





# She's a **Humdinger** dingy

Words by **John Eichelsheim**  
Photos by **Will Calver**



**The new Elite 15.5m from Bill Upfold is part game-fisher, part-luxury family cruiser.**

**W**ho says men don't listen? Mid-way through a boating weekend at Great Barrier Island, Viv Twomey casually remarked that the family could do with a bigger boat. First thing Monday morning, her husband Gerard phoned Auckland boat designer Bill Upfold.

The topic? A bigger boat.

The result is the Elite 15.5m *Humdinger*. As Gerard puts it: "She's a hard-out sportfisher from the rear bulkhead aft to the boarding platform, but a comfortable, practical family cruiser forward."

The Twomeys had owned *Kiwi Blue*, their 12.8m Elite sportfisher, from new. Their boating lifestyle includes regular trips away on the boat for weeks at a time and, with their children growing up and still enthusiastic about the boating lifestyle, the family wanted more space.

Gerard loves fishing, especially gamefishing – he boated 38 marlin



Gerard Twomey at the helm of *Humdinger*, the Elite 15.5m luxury cruiser



From the cockpit bulkhead aft, *Humdinger* is dedicated to game fishing







**CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT:**

**Luxury rod stowage:** Under-seat stowage in the flybridge

**Taking care of tackle:** dedicated space for lures

**Rodholders:** eight through-gunwale rodholders optimally positioned for trolling. Three vertical rodholders per side to stow big game tackle after hooking up on a gamefish

**Cockpit sole:** the cockpit sole area is 9.5m<sup>2</sup>, with teak for warmth and grip. It is self-draining with deep gutters around hatches. Good toe-room and covered corners to protect feet/toes. Provision for a game chair, but the Twomeys generally fish stand-up

**Washdown:** standard-sized fresh and saltwater washdown on the port side, plus a large capacity saltwater washdown aft. Also a hot and cold freshwater cockpit shower – great for divers

**Transom doors:** Sliding cavity transom doors open wide. Doors fitted with blowouts to empty water from the cockpit fast

**Bait:** stainless steel tuna tubes are plumbed into the transom on the port side. Gerard had the tubes before the boat, so the transom was designed to accommodate them. The live-bait well in the boarding platform is large with no sharp corners

**Coamings:** smooth with nothing to snag fishing lines

**Modified flybridge:** Bill Upfold redesigned the standard Elite flybridge for a more fishing oriented, shorter cockpit overhang. The built-in rocket launcher takes seven rods

**Riggers:** Chatfield Engineering outriggers built to a Bill Upfold design: easy to fold up and down. Uprigger/shotgun rigger on the flybridge roof

**Second station:** a second helm station in the cockpit for fighting fish

**Catch storage:** extra-large underfloor freezer/slurry bin big enough to hold a marlin or large tuna when broken down. Another freezer against the house bulkhead

**Dive gear:** an Alkin dive compressor keeps the dive bottles topped up and there's dedicated dive bottle stowage in the lazarette. The bait board stows neatly under the hatch cover

**Cockpit lockers:** generous size side lockers with covers; large lazarette; tackle drawers, rigging table/bench, BBQ and sink against house bulkhead

**Platform:** the boarding platform is wide enough for divers to gear up or to break down large fish like marlin before putting them on ice. Rails at the corners provide security when bait fishing or leadering gamefish and additional rodholders. The underside of the boarding platform is shaped like a duck's tail to lift it clear of the water when backing up on fish

from *Kiwi Blue* – and scuba diving; his children share the passion. In their bigger boat, Gerard and Viv visualised more defined spaces for sportsfisher and family cruiser.

Gerard worked closely with Bill Upfold on the cockpit and flybridge/wheelhouse design to ensure efficient, easy-care spaces set up for action.

**THE CRUISING BOAT**

For a family who goes boating year-round, accommodation is important. Forward of the bulkhead, *Humdinger* is a fairly standard Elite pilothouse, though the galley is unusually large and the Twomeys have opted for a three-berth bunk-room in the bows instead of an island double berth. There's a second, two-berth guest bunk-room below, opposite the bathroom.

