

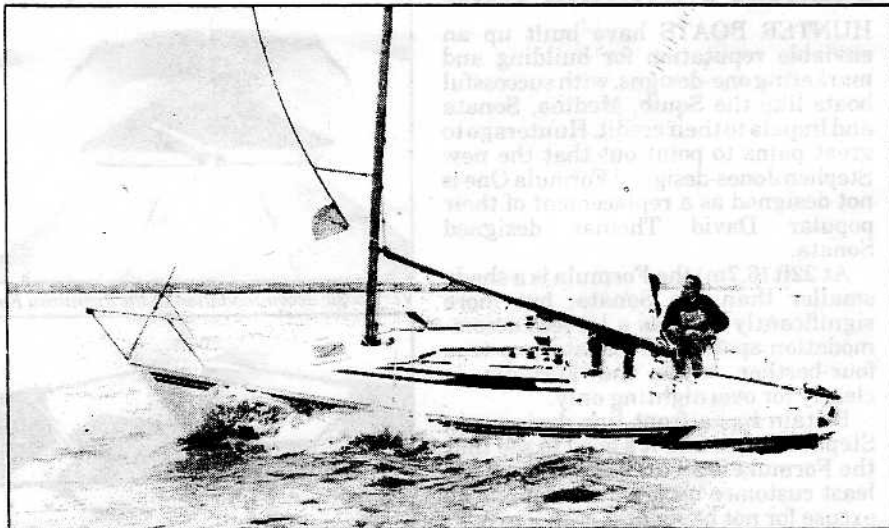
# On Board Formula One

Hunter's lively funboat

**T**HERE HAS TO BE something special about a 22ft yacht that will sail to windward at nearly six knots in only eight knots of true wind. When the same yacht will, in a fresh breeze, plane past racing yachts many feet longer, yet remain easily controllable and above all a delight to sail, then you have something that is a bit more than special. Considered as a pure sailing machine, the new Formula One, or 'fizz boat' as Hunter Boats' Peter Poland irreverently calls her, would appear to be exceptional.

The design is by Stephen Jones, who has produced a very clean and undistorted set of lines. The lifting keel, which is held in position by six substantial locking bolts, carries a 100 lb lead bulb to keep centre of gravity low for minimum weight. There is a long run aft with flat sections for downwind stability and to aid planing, leading to the large, and apparently substantial, transom hung rudder which is in the form of a lifting blade fitted in a light alloy frame. Stephen Jones has produced an exceptionally pretty little boat, with her low topsides, little blister coachroof and eager look. Her rig is sophisticated in design but simple in operation. Fractionally rigged, the Proctor mast is fitted with cap shrouds and single lowers, swept spreaders and a set of jumpers on the upper section of the mast to control mast bend.

Both hull and deck are moulded of a Kevlar/glass composite using polyester resins. Like others in the Hunter range, all underwater parts of the hull have two coats of epoxy paint applied before anti-fouling. Using Kevlar like this allows for a light but strong and stiff structure, and the material is now well enough proved on more exotic one-off craft for



its use to be quite acceptable on a production boat of this type: Hunters are also using a Kevlar cloth for their new 31, unveiled for the first time at the Earls Court Boat Show.

The cockpit is large and a proper 'sit in' type rather than just a well and sidedeck seats, though it's quite likely that the crew will find the nicely angled sidedecks more comfortable when sailing. The single locker there is large enough to take a 4hp Tomos outboard, tank, anchor and warp and probably the odd line and fender as well. In use the outboard fits on to a transom bracket and provides enough push to achieve five knots in calm water.

The accommodation is very simple and practical with four berths, two as a double up for'd, two as long settee/quarterberths and good comfortable sitting headroom even for someone well over six feet. A chemical WC is provided, as is a vestigial 'camping' galley, consisting of a single burner stove, water tank (five gallon jerry can) and pump, and a wash bowl completes the picture. All pretty basic, but quite adequate for overnighting.

However, in the same way as you wouldn't buy a sports car for its passenger carrying

ability, you wouldn't consider the Formula One for her accommodation. The fact that it's there and usable is almost a bonus. The boat's real strength is in her handling and performance. She is the sort of boat that even a relative novice could handle with confidence, under sail, in confined waters. She willingly responds to the helm, doesn't appear to become difficult when pushed hard, accelerates quickly in the puffs and is quick to let the helmsman know how well, or badly, he is steering and trimming the sails.

On the racing side of her character, and it's probable that the majority of these boats will be bought with racing in mind, Hunter Boats have drawn up very strict one-design rules spelling out just what is and what isn't allowed in the way of modification and equipment (essentially no variation is allowed).

But what are the real advantages of this boat for 'sport' sailing, probably a more accurate description of her non-racing role?

