff there is no movement and therefore no possibility of 'glass deterioration' through crystallisation. This construction method, used in both hull and deck/cabintop mouldings, also provides good sound insulation and stops condensation forming inside the boat.

Fairlite Plastics will finish the boat to owner requirements, so prices vary. But a basic hull and deck assembly costs about \$20,000, and a finished boat, ready to sail, about \$50,000.

The subject of MODERN BOATING'S pictorial look at the Cole 43 is Minna, the



MAIN saloon of Minna has dinette to port, settee to starboard. Galley is aft and to port, with fine navigator's area to starboard.