

# Basic Detail Report

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## Melaleuca

### Vessel number

HV000643

### Date

1943

### Description

Hobart boat builder Bernie Berkshire built MELALEUCA in his yard at Prince of Wales Bay and launched it in 1943 during World War II. The Bermuda ketch rigged yacht was planked in celery top pine over blue gum frames and built as a cruising and racing yacht. After the end of the war it was sold to John and Dot Willins in 1946 who raced it on the Derwent River. In mid-1949 the yacht, then known as COLLEEN II, was put up for sale, and plans were made to sail the yacht to Sydney in July when no offers had been made in Tasmania. The Hobart Mercury on 30 July 1949

noted it was “of sturdy construction” and had been based on a design by the well-known American naval architect John Alden. Later in 1949 it was sold in Hobart to Denny King. King was a self-sufficient personality who had established a home with his family in one of the remotest regions of the state, Bathurst Harbour in the south west wilderness. There he mined tin and lived off the land to support the supplies he occasionally brought in. Renaming the yacht MELALEUCA, the name of the inlet where he had settled, it became their primary means of communication and transport between Hobart and other centres on the south east coast. It served King and his family well as a sturdy transport in a region frequented by rough conditions. The deep keel, heavy displacement vessel was well suited to the conditions and transported cargos of tin and stores up until King died in 1991. By this time he and his family had become something of a legend and state treasure, living their lives in what had become a national park. King had settled there after World War II, while his sister and brother-in-law lived nearby in Port Davey working as crayfishers. Denny King and his wife raised two daughters, Mary and Janet. In May 1971 the Australian Women’s Weekly ran a pictorial on the family- “The Kings of Melaleuca” in connection to an ABC TV feature of the same name shown on A Big Country in late April that year. The Women’s Weekly described them as appearing to be ‘tough pioneering stock, whose sole concern is hewing a living from their property- a tin mine’ yet noted that they were also artists, and were holding an exhibition in Hobart at the same time. By this time King was widowed, but his daughters had remained working with him, before continuing their higher education in Hobart. The ABC TV crew took the opportunity to travel back to Hobart on MELALEUCA a 23 hour trip. As the Weekly noted- “The yacht also carried a load of tin, mined and bagged (worth around a dollar a pound) and the five family chooks, which produced three fresh eggs on

the voyage". After King's death the daughters sold the yacht in 1995 to the current owners. They have kept the yacht largely as it was, but with King's daughters' approval they have opened the cabin area up further. They use MELALEUCA for cruising, and wherever they go around Tasmania it remains well known as Denny King's yacht.

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 12.2 m × 11.8 m × 3.7 m × 2 m (40.03 ft × 38.72 ft × 12.14 ft × 6.56 ft)