

# Basic Detail Report

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## Maluka

### Vessel number

HV000240

### Date

1932

### Primary Maker

CAM Fisher and Sons

### Description

MALUKA was built at CAM Fisher and Son's Yard in La Perouse on Botany Bay NSW and launched late in 1932. The owners, brothers William and George Clark were bachelors, and had settled in Sydney a few years earlier after retiring from farming. They were interested in racing, cruising and fishing and commissioned the design from experienced amateur designer Cliff Gale. The 8.53 m ( 28 ft) long gaff rigged yacht has what have become the trademark features of a Gale design; raised deck, plumb stem and transom, and well-balanced sailing qualities. MALUKA was planked in Huon pine and fitted with a Lycoming auxiliary petrol engine. The Clark brothers raced MALUKA with the Sydney Amateur Sailing Club and fished offshore or around the harbour. They undertook the first of four well documented cruising voyages in April 1933 when they sailed to North Queensland, spending five months away from Sydney. It was a great success and the gale they experience very early in the voyage proved the seaworthiness of MALUKA's design. This gave them great confidence for their next voyage in September 1934 to Lord Howe Island, taking Sep Stephens as a third crew member. The boat weathered severe gales on both passages and again proved itself entirely capable in the open ocean. Their next voyage ended in disaster. The three sailors left Sydney just prior to Christmas Day in 1935 and south of Eden were caught in a southerly gale raging against a strong south moving current. The seas were huge so they hove-to for an extended period, and crew member Stephens was injured during one knock down. Unable to take any sights to confirm their position they estimated they were near Green Cape in NSW. The brothers were eventually overcome with exhaustion and lashed the tiller with all three sheltering below, believing they were drifting well out to sea. In fact the current had taken them well south along the Victorian Coastline and the early hours of the morning the boat grounded on a headland at Cape Conran, near the township of Marlo. It grounded with damage to one side and when dawn broke they found themselves on the rocks laying over to starboard and clear of the sea. With help from locals they salvaged the yacht by patching over the one hole in the planking, and removing its ballast keel so they could man-handle the hull across the rocks and back to deeper water. The yacht was refloated and motored to Marlow, while the keel was retrieved and brought back overland by truck. The keel was bolted back under the hull and then MALUKA was sailed back to Sydney. The yacht was then properly repaired by Fisher and 12 months later successfully voyaged to Tasmania and return over Christmas and New Year in 1936/37. This was the brothers last voyage in MALUKA, and shortly after they sold the boat and had a newer version built called MATHANA. MALUKA is

known to have changed hands a couple of times, and at one point in the late 1930s it was owned by the well-known Sydney sailor, Sil Rohu, designer of the VJ class dinghy. Peter Flowers' grandfather Glen Houston owned MALUKA for many years, and it was berthed at both Cottage Point and at their home at Abbotsford. Peter says " I learnt to fish ( and drink coffee as a 10 year old ) on Maluka and fondly remember the stories he use to tell us of how she was built and salvaged and sold on. My fondest memory was eating crabs and fish caught each day on the Hawkesbury followed by Glen playing his mouth organ late into the evening." The yacht remained in or near to Sydney and in 2005/2006 it was extensively rebuilt and restored so that it could take part in the 2006 Sydney to Hobart yacht race, with additional structure, fibreglass reinforcement, carbon fibre spars and kevlar sails. Skippered by prominent sailor Sean Langman MALUKA finished 4th on handicap, an extraordinary achievement for a gaff-rigged craft over 70 years old racing against modern yachts. In 2007 it repeated its voyage to Lord Howe Island.

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 8.53 m x 8.53 m x 3.05 m x 1.98 m, 6.8 tonnes (28 ft x 28 ft x 10 ft x 6.5 ft, 6.91 tons)