



Scruffie marine

about our
Secret 20



Secret designer's brief

The design foundations of this type of vessel were laid in the nineteenth century by which time the archetypal English gaff cutter had evolved into a near perfect expression of hull and rig. Whether racing or trawling their straight stems, graceful counters and rakish rigs dominated the sailing scene in late Victorian England. Their speed and sea keeping abilities were the stuff of legend and even today cutters such as the restored Partridge of 1885 are still winning classic regattas and races. I grew up in and around the south east of England where many a fine cutter had her home port and I had wanted one for the best part of forty years. Although tiny by comparison, Secret shares a common heritage with those wonderful old cutters and I have worked harder on her lines than any other in an effort to capture the essence of the old timers in a thoroughly modern trailer yacht.

Intended primarily as a day sailer with good weekend accommodation facilities, the emphasis is on cockpit comfort and space rather than a cavernous cabin with all mod cons. The boat will sleep two down below and two under canvas in the cockpit. Ample space is provided for portable toilet, sink stove and icebox. The cabin features a canvas hatch and specially cast bronze oval ports. The cockpit is self-draining and will comfortably seat four along one side ("R" Type.)

Auxiliary power is supplied by an electric motor sliding down through a flap in the counter; the batteries stowed forward under the bunks. A small generator and solar panels can be fitted for complete peace of mind (a petrol outboard can be fitted but should be removable.)

Structurally, Secret is built around our time honoured slot system marine ply framework. A two inch laminated keel/stem/stern assembly runs the whole length of the boat, extending down to include the ballast which is in the form of lead ingots, housed in a faired hardwood "box." The machined marine ply frames, seats and bulkheads interlock and slot into the keel, forming a light, strong box section framework. Next a series of closely spaced stringers are fitted around the hull and the ply skin is screwed and glued in place. The bilges are "planked" up in cedar and faired to a firm yet fully rounded profile. The bulkheads, floors, seat bunks, and lockers are all an integral part of the structure. There are no jigs or strongbacks needed and with all the components pre-fabricated, initial build time is very fast. Most builders will be able to get a Secret in frame within a week or two.

Fairing the hull and achieving a good finish will always take time and superb cabin joinery is not an overnight job. To help make the work easier, many finishing components are pre-machined to fit to the framework and a selection of matching off-cuts is provided for custom work.

The keel is of Oregon pine (Douglas fir) and Tallowood, stringers of Oregon and Western Red Cedar, the turn of the bilges is also Cedar. Interior trim and other bright work is in Queensland Red Cedar – a tough, resilient yet lightweight timber, finishing to a beautifully figured rich red brown. Options include Australian Silky Oak or Silver Ash. The spars are hollow and of the best clear Oregon pine. The sailcloth is available in tan, cream or white and the custom made fittings are in stainless steel. Good quality cordage and chandlery is by Ronstan. The rig includes two rows of reef points on the main, roller reefing to the foresail and a variety of jibs set flying on the bowsprit. Secret can be rigged, launched and sailed by the single hander. She draws 2'3" (.675m) when afloat.

Secret has proved to be beautifully balanced on all points, quick to manoeuvre and satisfyingly fast. In about 8-9 knots of breeze she points efficiently to about 35 degrees, making true 45 degrees over the ground. On a reach over 7.5 knots has been recorded. The boat has an easy motion in moderate chop and has exceeded all expectations and we are delighted with her. While the "C" Type hulls and an "R" Type rigs with their larger battened main, larger jib and with optional gennaker is by far the most popular combination, for those who require even more performance there is the "R" type cabin version with larger cockpit and a smaller, lower cabin roofline. The two bunks below will remain for basic accommodation but there's no space for stove or sink in the cabin, although a port-a-potti will sit snugly under the cockpit sole. Both rigs on both hulls are interchangeable. The "R" type with a crew of three or four will be very competitive in classic boat competition and in mixed handicap fleets.

The boat is thoroughly engineered to the best of my ability and while certainly not cheap, in kit form it will represent a huge saving on similar custom built craft

Secret is for those who appreciate the very best in small boats – I am proud of her.