"I don't like island berths, nor do I particularly like sleeping in the bows of any boat, even one with Bill's [Upfold] silent chines because it's too far from the bridge," says Gerard. "Anyway, having five berths forward works better for family boating." Gerard and Viv occupy a good-sized double cabin with semi-ensuite bathroom off the galley aft, with easy access to the cockpit and bridge.

*Humdinger* is equipped with a powerful diesel heating system, including screen de-misters for the bridge, for winter boating. Although the Twomeys undertook some extensive cruising and fishing expeditions in *Kiwi Blue*, they have even bigger plans for *Humdinger*. With 3200 litres of diesel in integrated fuel tanks low down in the hull, the islands of Tonga are within range.

"We'll go away for a month or more, so we wanted the boat to be comfortable and to work for us as a family. We're loving the extra room compared to *Kiwi Blue*," says Gerard. The Twomeys are enjoying the mid-pilothouse layout with its multiple levels defining distinct areas within the boat.

"Viv and I can be up on the bridge doing our own thing while the kids are watching movies down in the saloon," Gerard says. "We use a specially made canvas cover to block off the internal staircase when

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Above: The flybridge helmstation has plenty of room for passengers to enjoy the views from the top. Above right: The galley, on lower level to starboard, has 3.2m of bench space and generous stowage

we're travelling at night, eliminating any light from below. I do a lot of steaming at night, to get out to the fishing grounds early or heading away for a weekend."

*Humdinger's* galley is one of the largest Bill Upfold has drawn. It's equipped with masses of storage in drawers, lockers and roller-door cupboards and full-size appliances. The hob and oven are gas-fuelled, from aluminium bottles housed in

lockers at either end of the boarding platform. A 3.2m long Corian worktop provides a huge expanse of food preparation space and there's a good-sized pantry set into the teak-panelled wall opposite. The cabinetry and trim throughout are semi-gloss teak, except the saloon table with its airbrushed marlin motif, which is high gloss.

The galley is under the flybridge and opens up to the cockpit with

bi-fold windows and doors. It's a couple of steps down from the galley and open to the saloon, which is up a couple of steps. The galley has been built like a conventional domestic kitchen, in marine ply rather than MDF, but with unitary carcasses and solid timber doors. There's a lot going on out of sight behind the galley units, including two refrigeration units with associated air circulation ducting for them and the gas oven.

The interior palette, by Kim Lilly, makes good use of light-coloured vinyl, fabric and leather upholstery, padded vinyl ceilings with inset LED lighting, sand-coloured carpets, smooth matte-painted timber and easy-clean vinyl wall coverings. The overall impression is of space and light: luxurious but unfussy, melding practicality with comfort – exactly what the Twomeys were after.



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The spacious saloon resides at a level midway between the galley and the flybridge, achieving an overall lower profile. This is the quintessential element of Upfold's mid-pilothouse design

### **BUILD EFFICIENCIES**

*Humdinger* is the eighth Upfold design to be built at Scott Lane Boatbuilders.

"Every build is a progression on the last," says Scott. "You get to know how the designer likes to do things and how to build the boats more efficiently."

Scott built *Humdinger* the same way he has built the other Upfolds, using temporary MDF frames over which the hull is laminated from marine plywood, balsa core and fibreglass encased in epoxy resin. Scott finishes the hull completely, including fairing and painting, up to the silent chines before it is turned

over. Then, the temporary frames are removed and full length timber girders are glassed in.

With the hull the right way up, the builders finish everything to floor level, including fitting the engines, shafts and machinery, wiring by Watercraft Electrical, refrigeration by Fridgetech, fuel and water tanks

before laying down the soles.

"This is far easier than trying to install equipment once the floors are down," says Scott.

It means the underfloor machinery spaces, lazarette and lockers are beautifully laid out and finished.

