



Designer Geoff Prindle with his wife Dee at the PMA Worlds.

Geoffrey Prindle designed the Prindle 16 Catamaran as a high-performance multihull that he could compete on with his wife as crew. "Small catamarans are extremely sensitive to weight," says Geoff. "I wanted a competitive boat which could be sailed by lighter crew than that required by other two-man cats."

"With my wife along, I also wanted more safety," he adds. "So I developed a design which would overcome most catamaran safety problems, like pitchpoling. I compared the design and handling characteristics of many catamarans, sorting out those features which I liked and those which I could improve upon."

The Prindle 16 cuts smoothly through the water because its flared bows on asymmetrical hulls provide a finer water entry than is available on other catamarans. A long foredeck helps keep the Prindle's bows from burying in heavy conditions, while establishing balance for responsive maneuvering.

Radical cambering of decks complements the hull flare for a four-fold advantage: 1) reduced weight, 2) increased strength, 3) more comfortable seating for the crew and 4) improved water entry. As the lee hull dips, cambering brings both gunwales to the water simultaneously, developing additional water pressure on the gunwales to keep the bow from submerging.

"Most catamarans dip their lee hulls in heavy weather, frequently pitchpoling," says Geoff. "These and other design and handling characteristics were researched to determine which were good and which would need modification. The result is a boat that keeps its lee deck above water in most sailing conditions. This asymmetrical shape not only retards sliding to lee, it provides a lifting force to weather to keep the hull up and entering cleanly."

The 26 foot, limited rotation mast carries 149 square feet on its fully-battened mainsail, and reefing can quickly cut the area to 118 square feet during a strong blow. Continuous sheeting enables the main sheet to be used for traveler adjustments. The 40 square foot, partially battened jib is also continuously sheeted through fairlead blocks placed on the trampoline aft of the mast. All sheets can be easily handled from the trapeze rigs.

Maximum crew space is obtained by attaching the trampoline directly to the gunwales, taking full advantage of the Prindle 16's 7 foot 11 inch beam. All exposed deck areas have a textured, non-skid finish for added crew safety.

The Prindle designed kick-up rudder system will automatically raise itself when an obstruction is met. You can easily lower and raise each rudder separately and each has a positive lock down. The Prindle 16 rudder system also has fore-and-aft rake adjustments.

In 1968, after nine years of building surfboards, Geoff Prindle founded Surfglas with Sterling Santley. The same year, Geoff bought his first catamaran and began sailing in earnest. In 1969, he placed second to Hobie Alter in Hobie 14 national ratings. Moving up to two-person catamarans, he was unable to find one which could race effectively with an average husband-wife crew. Out of his search for this boat grew plans for his new catamaran, which was launched in August, 1971 as the prototype Prindle 16.

"We and our sailing friends tested and tuned the boat until August, 1972 when we began limited production of the Prindle 16 alongside our surfboard manufacturing line," adds Geoff. "The Prindle 16 began to appear in inter-class races at Dana Point and Long Beach and this competition testing enabled us to further improve the boat."

The Long Beach Boat Show in the fall of 1971 marked a real turning point for the Prindle 16, exposing the boat to the general public for the first time.

"When people walked into the show wanting a cat, but with an open mind as to what kind it would be, they picked our boat after a feature-by-feature comparison," Sterling recalled. "That's still the case today. Geoff's outstanding design and our careful workmanship are what has made the Prindle 16 a success."

By the end of 1972, nearly two dozen Prindles were in the water, the nucleus of the Class Organization was starting, the first Prindle 16 races had been held and several southern California dealers were signed up.

Six months later, the dealer network had extended from California to Florida and Hawaii, production was up to five boats a week, and the total number of Prindles had passed the 100 mark. The Class Organization was holding races, tune-up clinics and publishing its own newsletter.

Both the novice and veteran sailor have moved up and over to this versatile cat. It has been featured in sailing magazines across the country and proven its adaptability and racing performance to seasoned sailors.

As further proof that Geoff's design was excellent, the Prindle 16 has won the "Most Efficient Catamaran Trophy" two years in a row at the Pacific Multihull Association's World Speed Trials.