

FFLOW 8.5

8.5 Class
One Design
Racing Cat



by NATHAN STANTON

THE FREEFLOW 8.5 CAME about as the answer to one of my sailing passions. I've always enjoyed racing as well as cruising and after progressing from dinghies, owned and raced my own trailer yacht built to the old 7.8m rule for 13 years, Jo and I even had our first date and honeymoon on board. Since progressing to multihulls I have continued to enjoy and participate in many trailerable multihull races which is great as it has allowed me to experience a lot of different boat's strengths and weaknesses.

On the flip side, one of the frustrations has been that there is no defining length or minimum weight that denotes the maximum size of a trailerable multi. Hence, we have an interesting but scattered fleet as people are reluctant to invest the time, energy and dollars on a

boat knowing that if it is successful, someone can just build a bigger, lighter one next year.

There needs to be a line drawn in the sand to give us some certainty and a focal point for our efforts. A visit to New Zealand in March this year coincided with the NZMYC display at the viaduct basin where several 8.5m class multi's were displayed and I learned about this flourishing class with boats numbering in their teens on the water and half a dozen or more under construction. Check out the NZMYC website <http://www.multihull.org.nz/>

Wow, this is the kind of enthusiasm we need here in Australia. Fortunately, we don't need to re-invent the wheel, it is already being done for us. These boats hit so many of the right buttons it's obvious this is a course we should follow to rejuvenate our own fleets and give our

sport some direction, a premier class and a pinnacle to aspire too. Sitting down with some friends who felt likewise, the Freeflow 8.5 was born. The boat has to be simple and robust and above all else fun, fun, fun to sail.

A compact sail plan and all fore sails, including the spinnaker, on furlers make the Freeflow 8.5 an easy boat to sail two, three or four up, if need be.

A fixed mast means no mast rotation hassles to have to remember, less fatigue and chafe on rigging, no OMR penalty for rotation, very light composite mast only 11.5m long makes for easy, low stress raising and lowering. As the mast doesn't rotate we can have a narrow staying base, chain plates on the inboard side of the hulls, which allow narrow sheeting angles, so the screecher works as a No. 1 headsail upwind in the light breezes (less hassles, more options). No running



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Freeflow 8.5
Freeflow 43 coming soon
Freeflow 52
Freeflow 66

backstays to remember for the masthead spinnaker:

The prodder pole going to the mast acts as a compression member not allowing the forestay to pull aft under headsail sheet and rigging loads which results in better forestay tension and rig control. Both the prodder pole and bridal wires are kept high to allow the bows reserve buoyancy to do the job of lifting the bows without the weight and drag of a forebeam and tramps in the water creating a tripping effect. The forebeam has also been removed for less weight forward, and overall, less cost and one less part to bolt on. The result of these features means you can either push harder when racing or enjoy the extra safety margin. Either way, it's a win, win situation.

A self tacking jib makes tacking fast and fun. No winching on the headsail after every tack.

Light to tow, light overall weight means that you can tow this boat behind a car or 4 x 4 (not a truck).

The Freeflow 8.5 has been designed to fit into a 40ft (12m) shipping container complete with 11.5m mast sitting on its own road trailer, so sending a boat to NZ or Thailand, or anywhere for that matter to compete is as easy as it should be.

Designed from the outset to be quick and easy to rig and de-rig, both beams fit into moulded recesses. Main aft deck

trampolines have been designed to be fitted and tensioned in no time at all using a simple system hidden inside the inner cockpit lockers. No knots, no fuss.

Really comfortable 3.1m long cockpits that can seat the whole crew with plenty of room to move for those action packed moments.

Both performance and safety win out with the rig more than half the boat's length back from the bows.

Simple, watertight, off the shelf companionway hatches set at a comfortable angle allow easy access into the cabins.

We have calculated the Freeflow 8.5's projected OMR rating which indicates it will be very competitive under OMR in mixed fleet racing.

One Design: Level racing, no cheque racing or ever bigger boats. The added bonus of the Freeflow 8.5 being designed to the New Zealand Open 8.5 Rule is there is very little you can change as just about all measurements where practical have already been taken to their maximum.

The Freeflow 8.5 is eligible for the Brisbane to Gladstone race which is also an OMR rated event as the boat is equipped with the now mandatory escape hatches. Given the right conditions this boat is capable of doing this race in less than 24hrs.

Being part of a larger international class

that is already established opens opportunities to compete overseas.

The Freeflow 8.5 can be supplied as a complete One Design fully moulded sail away boat or as a mouldings part set you can put together at home. In the future, we will supply a flat panel kit version of this design.

It will be great to see the groundswell our close neighbours have started, roll across the Tasman and invigorate the scene on our shores.

Happy Sailing – Nathan

For more information contact :

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FREEFLOW 8.5 SPECIFICATIONS	
LOA	8.5m
BOA	5.4m
Draft – Boards up	0.3m
Draft – Boards down	1.6m
Displacement	900kg
Engine	8hp outboard
Mast height off water	12.6m
Mainsail	33m ²
Self tacking jib	16.8m ²
Hounds screecher	40m ²
Masthead spinnaker	85m ²
Hull and deck construction :	
Infused multi-axial fabrics and foam core in female moulds for highest control of quality and weight.	

