

Basic Detail Report



Yarrowonga

Vessel number

HV000724

Date

1939

Primary Maker

Charles Larson

Description

YARRAWONGA was built in 1939 by Charles Larson at his Gladesville yard with plans supplied by the designer Archie Barber. It is thought the design and structure of YARRAWONGA was based on the design of a successful yacht also designed by Barber and built by Larson, which maybe RANI. A other similar yacht to these two was also built and called NIMBUS. This yacht was moored in Mosman Bay for many years, but RANI was lost off Port Stephens in the 1950s. When acquired by Bill Pritchett in 1955, YARRAWONGA was a 35' cutter with a bowsprit. Bill Pritchett quickly added an ice chest, a quarter berth on the starboard side and a Gray petrol marine engine underneath the cockpit. William "Bill" Pritchett was a well-known sailor on Sydney Harbour from the 1920s and 1930s, when he and his brothers, Jack and Ron, sailed their father's gaff-rigged 25' yacht, GOORA, 25' from Rose Bay. After WORLD WAR II Bill Pritchett was the first mate to Alexis Albert on his 8 Metre Yacht, NORN. When Bill Northam was asked by the Johnson & Johnson Board of Directors to give up racing cars in the early 1950s he decided to become a sailor. He rang Bill Pritchett from Scotland saying I will buy the 8 Metre SASKIA if you will be my first mate and teach me. SASKIA went on to win many races including the Sayonara Cup with Bill Northam at the helm and Bill Pritchett as first mate. Bill Pritchett was a long-term member of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, a Committee member for many years and one of the starters for the yacht races at the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956. He had always wanted his own yacht but could never afford one until he saw YARRAWONGA . Within a year or so of acquiring Yarrowonga, Bill Pritchett had upgraded Yarrowonga's condition by removing the bowsprit, changing to a masthead rig and ordering new Dacron sails from Peter Cole's loft. The new ice chest was an important feature- Bill Pritchett loved his beer cold and his gin and tonic with ice. The yacht was superbly maintained - the underside was antifouled regularly to maximise boat speed and the hull and superstructure painted and varnished 3 times a year much to the consternation of the crew and family. He also acquired a clinker dinghy powered by a 6hp Seagull outboard engine. YARRAWONGA originally sailed in Division 3 on Sydney Harbour. The races were variously hosted and run by RSYS, RPEYC and RPAYC. The new rig and sails helped its speed and YARRAWONGA's success in Division 3 led to it to being elevated to Division 2. Bill Pritchett never set YARRAWONGA up for competitive offshore sailing. He would never condone the required railing as this would spoil the look of such a classic yacht. Bill Pritchett was substantially assisted in the acquisition of Yarrowonga by Bill's crew consisted his best mates Boyce Pizzey, Scotch MacDonald and Bruce Daymond. There were few yachtsmen on Sydney Harbour who could

or would match Bill Pritchett on the harbour. He raced every Saturday and cruised most Sundays. Bill Pritchett also used to sail YARRAWONGA for long stints outside and on his own. YARRAWONGA was so well trimmed that he could leave the tiller for extended periods and the yacht would remain on course. YARRAWONGA 's generous cockpit and large awning made all the difference for cruising and entertaining. His wife Betty, although prone to sea sickness came every Sunday and holiday. The family including the dog Socksie shared the passion on Sundays which was normally a sail to Quarantine or Store Beach, lunch and a sail back with a venture outside through the Heads. Sometimes it was overnight on long weekends to places like Killarney/Roseville or Lane Cove River or time spent on holidays at Pittwater with other families and their yachts including the Sturrocks with EUDORIA, and the Williams with STRUEN MARIE (HV000197). Bill Pritchett also entertained overseas guests by taking them for an evening sail and meal. The Pritchett's children Diane, Bill (Jnr) and Ken all learned to sail Moths at RSYS with their Junior Sailing programme. When Bill Pritchett became ill in 1963, Bill (Jnr) continued to sail YARRAWONGA socially until it was sold late in 1964. Its ownership since then is not well documented. The current owner, although resident outside of Australia has had YARRAWONGA overhauled and restored to its original excellent condition, and when he visits Sydney YARRAWONGA is his base.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 10.58 m × 2.62 m × 1.83 m (34.7 ft × 8.6 ft × 6 ft)