The integrated underfloor fuel



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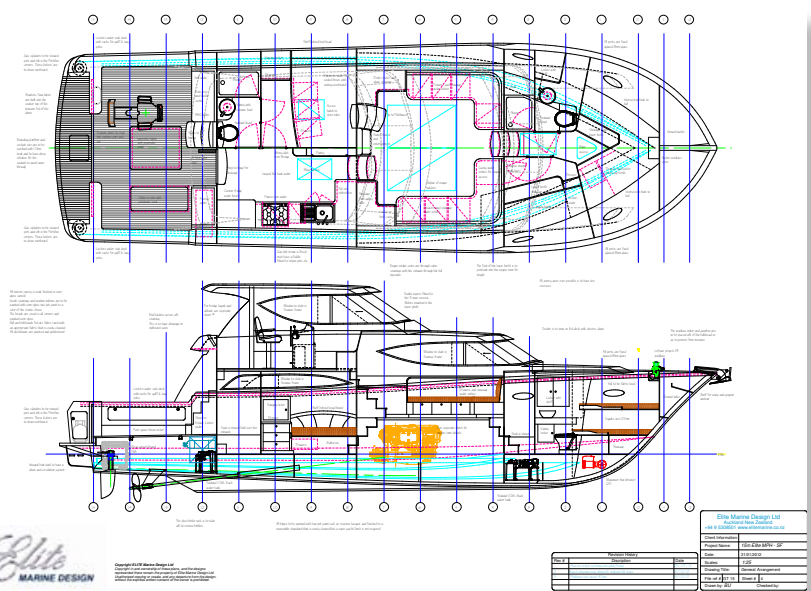
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**GOUGH**  
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A pair of Caterpillar 450hp engines lives in carpeted splendour and gives a cruising speed of around 20 knots and a top speed of 26 knots

tanks are a feature of most Upfold designs. The boat's structure/hull is the fuel tank, divided into multiple sections to provide baffling, with the pick-up and return at the lowest level of the multi-cell structure. Glassed and painted, the lattice structure is finally sealed by the sole and then pressure-tested. This system avoids the need for separate fuel tanks. The structure adds stiffness and strength. The boat can accommodate large quantities of fuel, stored low in the hull, which brings handling benefits.

The boat's decks and superstructure are made from fibreglassed plywood and foam sandwich, glassed foam detailing, solid plywood and solid timber. Everything is sealed using epoxy resins.

### LOADS OF PRESENCE

Weighing in at around 19 tonnes, *Humdinger* has some real presence on the water. A pair of Caterpillar 450hp engines gives a cruising speed of around 20 knots and a top speed of 26 knots. We slipped along at a comfortable 16 knots. The boat was on the plane; her flared bow carved through the slop.

The engines are amidships under the saloon sole. They are accessed via a dogged door in the starboard guest cabin or by pulling aside the carpets and lifting the saloon sole. The machinery space is clean and bright, with enough space to get around the engines and other machinery easily, or do the laundry.

Gerard is impressed with the way

the boat behaves in a seaway – his confidence was boosted recently while coming home from Great Barrier through Colville Channel in 35 knots of breeze. *Humdinger* easily handled the conditions.

"She's solid and predictable and the flared bow really does the business in the rough," Gerard says, "and I won't think twice about heading out to the edge of the shelf to fish for broadbill and tuna or about staying out there overnight."

