

Notes on the redrawn SII plans

by Robert Tucker. From *The Silhouette Owner* 1961

EARLY in October my printers broke the horrible news that the tracings of the Mark II Silhouette, wearied by many passages through the printing machines, had died; well, they'd run about twice as long as they should have done, so I couldn't complain. We've given them honourable burial. Of course, it did pose the problem that a new set was required, and since this would take around 600-700 man-hours to produce, it was some problem. However, as many of you who have built your own Silhouettes will agree, the old plans were somewhat bitty, and—especially with the advent of the masthead rig—not entirely adequate. Moreover, Silhouette was originally designed to offer the choice of fin or centreboard, and the drawings for the bilge keels came rather as an afterthought. So a redraw was overdue in any case, and we had long felt that a new set of plans ought to have been produced to give the Silhouette builder a really first-class set of working drawings which anticipated all his problems and presented the most effective solution. With close on seven years of dealing with queries, we were in a reasonable position to know both the problems and their solutions and it is on this basis that the new set of plans is presented.

Comparison between the old and the new drawings will reveal considerable apparent differences, but this arises only from the desire to incorporate all that experience has shown to be desirable, or those things which have long been part and parcel of the Silhouette as we know it.

The rig is, of course, the masthead one, exactly as now fitted with the "long" mast to give a good kicking strap and better backstay clearance; coupled with it are all the proper fittings, in detail. The sails remain unchanged, giving the 65 sq. ft. main, jibs of 27, 50, 67 and 100 sq. ft. and the 125 sq. ft. spinnaker. The slight changes in the lines are the result simply of improved fairing methods, but a new load waterline has been drawn to indicate the immersion of level found to give the best performance under the greatest variety of conditions.

The really big change is in the accommodation, for the so-called 3-berth or Susanne layout has been adopted as standard. This arrangement has delighted every owner who has it, and certainly gives the most effective design for living aboard so small a cruiser. Of course, the builder who wishes to stick with the original berth-each-side layout will find no difficulty in adapting the drawing to this simplification, and it is probable that our builder, Mr Hurley, will continue to offer this as standard. There must, of course, always be some latitude allowed in the accommodation of a cruiser class, but we are anxious to prevent the building of Silhouettes which will prove unsatisfactory and so give the class a bad name, an example of this is the odd one which contains four short berths and no form of stowage whatever.

The drawings also show an inboard engine, the 3 h.p. "Sea Urchin," which is the biggest unit the hull can carry. It gives enough power for a top speed of around 7 knots and combines the advantages of a 4 stroke power unit with slow-running propeller and light weight. Many owners may still prefer the smaller 1 h.p. Stuart Turner, or the transom-hung outboard, and there is no intention of advising against these.

From the foregoing, I hope it will be quite clear that we have most emphatically not redesigned the Silhouette, and that a boat built to the new plans will be no better or worse than one built to the old. What we have done is to produce, of necessity, a new set of drawings to encourage more amateurs to build their own Silhouettes, and to be more helpful to those who decide to do so. In pursuance of this hope we have kept the price of these drawings the same as before, namely £5-5-0, which still includes the royalty, and all the help and advice I can give you. Dare one add that this is one of the few things which has not become dearer since 1951