First of all she is so light, accelerates so quickly and handles so precisely that she can be sailed out of trouble before actually getting into it; like the good acceleration and road-holding of a sports car giving its driver a greater margin for error. A light boat needs less drive than a heavy one, so needs smaller, more easily handled sails; this is aided on the Formula One by having remote reefing for the first slab. Lightness with a buoyant hull gives a drier ride as the boat goes over rather than through waves, though the sort of speeds the Formula One is capable of could lead to a degree of dampness. And if you do make a mistake when, for example, coming alongside, she is easily fended off or stopped. Finally, with her lifting keel and an all up weight of only 1,890 lb, she is eminently suitable for trailing behind a quite modest sized car, even if only at the beginning and end of season, and Hunter Boats are designing a new trailer for the boat to make launch and recovery as easy as possible.

If this report seems enthusiastic, it's a reflection of the way that even the most reactionary of the testers felt after sailing her. In the same way as a motorist might buy a Golf GTi or Escort XR3 because he enjoys his driving, the Formula One will appeal to the yachtsman who enjoys his sailing, whether racing or sport sailing.

AB

## DATA

LOA	6.7m	(22ft)
LWL	5.5m	(18ft)
Beam	2.44m	(8ft)
Draught	Keel up: 0.4m	(1ft 4in)
	Keel down: 1.45m	(4ft 9in)
Displacement	860kg	(1,890 lb)
Ballast	364kg	(800 lb)
Sail areas	Main: 12.2m <sup>2</sup> (131sq ft); No 1 genoa: 12.45m <sup>2</sup> (134sq ft); No 2 genoa: 8.36m <sup>2</sup> (90sq ft); spinnaker: 27.87m <sup>2</sup> (300sq ft)	
Engine	Outboard, 4hp	
Designer	Stephen Jones	
Builder	Hunter Boats Ltd, Sutton Wharf, Sutton Road, Rochford, Essex SS4 1LZ (Tel: 0702 546541)	
Price	Standard boat £6,900. One-design racing pack with Mylar genoa, spinnaker and spinnaker gear £345 (special discounted package). Other options including storm jib, Tomos 4 outboard, nav lights, battery, bilge pump and anti-fouling, £590 total	



## Hunter Formula One

HUNTER BOATS have built up an enviable reputation for building and marketing one-designs, with successful boats like the Squib, Medina, Sonata and Impala to their credit. Hunters go to great pains to point out that the new Stephen Jones-designed Formula One is not designed as a replacement of their popular David Thomas designed Sonata.

At 22ft (6.7m) the Formula is a shade smaller than the Sonata, but more significantly she has a lot less accommodation space. The Sonata is a true four-berther while the Formula is clearly for overnighting only.

Britain has a front line designer in Stephen Jones and it's good to see that the Formula is an all British effort. At least customer back-up service has no excuse for not being first rate.

### Above decks

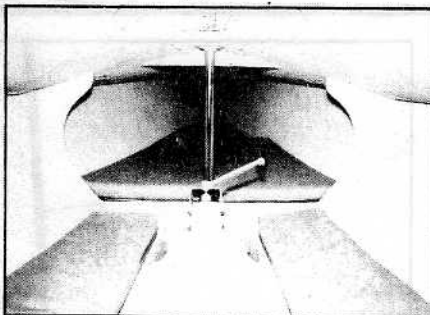
The Formula we had at our mini Rally was the pre-production prototype that David Robinson of Team Sails, Graham Childs of Proctor Masts and Jones the Designer have been sailing in the Hamble River Autumn Series. As a result of their experiences a few changes have been made, and some mild tuning has been made to the very tough draft one-design rules. Surprisingly, the changes have been minor.

For instance, additional mooring deck gear will be allowed for those who keep their boats in open roadsteads. Kevlar halyards and control lines have been abandoned in favour of longer-life Terylene/wire and Terylene, and extra fittings for barber hauling the headsail will come as standard. Metal Clam Cleats, which don't allow ropes to slip so readily under load, will be used instead of plastic fittings. Owners will be allowed to add their own additional non-slip deck treatments. Although the standard surface is pretty good it is one of the few personal touches allowed under the rules, as each boat comes with standard hull, coachroof and sail stripes. Also, foot straps will be allowed as a sitting out aid. Straps were chosen because they are adjustable and kinder to shins.

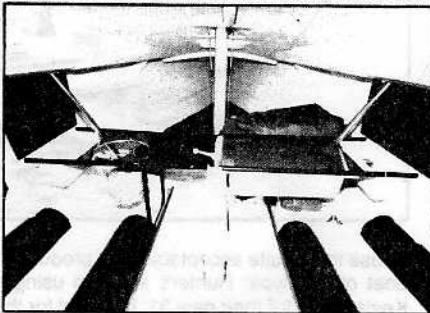
The rig is set on a Proctor mast, the same section as used on the Sonata but much revamped. To achieve good headstay tension, without recourse to the complication of running backstays, struts and jumpers have been added to the tapered top mast. A single backstay joins a strop at boom height and adjustment of either end of the strop gives control of mast bend. This allows the helmsman to reach this all important control from either side of the boat.