Derek Ellard
Designer

6-8 Knoll Road
North Tamborine QLD 4271
Australia

Scruffie Marine Pty Ltd
info@scruffie.com
www.scruffie.com

Phone: +61 7 5545 1015
Local: (07) 5545 1015



Secret racing on Sydney Harbour,, photo John Jeremy



Secret on Moreton Bay, Queensland

6-8 Knoll Road
North Tamborine QLD 4271
Australia

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Specifications

LOA:	27' (8.2m)	LOD:	20' (6.0m)
Weight:	700 kg approx.	Ballast External:	100 kg
Draught:	2'3" (.68m)	Ballast Internal:	water/batteries
Beam:	7' (2.1m)		to 200 kgs
Berths:	2 + 2	Rig:	gaff cutter
Working sail area:	24.06 sq m (“R” Type)	Timber trim:	red cedar or various options

Kit Components: pre-fabricated and ballasted keel assembly, frames, seats, bulkheads, stringers, hull panels, timber spars, rudder and tiller, solid timber trim for fit out, epoxy resins, fillers, fibreglass cloth, fixings and custom fittings – everything except paint and varnish.

Materials: BS1088 marine ply and Hoop Pine plantation ply, Western Red Cedar, selected Queensland Red Cedar, Silky Oak and selected hardwoods. Spars in clear Douglas Fir (Oregon Pine.)

Hull Versions

Secret 20 Full Cabin Hull Kit – more cabin, more overnight comfort.

Secret 20 Cuddy Cabin Hull Kit – a shorter cabin allows more cockpit space

Mast/Sail Pack Versions

Secret “R” Type Mast/Sail Pack

Mast, gaff, boom, bowsprit, rudder, tiller, all standing & running rigging, fairleads cleats, blocks, mainsail, foresail and jib in 6 oz cloth, foresail roller reefing

Secret “C” Type Mast/Sail Pack

As for the “R” Type but with cruising rig, smaller unbattened main & smaller jib

Road Trailer – custom built

Accessories – a full range of accessories is available

Special Trim – Please request price & availability of special trims when ordering

Completed Boats – built to various stages, please contact us for further information



Secret at Moreton Bay, Queensland

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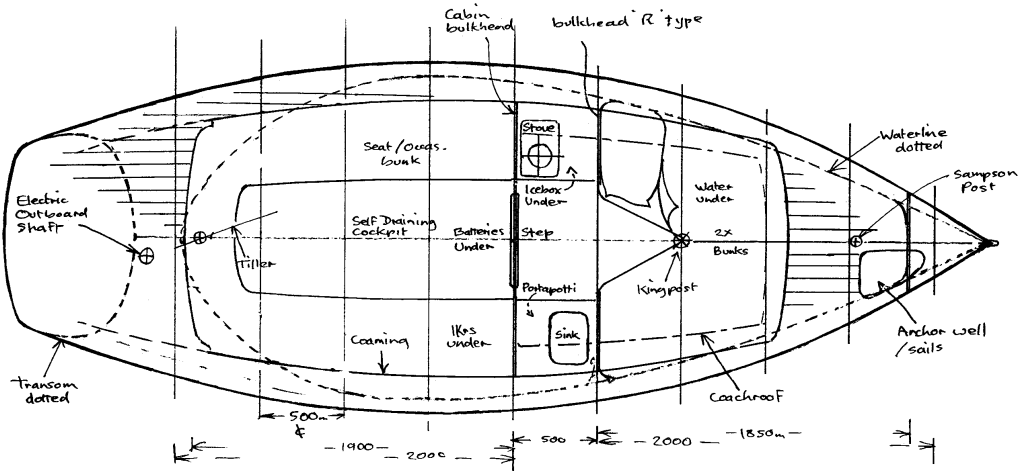
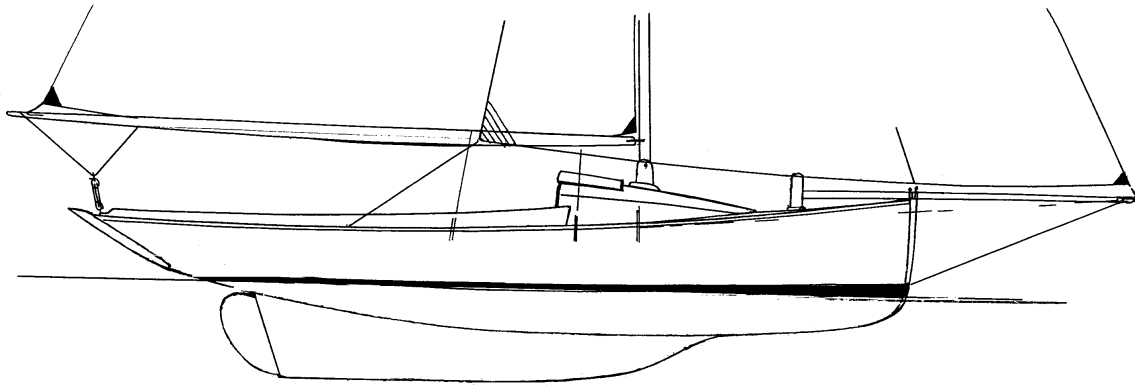
Max Campbell's Secret, Whisper, in the UK, photo by Peter Chesworth

