

Basic Detail Report



Fidelis

Vessel number

HV000125

Date

1964

Primary Maker

Lidgard Boatbuilders

Description

FIDELIS was a surprise performer in the 1966 event. The December 1966 issue of Seacraft magazine noted that six New Zealand yachts were coming across for the event, but only mentioned SATANITA as a classy performer, and remarked that "New Zealand yachts have never given much of an account of themselves in ocean races in

Australia, except perhaps those two beautiful yachts that came over in 1950'. The February 1967 issue however had the headline 'KIWI FLYER SHOWED US HOW' and continued: "Splendid performance of Auckland's Swedish-designed 61-foot flyer FIDELIS was a surprise to Australian yachtsmen and a great joy to her skipper Jim Davern and New Zealanders generally...". The 'US' in the headline could be taken to refer to the USA entry NAM SANG as well. NAM SANG was highly favoured to win line honours before the event, but in the end was a big disappointment. FIDELIS won line honours in a rare light weather race, finishing 17&1/2 hours ahead of the next yacht, BALANDRA. Despite this large margin and having been over 80 nautical miles ahead at one stage, FIDELIS was not able to win the rare double, the small Sydney yacht CADENCE came through under spinnaker over a day later to win on handicap. The line honours win to FIDELIS revived the yachting rivalry of the Logan Bros era in the early 1900s, when their designs RAINBOW, RAWHITI and the smaller 30 foot linear raters dominated racing on Sydney Harbour. Another strong performer was BONA, from the New Zealand Bailey yard. FIDELIS continued the line started with RAINBOW, which returned to New Zealand after its short visit to Sydney in the late 1890s where it won most of the races it entered. It became an outstanding performer in Auckland before RANGER began to dominate that city's sailing. FIDELIS was one of the boats then built to beat RANGER, and its performance should not have come as such a surprise to the Australians. FIDELIS shares a common design concept with all of these famous craft; they were narrow, had light displacement, long overhangs, and a deep keel, very similar to the large square-metre class boats. Such easily driven shapes were ideal for inshore racing, and soon proved their worth in offshore events. The Victorian yacht PANAMUNA is a good example of an Australian yacht built along these lines, and it was very successful too. FIDELIS renewed the close links between Australia and New Zealand that were at their strongest during RAWHITI's time, and it even shares a similar triple-planked kauri construction. Building on FIDELIS's performance, another wave of New

Zealand boats came across for subsequent Hobart races and achieved more ocean racing success. FIDELIS is based closely on the Knud Reimers' BACCHANT design, as was Lou Tercel's RANGER. Jim Lidgard helped with the design, and owner Vic Speight probably had a hand in the process as well. It was launched in 1964, but a year later ill health forced Speight to sell FIDELIS to Davern. Davern's first race with FIDELIS saw victory over RANGER. For the 1966 Hobart race he put in a new rig and sails, and it went on to take many trophies in other races over a long period. In the 1980s the yacht was rebuilt to become a fast passage maker and in 2007 it takes part in club events on Sydney Harbour and made the passage south to Hobart again, for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival. July 2023 update: FIDELIS is moored in Shell Cove, Sydney Harbour. FIDELIS is still racing on Sydney Harbour and in offshore events, the most recent being the Brisbane to Gladstone Yacht Race in April 2023.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 18.59 m x 14.32 m x 3.05 m x 2.59 m (61 ft x 47 ft x 10 ft x 8.5 ft)