

# Eygthene 24

**'Eygthene' said with a strong New Zealand accent sounds like 'eighteen', the rating number to which IOR Quarter Tonners were designed. Simon Jinks discovers how this pocket-sized cruiser-racer sails**



**T**his little-known yacht was the launch pad of New Zealand yacht designer Ron Holland's career. While working in the engineering department of Morgan Yachts in St Petersburg, Florida, Holland designed the Eygthene 24 to compete to the IOR Quarter Ton Rule. The yacht was still being screwed together as she sailed over her first start line, but went on to win the 1973 Quarter Ton Championships in Weymouth. Eygthene 24s were built until the early 1980s by Master Marine in Guernsey and as the Kiwi 24 in America.

The Eygthene 24 is not a conventional racing boat by today's standards. She has a ballast/displacement ratio of over 52%, like a long keeler. This does, however, allow her to carry more sail. The hull shape is almost saucer-like around the beam, with a 90cm (3ft) increase between the waterline beam and the deck, a feature designed to get the crew's weight as far outboard as possible. This increased beam also gives her excellent room and stowage below decks, and combined with a comparatively heavy displacement makes for a good little cruiser racer. Below the waterline, Eygthenes were fitted with fin keels, although a few bilge keelers do exist. For a Quarter Tonner the underwater sections and forefoot are relatively deep so should give a comfortable ride to windward.

We sailed *Wild Thyme*, a 1976 version owned by Richard and Joan Openshaw.

They have owned the yacht for five years, graduating from a Skipper 17, and use her for Solent cruising with the occasional trip along the Dorset Coast.

Sporting 25m<sup>2</sup> (270sq ft) of sail, she is masthead rigged with adjustable backstay and shroud chain plates stoutly secured, through the deck, to the main bulkhead. The mast is deck stepped and a compression post running through the main bulkhead takes the load to the keel. The cockpit is shallow, with no coaming, so the crew have to sit on deck – this is good for keeping the weight out but can get them wet. Richard has fitted a sprayhood to provide a little more comfort and protection from the weather. There are no cockpit lockers as such, just a cavernous lazarette to store fenders and lines, etc. The wide, flat decks are easy to walk around, aided by Treadmaster

non-slip decking and teak handholds along the coachroof. The anchor locker holds a decent-sized Delta anchor and more than enough chain, though the bow roller is small and there is only one warp-securing point, a large bollard.

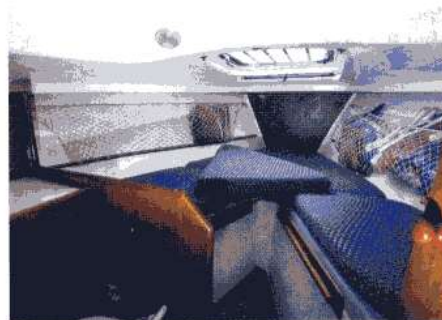
## Below decks

The Eygthene sleeps five, a number which, while fine for a young, campaigning racing crew, might be a little too cosy for cruising. She is, however, very spacious for a 24 footer, and would ideally suit a couple and small child for short periods afloat. The forepeak provides the only double berth, although the port saloon berth could be converted to a double without too many hitches.

Headsail stowage is under the forward berths; light and ventilation is through the forehatch. The heads are also in the



**The comfortable saloon has an adjustable table to port over a 3.96m (13ft) berth**



**The double-berthed forepeak also contains the screenless heads and a wet locker**

grill. The chart table originally sat underneath the companionway, where the inboard diesel is now housed. As *Wild Thyme* has shoehorned a longer engine under the companionway, the chart table has been repositioned so that it slides out of the starboard berth.

### Under power

The Eygthene is easily driven by either outboard or inboard engines. There are a variety of inboards, from lightweight petrol Vires to heavier 8-10 hp single-cylinder diesels, driving a two-bladed prop through a P bracket. Outboards are transom hung and are generally 4-6 hp longshafts.

