

Fine example of a craftsman's skill

The Mermaid in Jorge immensely strong launch Waikawa Bay this afternoon, Moore, of Wellington, as

Good traditional boatyards are endangered.

As property speculators the world over scramble for waterfront land to establish marina and resort or "dockminium" properties and traditional boat building methods are replaced by glass fibre factory techniques, traditional boatyards that serve the boating public with good-quality craftsmanship are slowly slipping away from the shoreline.

Picton is fortunate to have Jorgensen's Boatyard at the head of Waikawa Bay.

Generally known as "Jorgies", it was established in 1958 by Danish boatbuilder Peter "Pop" Jorgensen, and the yard is not only famous for the number of high-quality craft built there but also for the apprentices it has trained in the art of boat construction.

Many of these apprentices were building boats there in 1968, when Jorgensen's employees banded together to buy the yard from the family, and through them the quality continues.

REPUTATION

Wellington man P J Moore also knew Jorgie's reputation for workmanship from a lifetime of sailing around the Sounds in dinghies and keelboats, when he took his Roger Carey-built motorsailer Capella there for her regular maintenance.

When it came time to replace Capella he chose another design from the portfolio of her Boston, Massachusetts, designer, John G Alden, and approached Jorgie's to do what they do best — build the boat in wood.

"He has a property in the Sounds and wanted a top-quality timber boat, glassed over for low maintenance," Jorgie's general manager John Langdale said.

CONVERTED

Mr Moore had chosen a 1968 design for a 39ft 8in launch ("no metrics please she's all imperial"), meant to be carvel planked, but it was converted for cold moulding and, last September, construction began.

After the keel was laid the 21/2-inch square frames, laminated from

New Zealand kauri, were erected on 3ft 6in centres and planking began.

Two diagonal layers of 1/4 inch kauri were fastened on by Epiglass 9000 epoxy glue and staples and an outer fore and aft layer 3/8 inch thick was laid on top of that. The hull was then covered with a layer of fibreglass cloth and epoxy resin.

"She's immensely strong and lighter than the original carvel would have been," Mr Langdale said.

ROOMY

Inside her 12ft 9in beam, interior joinery, all in kauri trimmed with teak, highlights the roomy accommodation which sleeps three people in two separate bunks in the aft cabin with shower and toilet en suite, and two people in the forepeak, which has its own "head".

Underfloor in the wheelhouse a Cummins 6B 5.1M 120 horsepower six-cylinder diesel should power the boat, which draws 3ft 9in, to about nine knots, Mr Langdale said.

Tim above deck is all teak too, from the boarding platform aft to the teak decks laid over 1 1/2 in, mame grade plywood and the handrail running around the boat.

GALLEY

A galley and eating facilities are in the wheelhouse, and the boat has two stations for the Hydraulic hydraulic steer-

ing so that it can be steered from either the wheelhouse or flying bridge, Mr Langdale said.

Two tanks carry 300 gallons of diesel in the engine room, and there is 200 gallons of fresh water stowage aboard.

"She'll really be used as an all-weather commuter from Waikawa to Mr Moore's holiday home and general boating in the Sounds," Mr Langdale said.

Called Mermaid, the launch's generous beam and round bilge belie her spacious interior, while the long keel and flared bows should help make her a stable and dry sea boat.

FINISH

Five coats of Epithane reaction lacquer have been sprayed on the hull, leaving a finish most fibreglass boat manufacturers would swap their chopper guns for, and, in an age of hard chine look-a-likes, Mermaid will stand out like a real siren from a deckload of fish cases.

When she takes to the waters of Waikawa Bay this afternoon Mermaid will join the ranks of other Jorgensen-built boats like the stalwart Enterprise, which serviced the light-houses of the South Island for 26 years, the Picton pilot boat, Marlborough, or the sleek launch Big Six-O and motorsailer Fair Isle.

That's a heritage to be proud of.

CUMMINS SALE

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Another fine craft from Jorgensen's