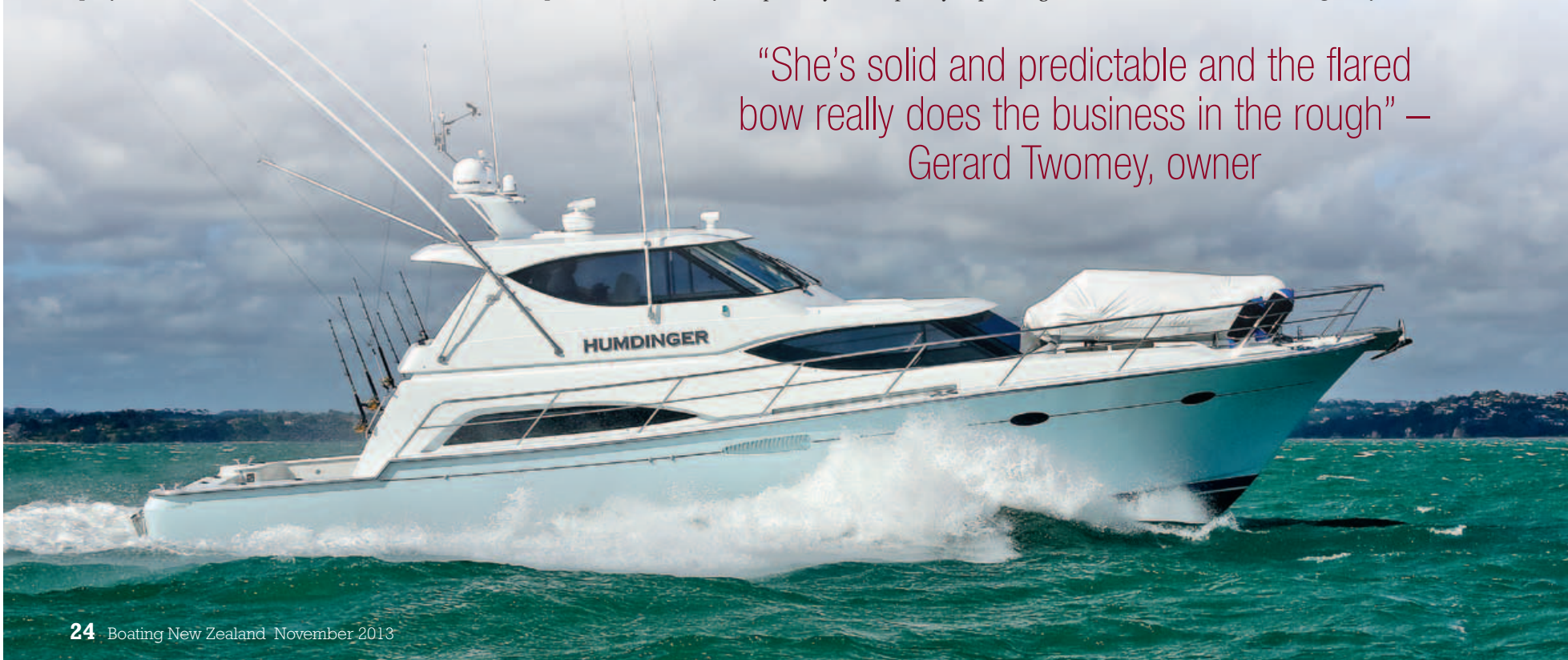
*Humdinger's* flybridge is vast at 10.2m<sup>2</sup>, including seating. There's comfortable seating for up to eight, heaps of stowage and a bar fridge under the hardtop, which has multiple rear sliding doors that open up partially or completely, depending on

the situation. The settee on the port side hinges up to reveal dedicated rod, tag pole and gaff storage while a couple of loungers on the short rear deck are made for lure watching.

There's a single super-comfortable swivelling helm seat behind *Humdinger's* wide console. Sight-lines from the helm are excellent, especially into the cockpit, which is important for gamefishing and when berthing the boat. There's a second helm station in the cockpit.

The flybridge benefits from the mid-pilothouse design by being half a deck lower than the flybridge of a conventional flybridge sportfisher. While this sacrifices a little bit of long range fish-spotting ability, it means a lower centre of gravity,

"She's solid and predictable and the flared bow really does the business in the rough" – Gerard Twomey, owner







A double cabin with ensuite on the lower level, to port, opposite the galley

less windage and a generally more pleasing profile. Access to the flybridge is via an internal stairway from the saloon or by a second stair from the cockpit. Like the rest of the boat, the flybridge is diesel-heated, but there's no air-conditioning.

*Humdinger* has a comprehensive electronics suite, including a pair of Raymarine 12-inch HybridTouch displays, Raymarine autopilot, Maxpower bow thruster controls, Jabsco remote spotlight controls, Volvo Penta trim tab controls and the Caterpillar digital instruments. Gerard has also fitted mechanical analogue gauges "in case the electronics go down".

