

Owner-driven

This first sighting out on Sydney Harbour of McConaghy Boats' mouthwatering new 38ft Harry Dunning one-design quickly had local tongues wagging... as Blue Robinson discovers



HARRY DUNNING

A mini-TP indeed! Recently we have seen the launch of mid-sized, lighter, faster designs with one-design aspirations from Farr, Acebal and Ker, this new 38 from Harry Dunning plus the forthcoming new Carkeek 40 (see pg46). They all look good with admittedly different detailed objectives, but McConaghy's extremely racey-looking 38 appears to have an edge on price at a pretty remarkable base cost of US\$236,000

The McConaghy 38 is a product of its time. Eighteen months ago a growing desire in Australia for a light-displacement high-performance boat suitable for mixed fleet, one-design, club, regatta and twilight racing led a group of experienced owners to approach McConaghy with a list of what they wanted – and, just as important, what they didn't want.

Critical to this project's success was to also create a strictly controlled one-design class, which in these turbulent times should limit the arms-race now being seen at the top end of IRC competition. Other keys were build quality and transportability. And with an eye on the success of the TP52 why not create a scaled-down version of that quality of racing, ideally with similarly blistering performance and a simply good-looking yacht? What has emerged was quickly dubbed the 'Twilight-TP' in Sydney.

McConaghy's Jono Morris explains, 'The key point for us is that we were approached by boat owners with very strong views. They had taken a hard look at their racing, and the language they were using was telling us clearly that what they were doing was not sustainable. The cost/performance/fun ratio was out of control. Strength in build quality, design and class management would now be critical to them simply staying in the sport.'

'Together with America's Cup designer Harry Dunning we started looking at a design around the 36ft mark. Harry ran the numbers on that and pretty quickly it became clear that extending the length to 38ft gave the boat a wider market appeal plus a significant performance gain – making it faster than most existing 40-footers while also keeping the handicap competitive.'

'The other point the owners made strongly was that if they were committing to a new boat, they wanted a "wow" factor; hence the 38 has a clear-coat carbon finish, autoclaved carbon foils, carbon bow prodder and carbon rig all fitted with PBO rigging as standard – which we think pretty well covers that!'

It was the strong input from those people likely to be buying the product, plus a rewriting of the OEP ratios (owner's essential points...) to minimise weight and costs, yet maximise performance, that led McConaghy to opt for the all-carbon package with a removable keel-fin and road-legal 3.5m beam included for easy transport. The end result is a boat that comes in at 3,200kg, with 50 per cent of that in the keel, at an impressive ex-works price tag of US\$235,400 (roughly 170,000 euros).

North 3Di and Quantum are the sails of choice to date, but class rules allow any loft to supply the new class.

Nine boats have already been sold worldwide, to Australia, Asia, Europe and America, with interest especially strong in Italy and Germany. The first North American boat will compete at Key West and experienced Australian yachtsman Jamie Neill has Mc38 hull #1 in Sydney... He already sounds impressed. 'Downwind the 38 is actually pretty low-stress and quite forgiving to steer and upwind it feels like a much bigger boat than its 38ft, with lots of drive. Very quick and fun!'

A high-performance, light-displacement project, driven by owners to secure their own longterm involvement, governed by an enthusiastic new class association and coming in at a reasonable price. Not a bad plan... □

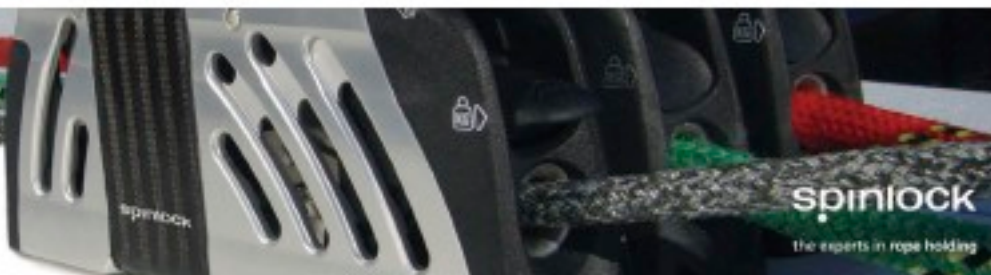
XXC0812 Series

Weight -15%, SWL +30%

Carbon & Titanium Internal Components

Ceramic Coated Jaws

Side Mounted Bonded Versions



spinlock

the experts in rope holding