6-8 Knoll Road
North Tamborine QLD 4271
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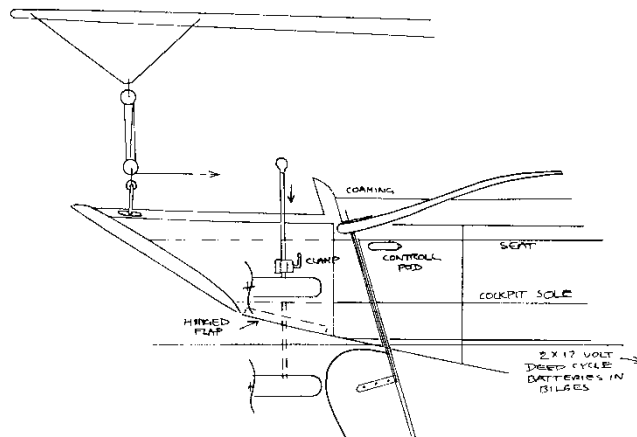
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Secret "R" Type hull and rig



Secret "R" and "C" Type cabin layout



Secret electric outboard

A “Secret” day out on Sydney Harbour

It's a fine day and we're heading out onto the harbour for a lazy summer sail and picnic in the modern classic, Scruffie Marine's flagship, Secret 20. We chose to leave from Rose Bay boat ramp this time, which is in the south eastern corner of the harbour and offers the quickest path to the best sailing and best beaches. Being the closest ramp to the open water there are usually quite a few small fishing boats at the ramp, both commercial and recreational and it's a public ferry wharf as well, so it gets a little exciting sometimes.

The Secret 20 is an easy going, sea-kindly gaff cutter with good, balanced performance on all points, but she really gets up and flies when running or reaching. Those who have some sailing experience will enjoy the light helm and predictable heeling motion, as well as the raw performance of this modern take on classic racers. Secret 20 owners are very confident with their boats and take them out in all conditions, so far with winds up to 30 knots. I chuck a reef in at 20 knots if I'm not racing but she is a safe boat with enough airtight compartments and safety features make her crew, of six (seven at a squeeze) confident and comfortable.

This is maybe the tenth time I've taken out my Secret 20 (built by Scruffie Marine in Queensland Australia) and I've got to know her well. She is a modern interpretation of East Anglian fishing smacks from the golden years of sailing at the turn of the last century, renowned among classic yacht enthusiasts. Although loosely based on these thoroughbred working boats, looks can be deceiving. She has a traditional appearance above the waterline but below it's a different matter. The keel is reminiscent of the full-length type popular with the smacks, but has a large cutaway towards the bow to give her a fin type leading edge, while retaining that directional stability provided by the large surface remaining aft. The hull has a very fine entry which tapers smoothly to a full centre section, sliding gently back with the perfect amount of rocker, to a graceful counter stern. And when you see her on the trailer with all the sails up, and you can see the keel, rudder and wetted area below the water line, you know she's going to be quick and point well. It's very rewarding to have one of the best looking and handling boats on the harbour, and I'm continually beating away the hordes of bystanders and interested parties harassing us at the ramp (I keep a short stick in the cockpit.)

Secret's probably the perfect boat for the harbour with her shoal draft and manageable rig. We were due to leave Rose Bay boat ramp about 10 am (remember it is Sunday) and pulling up at the ramp I could smell the salt breeze,

eagerly anticipating what the predicted southerly might hold for the day's adventure.

After arriving at the ramp at 9am, we had an hour to get her ready while the other crew members, who were coming later, took their time having breakfast in bed and generally lazing around. The coastal weather forecast for the day was a 10 –15 knot southerly, gusty later and with clear blue skies. At that time of day it was a mere 3–5 knots, a perfect beginning for a Secret Sydney day, bound for one of the famous little harbour beaches.