A 3.2m Zodiac takes care of trips ashore and is craned off the foredeck with an electric Steelhead crane, and a Lewmar windlass deploys *Humdinger's* anchor and all-chain rode.

The Twomeys specified plenty of battery capacity for *Humdinger*.

There's a 9kVA Onan genset, but Gerard mostly relies on the engines to recharge the batteries and run the Sea Recovery watermaker. Cooking is gas, lighting is LED and the engines provide enough hot water most of the time. And while there's plenty of fridge capacity onboard, *Humdinger* has the battery capacity to cope.

"We seldom run the genset at anchor because there's no need. Anyway, I hate the noise and the disturbance gensets bring to other boaties. Typically, we still have eighty per cent capacity left in the house batteries when we get up in the morning and they are topped up in no time when we fire up the main engines," says Gerard.

With long range cruising and extended stay-away cruises over several weeks, the boat's systems have been configured to cope.

"Provided we've got food, water and diesel, we can be completely self-sufficient if we need to be."

## PERFORMANCE

\* Maximum range: 1026.8nm with 10% fuel in reserve

\*\* Optimum cruise speed

RPM	Speed (knots)	Fuel flow (lph)	Litre (pnm)
1200*	8.2	23	2.8
1600	10.0	50	5.0
2000	13.5	91.0	6.7
2200	17.3	113.0	6.5
2428**	20.2	130.0	6.4
2600	22.0	159.0	7.2
2818	26.0	196.0	7.5

Figures supplied by Elite Marine



## Vanessa Penman

**ALTHOUGH SOUTH AFRICAN** born and raised, upon emigrating to New Zealand in 2009 Vanessa Penman set about immersing herself in the landscape and life style of her adopted country. "I found myself in awe of the extreme colours, dramatic textures and haunting fragrances of the bush, mountains and coast of Aotearoa. Even though I'd come from the heat and drama of Africa, this was something new and exciting. I couldn't wait to find new subjects for my painting and drawings." In the recent months of America's Cup excitement Vanessa has concentrated on drawing and painting the sea craft that make so many New Zealanders happy. No matter what the subject might be, whether it's a dinghy or a super yacht, she sees each and every one of them as deeply loved icons of a life worth living. To her they stand as a symbol of the Kiwi lifestyle that she is fast coming to call her own.

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Vanessa's motivation behind creating these artworks is to capture memories, moments and boats with special significance to the owners and their families.

\* Very pleased with Vanessa Penman's artwork of our catamaran. Good prompt service. I would highly recommend to any boat owner, like myself to have a sketch done. \* Brent

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## CONCLUSION

*Humdinger* is an interesting development of Bill Upfold's popular mid-pilothouse concept. By fusing a family-oriented cruising layout forward with a no-compromise sportfishing cockpit, he's designed a boat that fulfills the needs of keen fishers and divers, as well as family cruisers. The Twomeys' considerable input ensures *Humdinger's* particular suitability for long distance cruising and fishing with extended stay-

aways, usually with family as crew. The boat works wonderfully well in this regard.

*Humdinger* is a credit to Scott Lane, Bill Upfold/Elite Marine and everyone else involved in her construction and fit-out, including the Twomeys. Beautifully-built and well engineered, finished to Scott Lane Boat Builders' usual high standard and configured for the sort of boating the Twomeys love, she's a worthy addition to the Elite range of custom motoryachts.



Designer Bill Upfold commissioned this sketch of *Humdinger*, as a gift to her owners, from local artist Vanessa Penman



### Upfold Elite 15.5m mid-pilothouse sportfisher

- ▶ **loa** 15.5m
- ▶ **beam** 5m
- ▶ **draft** approx 1.2m
- ▶ **displacement** 19,000kg
- ▶ **construction** Mixed composite: plywood, balsa, fibreglass, foam and timber
- ▶ **engine** 2 x Caterpillar C7 450hp
- ▶ **propellers** ZF Marine
- ▶ **fuel** 3200 litres
- ▶ **water** 800 litres
- ▶ **holding tank** 42L litres x 2
- ▶ **cruising speed** 20 knots
- ