

Sea Spray

NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL BOATING MAGAZINE

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FACTS

SR26

LOA: 7.9m (26ft)

Beam: (9ft 5in)

Draft: (5ft)

Displacement: 1179.36kg (2600lb)

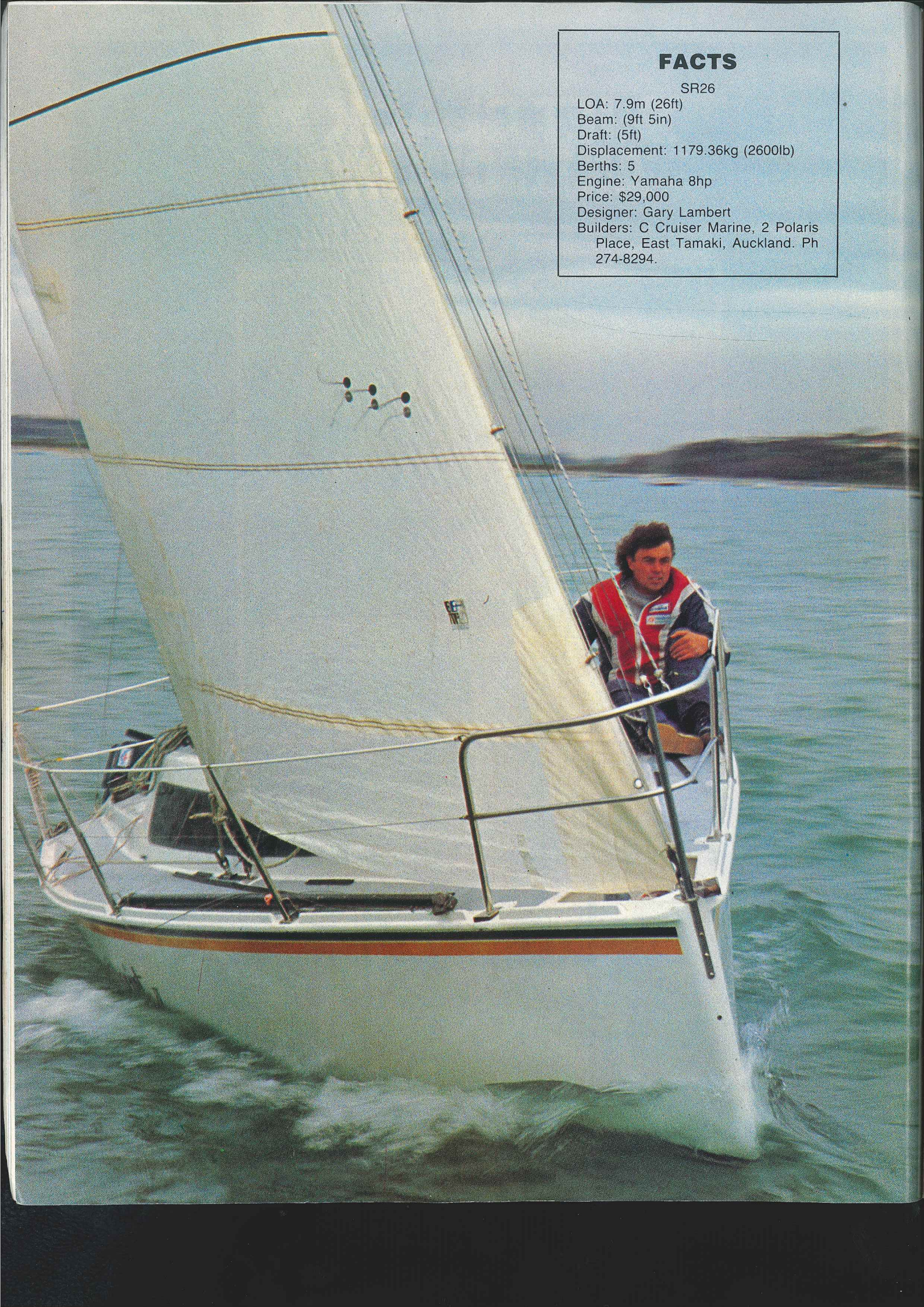
Berths: 5

Engine: Yamaha 8hp

Price: \$29,000

Designer: Gary Lambert

Builders: C Cruiser Marine, 2 Polaris
Place, East Tamaki, Auckland. Ph
274-8294.





SR26

... a racing man's yacht

THE SR26 started life in the imaginations of a group of Bucklands Beach sailors who wanted to build a racing keelboat to meet various criteria: In particular it had to be capable of footing it with the Ross 930 and 830, the Young 8.8 and other harbour racers whose reputations for performance were becoming somewhat awesome.

The syndicate (SR stands for Syndicate Racer) would own the boat as their racing machine, leaving the family cruising boats for family cruising. The racer, therefore, had to be as cheap as possible and this dictated light displacement and minimum length.

The group continued to throw ideas around until Phil Dufty, who runs C Cruiser Marine, decided that for commercial appeal the design would have to make some concessions to cruising.

The SR26 is the result. The boat was designed by Gary Lambert and the first, his own strip-planked *Counterpoint II*, was launched in January. Phil Dufty has since launched *Night Shifter* and a third centreboard version, *Strictly Business*, is also sailing. The latter two are flush-decked racers.

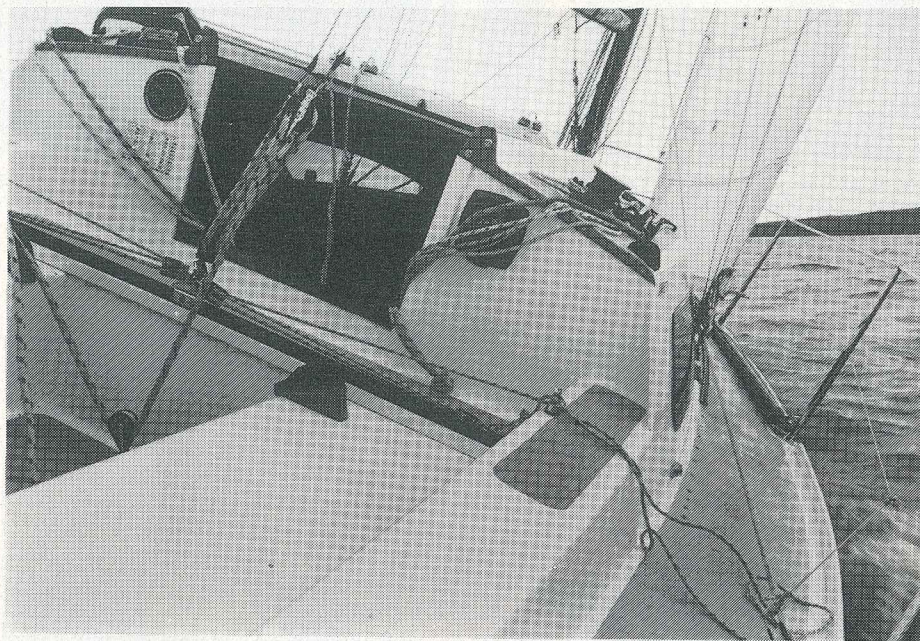
The three boats have had excellent racing results to date, *Counterpoint II* and *Night Shifter* coming second and third in the Akarana winter series' lightweight division. *Strictly Business* was fifth after missing the first three races.

The designer comments: "This 7.9m (26ft) yacht was designed as a fast racer/cruiser which could race competitively among a range of sizes. The prototype, *Counterpoint II*, was built in 12mm cedar planking with 14oz unidirectional E glass inside and out, using WEST resins and systems.

"The hull lines make for a fast planing boat which uses crew weight for optimum racing performance upwind. There is a 46% ballast ratio with all ballast in the keel. Entry is fine with a slightly hollow long waterline.

"Sections are U-shaped forward, slightly rounded at the transom. Buttocks and waterlines are fairly straight aft and the after beam is moderate in the waterplane. It is narrower and not as flat as boats of similar type.

"The waterline is quite narrow, with flared topsides and a three-inch lip all round the gunwale. This allows wider side decks so that



Above: Side-decks are wide and clear even with spinnaker pole clipped to forward stanchions. The mainsheet runs across the width of the cockpit. In newer boats the hatch and bridge deck will be modified

Below: Cockpit is large, with T-shape giving storage room against the cutaway transom for fuel can and gas bottle





There are storage lockers beneath all the berths. This one, under the starboard saloon berth, extends aft beneath the quarterberth almost to the transom



The interior is surprisingly roomy — designer Gary Lambert (left) and Phil Dufty relax on the settee berths

reasonable interior beam is achieved.

"It also adds a little beam and strength and deflects a surprising amount of water and spray.

"The rig is threequarter with single spreader — tall, but the boat handles it well. Headsails are 100%, 120% and 140% lightweight. As the rig is tuned it has been found that a full main can be carried in 20 to 25 knots."

Gary Lambert's SR26, *Counterpoint II*, was the boat sailed for our test. This was the prototype and plug for the production mould.

Production boats will be in Divinycell/GRP foam sandwich reinforced

with Ulticloth and chopped strand mat in polyester resins. Extra glass will be laid around the main bulkhead to act as a ring frame, and also around the other stress areas.

The SR26 has seven solid wooden floors, with keel bolts through the fibreglass between floors. The deck layup is also foam sandwich, the foam replaced by balsa in stress areas such as beneath the winch pads. The transom will be a balsa sandwich construction.

The hull and deck are glassed and bolted together through a 2½in flange designed to add beam and deflect water as it slops up the topsides. It is surprisingly effective, making the SR26 a dry boat and providing an

excellent basis for a strong, watertight deck join.

The production hull will be a light displacement keeler with all 544.32kg (1200lb) of ballast in the keel and making up for just under half the displacement of 1179.36kg (2600lb).

Deck layout is straightforward and sensible. There is a deep anchor well in the bow with ample room for ground tackle. We thought the bow roller could have been stronger and noted there were no fairleads. Both are necessary for cruising.

The non-skid and toe-rails were good, but production boats will be fitted with a new alloy toe-rail being produced by Auckland Anodisers.

The SR26 does not use a Flying Dutchman-type spinnaker pole launcher. Instead, the pole is kept clipped to stanchion bases and, when sailing, can be left clipped to the mast.

The side-decks are clean and unobstructed, with the genoa sheeting tracks and rigging mounted close in to the cabin sides.

All sail controls are led aft along the coachroof to rope clutches and jam cleats. The layout is clean and easy to work.

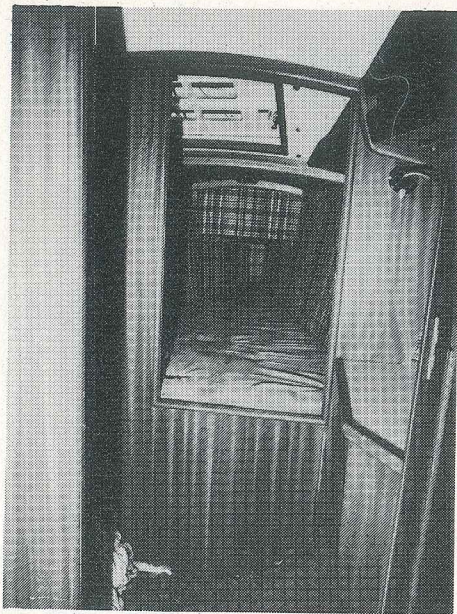
Two pairs of winches were fitted to *Counterpoint*, Maxwell 16s for halyard tensioning and 18s for sheets. The standard boat will have only Maxwell 16s fitted to the coachroof.

The mainsheet track was at the forward end of the cockpit on a bridge deck. In the production boat the bridge deck will not be there and the track will be moved slightly aft, but will remain the width of the cockpit from coaming.

The mainsheet purchase is 6:1 — plenty for the size of boat.

Small stove and worktop and a huge chilly-bin locker comprise the galley





Bow berth is wide at one end, narrow at the other — recommended for one person only. The space between the two bulkheads is the toilet/vanity area

The SR26 has tiller steering. The rudder, mounted on the transom, is a high-aspect ratio fin built by Cross Marine of laminated kauri reinforced by epoxy/orcoweb/S glass.

The SR26's cockpit is 8ft 6in long with wide seating and wide coaming which can also be used as a seat. The cockpit, T-shaped with a low, cutaway transom, provides plenty of room, and the helmsman has a good seating position upwind and down with a good view of headsails and spinnakers.

The seat on the port side of the cockpit lifts to provide access to a huge storage and sail stowage bin. Half the space beneath the cockpit is storage accessible through this hatch and the other side is the quarterberth, separate from the storage.

Gary Lambert had a compass and speedo/log unit at the forward end of the cockpit.

After last season's series of disastrous rig failures which damaged the reputation of harbour racers, Lambert and C Cruiser felt the last thing they wanted was to have masts toppling on the SR26. "We couldn't afford to lose one rig," says Phil Dufty.

So, the SR26 has a threequarter-rigged Bavstock BS3/4 section keel-stepped mast. The rig started with single spreaders but Dufty and Lambert added check spreaders between the spreaders and hounds. Sails are hanked to the forestay. The SR26 also has cap shrouds, lowers and a set of checkstays. Single runners are used in heavy weather.

The boat also has an adjustable backstay used in heavy upwind conditions to flatten the top of the main.

All stays are 4mm or 5mm wire. So far, through the changeable conditions of the winter series, which have included a few solid blows, there have been no problems with any of the rigs.



Plumb stem and transom and low coachroof give the SR26 rakish good looks

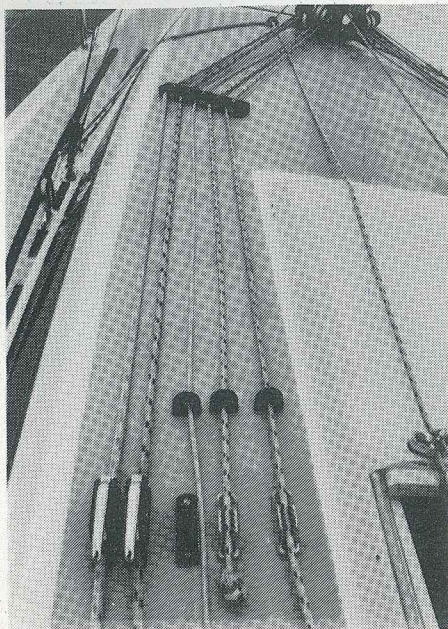
Accommodation for five people has been drawn into the SR26 but this would be comfortable only for short trips. Three would be the ideal number to cruise, four for week-long trips or so.

The bow in *Counterpoint* contained a large single bed, wide enough for two people at one end but narrow in the bow. Beneath this is a large storage area. On *Counterpoint* the forward hatch opened above this berth but in later boats this will be moved to

behind the bulkhead.

Between the two forward bulkheads are a small chemical toilet to port and a vanity unit to starboard. The mast is on an adjustable aluminium step against the rear forward bulkhead.

On *Counterpoint* the toilet was difficult to get at but on production versions there is more room between the bulkheads, and the hatch will be moved aft to this area.



All sail controls are led aft along coachroof to jam cleats and clutches. The layout is neat and workable

The saloon design is simple, with a long settee berth along each side. *Counterpoint* had no table but production boats will have one affixed to the bulkhead, from where it can be easily swung into place.

There is storage beneath both settee berths and in small cupboards where the chainplates attach to the hull.

The settee backs pull forward to reveal more storage and there is a bookshelf above the berths on both sides.

The galley is between the port berth and aft bulkhead. A small non-gimballed Roden Casita gas stove with two burners and a grill, is fitted. There is a small worktop area and a sink with a manual fresh water pump.

The cupboard beneath the worktop is large, designed to take a large icebox or chilly bin. On Lambert's boat the sink draws water

from a plastic container in the aft storage locker and drains to another container in the same place.

Rubber tanks will be fitted to production boats.

To starboard of the hatch is the large double quarterberth which fills the space from bulkhead to transom.

Counterpoint has been invaluable experience for Lambert and Dufty and they have made a few modifications which will refine the production boat.

The cabin top will be a couple of inches higher, the hatch much bigger and the worktop further across the front of the quarterberth.

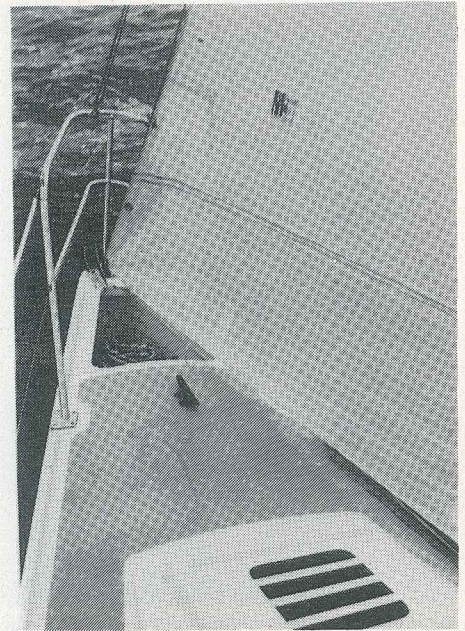
The SR26 will be sold with a Yamaha 8hp outboard motor on an adjustable bracket on the transom. The fuel tank is in the starboard part of the T-cockpit (the gas bottle fits in the port side). The engine provides enough power to push the SR26 along at seven knots in flat water and provides ample thrust for manoeuvring.

It is the sailing performance of light displacement gulf racers which has so endeared them to Auckland's sailing population and the SR26 is no different — it sails brilliantly.

We had the opportunity to sail *Counterpoint II* twice, first in very light conditions and then on a bright winter's day when, as we left Tamaki estuary, the wind filled in from the west at a steady 15 to 20 knots. It was like we had a hotline to Huey.

In the light, the boat slips along well, the big rig and long water line helping to maintain speed. The light displacement doesn't hurt sailing performance in the light — as boats twice the length of the SR26 have found during the Akarana winter series.

Neither did we have any complaints about *Counterpoint's* performance in moderate winds either. The boat is close-winded and will give much bigger boats a run for their money upwind. Progress will be hampered by a short chop but adding weight to the front of the boat seems to damp the pitching.



Anchor well is deep but we would prefer a more substantial anchor roller and the fitting of fairleads

The boat likes crew weight on the rail but weight on the upwind side of the cockpit and careful use of sail area should provide ample power for cruising.

The SR26 pops on to the plane at 8 knots. Under the Boyd and McMaster kite *Counterpoint II* behaved well and when a few gusts came through intent upon upsetting things, it was simply a matter of bearing away a touch to stop the rudder lifting and stalling out. Crews who have raced them say the SR26 is well-mannered, even when broaching. The boat just rounds up and lays over, rather than going into a death roll and total wipe-out.

In fact, the kite run from Cheltenham Beach to Half Moon Bay Marina, with *Counterpoint* planing the whole way, was one of the best afternoons of sailing we've had all year. □

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