On any given Sunday there are numerous racing fleets out and about, including the famous CYCA fleet of 150 large Tupperware racers. The classic Sydney 18 footers (replica timber boats from the twenties) were out in force with their seriously over canvassed rigs and serious, calloused captains and crew. We sometimes take the same tacks as these beautiful classics but don't get too close as they are usually racing around the marks in a very serious manner and don't much care for modern gaffers keeping station with them.

We watched the fleets start to make their way out of port and thought this would be a perfect time to get over to Chowder Bay to avoid being caught up in some more serious racing. So, broad reaching on a sou' west heading, we made our way to the calm protected waters of the bay. Coming in we could see a large number of yachts and motor boats anchored and decided to put the engine in the well just in case.

The Secret 20 is designed to have an electric outboard which will push her along at near hull speed for a couple of hours on ¾ revs with two batteries. With four or even eight batteries, which also increases the ballast, you could expect 5-8 hours total running time. There are options for solar panels or for a small generator to charge batteries on board, otherwise plug them in at home for a couple of hours after sailing. The recommended petrol engine is a 2 hp Honda 4-stroke which sits neatly in the well in the counter stern. It has a top mount 1-litre. fuel tank, which will run for 2 hours on 1/2 revs. This is my favourite engine in the world. It starts first go every time and never misses a beat but this time we didn't need it.

We brought in the foresail, left the staysail and started spilling wind out of the main. We came in to cheers and envious looks from many of the other people there. We managed to easily manoeuvre amongst the vessels at anchor without the engine and dropped the hook in 4' to a sandy bottom. We lowered the yard, brailed the sail and boom nicely underneath and tied the halyard off at a height that would provide good seating headroom in the spacious cockpit.

By now the sun was riding high and a quick swim and a cold beer was the order of the moment. So in they all jumped. With all the ample storage space I keep two sets of flippers and snorkels on board. These were put to good use over to the western side of the bay where it is very rocky and provides shelter for the many species of sub-tropical fish that live in Sydney's warm waters.

While the pampered crew were frolicking about, I was laying out a small stern anchor for peace of mind - there was a large turn out of boats, even for a Sunday. So, after our swimmers and adventurous snorkelers returned we grabbed towels, bags, food and drinks and waded ashore for a picnic on the beach. Distributing the provisions began, (the captain of course gets a double ration), the hungry crew gobbled up the rest and topped up any vacant space with more beer and wine.

We stayed for a few hours, laughing and splashing about like little kids, but soon it was time to get back. So in piled the crew and up came the hooks. We could have sailed off the anchor, although by then more boats had arrived and I thought we'd better use the engine. She started first go and took us just out of the bay where sails were hoisted, sheeted and off we went again. The course we decided on was to head for the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House for some photo opportunities for the more artistic among our motley crew. This meant a southerly reach across to Shark Island, then we bore away and made our way upstream in style. The wind was a fresh 15-knot breeze by now and we were sitting on a very comfortable 6

plus knots. The Bridge, Opera house and colonial Fort Denison quickly came into view and the cameras started snapping away.



It was getting late as we turned to beat back to Rose Bay. For a gaffer, the Secret is remarkably close winded – a true 35 degrees with little leeway – and with the breeze still holding, a few tacks and we were in sight of the ramp. The Tupperware fleets had disappeared and the old salts on the 18 footers were likely back at the club with jugs of rum in front of them. The sun was setting over the beautiful city that is Sydney and I wasn't quite sure whether it was the crew or the sun casting a warm glow over the boat.

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We soon arrived back at the ramp, I jumped ashore to get the car while the others held the boat off the jetty and started a chain to remove all the gear that didn't live aboard. We got her on the trailer and de rigged her in 25 minutes. The day was over and a well satisfied crew all offered their thanks with smile (until I held my hand out and said 'that will be fifty dollars each please'), which some took seriously. All said and done it was a very successful day. I'll have the same again please!

Christopher Ellard



Contact Scruffie Marine

Email: info@scruffie.com

Website: www.scruffie.com

Phone: +61 7 5545 1015

Phone local: 07 5545 1015

Yard: 6-8 Knoll Road, North Tamborine, Qld 4271, Australia

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