

Just Launched

New Boats

ULTIMATE 20: SMALL AND FUN

Edited by Charles Mason

Fast and frugal boats like the Ultimate 20 have wide appeal:

- to ex-cat sailors looking to upgrade
- to new sailors who want to go fast while they learn
- to anyone who's grown tired of plodding along under sail

Support boats, those high-end racing machines around 25 feet overall that are trailered to the scene of the action, have been a big story. Jeff Canepa, a former world champion in Hobie Cats, watched interest grow and concluded that there's a place for a boat with the same general sailing characteristics that is smaller, less complicated, and cheaper.

As it happened, seven years ago designer Doug Hemphill had drawn the lines and even produced a prototype of the boat Canepa was looking for—a perky 20-footer with lots of sail area, no backstay, and an easily managed sail-control system that featured a small but efficient roller-furling headsail. After some rethinking and retooling, an updated version was presented at last fall's boat shows.

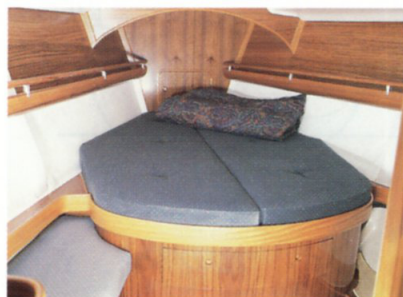
The hull and deck are hand-laid and vacuum-bagged; the hull features unidirectional S-glass, biaxial fabrics, and a high-density foam core. The boat displaces 1,100 pounds, and the retractable keel, which draws 5 feet when fully extended and about 12 inches when raised, is a high-aspect-ratio weighted foil with a 300-pound lead bulb.

We test-sailed the prototype off Newport, Rhode Island, in conditions you'd die for: 14 to 16 knots of true wind and relatively flat water. On the wind the 159-square-foot full-batten mainsail gives you all the power you need, and there's no mistaking when the boat is in the groove. That said, for those who



The Ultimate 20 (above) carves to windward cleanly; a carbon-fiber pole extends to power the asymmetrical chute downwind.

Below, the Oceanis 440 from Beneteau and its big comfortable berth in the forward owner's cabin



don't care whether they get the last 6 inches of height out of every puff, there's great sailing on either side of that line.