### Under sail

Our November test day had unseasonably light winds. However, for a 30-year-old design she recorded some surprisingly good speeds to windward, making just over four knots in 10 knots of wind. She is an absolute delight to sail, very light on the helm and with razor-sharp pointing ability. The sail plan is definitely headsail orientated, with a small mainsail and large, overlapping genoa. Richard has had her out in winds up to Force 7-8 and he says that once she has a couple of reefs in the mainsail and a much smaller jib she is fairly bullet-proof in strong winds, just wet. Owners have commented that as she lacks the wide aft sections of modern-day racers, her downwind performance is her slowest point of sail – she does not have enough buoyancy aft to get picked up by a wave and to surf. However, this is the exact shape that makes her so comfortable going into the wind.

The yachts are still competitive, showing good results in races at club level, and they are still bringing home the silverware. They were strongly put together, so even yachts with a race history can still be up to the job. Ideally they'd suit a dinghy sailor who is taking their first steps into the bigger-boat scene, wants to race at weekends and midweek and have some days, weekends or possibly weeks away. If the wind gets up she'll get you home and if the wind is light she'll still turn in a respectable speed. Aim to pay between



The Eygthene 24, 'a delight to sail', is an ideal first step into club racing or fast cruising on a budget

£5,000 and £9,000, depending on engine, sails and specification.

### Ron Holland comments:

The inspiration to design Eygthene was influenced by my presence in La Rochelle as skipper of the 13.1m (43ft) US yacht *Improbable* – New Zealand's first entry in the Admiral's Cup. I was fascinated by the experimental variety of French quarter tonners and vowed to design and build a yacht to this rule.

Together with Gary Carlin, I designed the Eygthene to compete in the first USA Quarter Ton Cup in 1973. Winning this regatta created the opportunity to ship the yacht to England for the 1973 Quarter Ton Cup in Weymouth. We won this too, and the publicity generated gave us the chance to visit the Royal Cork Yacht Club. I arrived in Crosshaven for the weekend and never left.

I could never have predicted the inspiration I received visiting La Rochelle would lead to such a successful career in yacht design. The contrast between my initial design efforts and my first 61m (200 ft)-plus design, which will launch at Perini Navi in January 2003, as well as the world's largest composite sloop, the 75.2m (247ft) *Mirabella V*, could not be more extreme.

Ron Holland,  
Ireland,  
November  
2002. ▲

Photos: Graham Snook 471/Photo

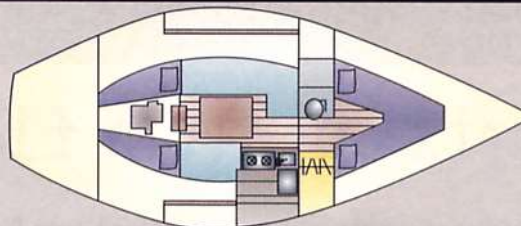
forepeak, and as they are not screened, a curtain would be necessary to provide some privacy for the bashful. Opposite the heads there is a wet locker that, as Richard says, 'drains into the bilge, except when the yacht is heeled, when the bilge drains into it'. This is because the floor is low to maximise space down below. The bilge is therefore shallow and any stray water in the forward bilge might flow into the wet locker.

The saloon, with sitting headroom, is comfortable, with a short settee to starboard and a long settee berth to port beside an adjustable table. Beneath the settee berths, there are an assortment of lockers for stowage. Some have neat glass-fibre moulded liners, others do not. The real stowage is above the seat backs, where the Eygthene's maximum beam allows huge cupboards that many 35 footers would be proud to have. They run the length of the saloon and Richard has divided his into three separate lockers per side.

Sleeping arrangements in the main saloon consist of one 2.21m (7ft 3in) berth to starboard and two berths (a head-to-toe arrangement measuring 3.96m [13ft]) to port. Only one of these, however, would realistically be used. Some versions have lost the port-side quarter berth to accommodate an extra cockpit locker.

The galley area is situated at the fore end of the saloon, butting up to the main bulkhead. A glass-fibre moulded unit houses sink, uninsulated coolbox, a couple of cupboards and a two-burner stove with

### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



<b>LOA</b>	7.32 m (24 ft)
<b>LWL</b>	6.25 m (20ft 6in)
<b>Beam</b>	2.95m (9ft 8in)
<b>Displacement</b>	1,955 kg (4,300 lbs)
<b>Ballast</b>	1,020kg (2,250 lbs)
<b>Sail area</b>	25m <sup>2</sup> (270sq ft)