The end result was a highly commendable rig, simple and safe, yet capable of as much adjustment as offered by complex rigs. A proper coachroof carries all the controls including the headsail tracks, sheet winches, flattener and first reef.

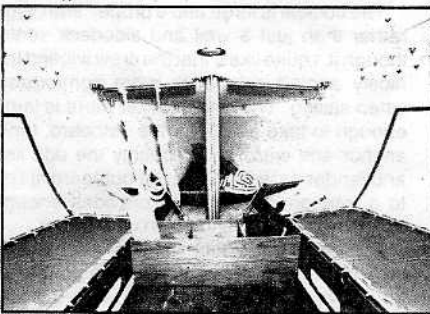
We also thought the Formula was the best built boat. Certainly she was the most sophisticated, using a Kevlar composite laminate for hull and deck for higher strength and a lower weight.



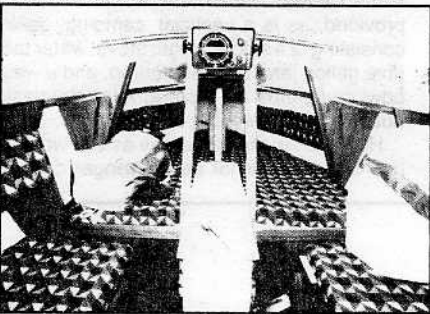
Very basic accommodation in the Jeanneau Fun



Tube effect interior of the Beneteau First Class



Stark functionalism in the Elvström 7170D



Big boat finish in the Hunter Formula One

She is fitted with a neatly built laminated wood rudder carried in an alloy stock, and keeping the Formula on her feet is a slim epoxy-coated iron keel complete with torpedo bulb. Jones' aim was to produce a stiff boat that can be sailed upwind in fresh conditions by the crew of three allowed under class rules. He seems to have been successful in this respect as the mainsail area was increased twice before being finalised for production.

### Below decks

Along with the Beneteau First Class, the Formula was completed to a higher standard below. She has four proper cloth-covered berths, with stowage under and behind them, a bosunary tray at the companionway and a mini-galley with a single-burner cooker, water container and pump, and a lift-out sink. This is enough for very basic one-pot cooking, or as is more

likely, a brew-up. There's a chemical WC too, for those brave enough to use it.

This interior was clearly the smallest of the four, not surprising as she was the smallest boat overall. Yet careful arrangement of the berth heights and backrests give comfortable sitting headroom under the coachroof. Dominating the centreline is the lifting keel mechanism. The keel box is sealed by a tray which conceals the lock down studs for the keel. Alloy struts tie the box to the main bulkhead, floor and deck and the keel is lifted by a Jockey winch.

### Under sail

Some were disappointed with the Formula's performance at the start of the rally, but then a sideways spinnaker hoist in one of three races wouldn't help the cause of any boat. In all conditions upwind she pointed well, and given a good helmsman in the shape of David Robinson or Neil Graham she could stay with the larger Fun. In our last informal race, she led right around the course in flat water and 8 to 10 knots of wind. Although the Elvström and Fun were separated by a shift, the Formula and First Class raced together without the French boat able to break through. Her newly found extra sail area will obviously make the Formula more potent still. Without it she was able to sail happily upwind with just three aboard, so doing away with the need for extra windward rail passengers.

Everyone thought she was a delight to sail, light and sensitive on the helm with good control on the close reaching legs. The boat comes complete with a handsome mainsail and good looking Mylar 100 per cent jib. A No. 1 genoa and spinnaker are extras, but all sails come from David Robinson's Team loft, the nominated sole supplier to the class. Some might not like the lack of choice, but the sails we saw were well cut from high quality cloth.

Racing results for the Formula look promising: Three 1sts in the Hamble River Winter Series speak well for the boat.

### Verdict

This was the best built and best packaged boat of the four. It is fortunate that Hunters have done a good packaging job because the one-design rules are so strict that owners are left with very little that they can alter.

Like the Fun, the Formula is small enough to trail but has just enough accommodation comfort for a crew to spend the weekend aboard her at a championship. Of the four boats, the Formula seems best equipped to become established as a class. Apart from the back-up from her builders, the Royal Yachting Association has allocated the K8000Y sail number series to the class in readiness for its growth. More to the point, there are enough Hunter boats established in the country's popular one-design sailing grounds like the Clyde, Burnham-on-Crouch, the Fourth, Dublin Bay, Solent and so on, to find a receptive market. The boat rates 18.5ft if you want to try your hand at budget quarter tonning. All said, a versatile little yacht. ■