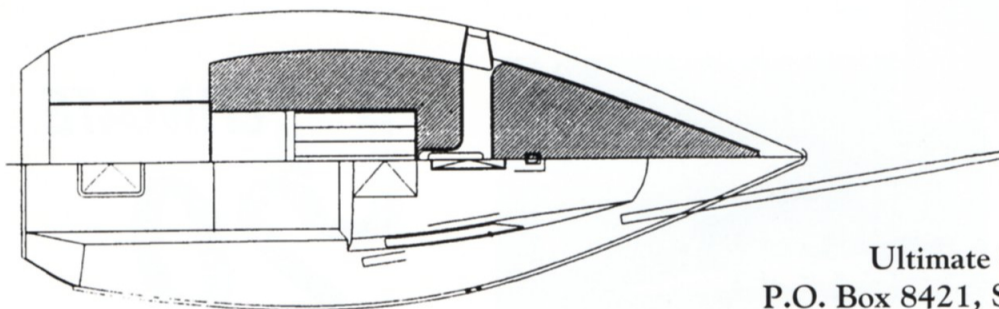
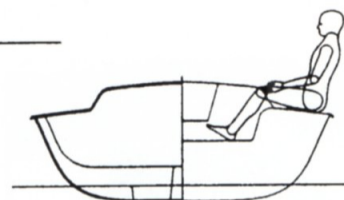
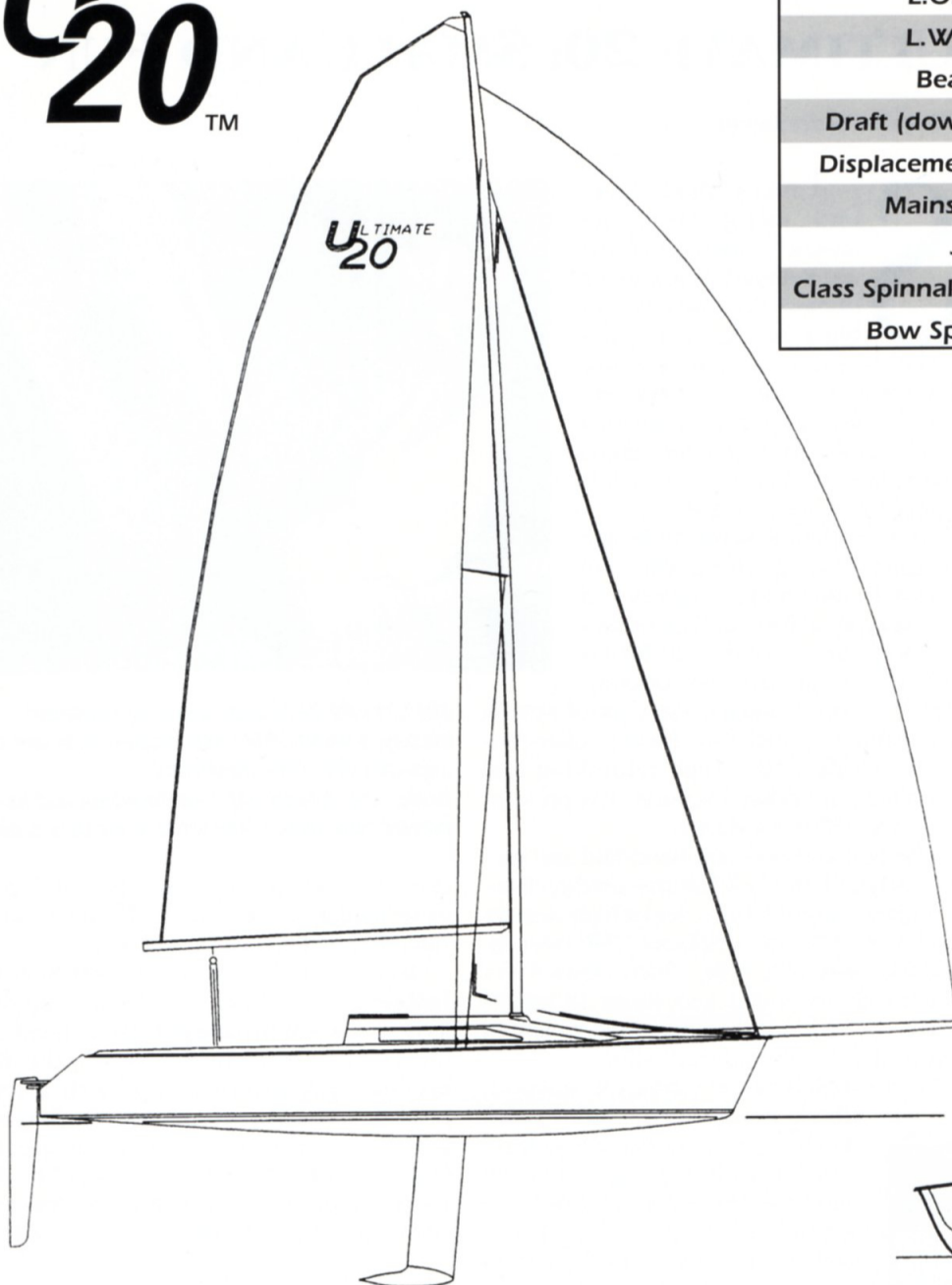
Reaching and running, the relatively flat hull sections aft help the 20 power up over its bow wave. When the pole is extended and the asymmetrical chute kicks in, the ride becomes just plain exciting. With a retail price of about \$17,900, plenty of sailors will want to savor sailing their own boat up at the high end. *Ultimate Sailboats USA, P.O. Box 8421, Santa Cruz, CA 95061; tel. 408-457-8000, fax 408-459-9479.*

—C.M.



ULTIMATE 20TM

ULTIMATE U20TM



DIMENSIONS

L.O.A.	20.95 ft.	6.39 m
L.W.L.	18 ft.	5.48 m
Beam	8.2 ft.	2.5 m
Draft (down)	5.03 ft.	1.53 m
Displacement	1000 lbs.	454.5 Kg
Mainsail	205.8 ft. ²	19.13 m ²
Jib	100 ft. ²	9.29 m ²
Class Spinnaker	452 ft. ²	41.98 m ²
Bow Sprit	6.0 ft.	1.82 m

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Ultimate Sailboats International
P.O. Box 8421, Santa Cruz, CA 95061
Fax 408.459.9479
Phone 408.457.8000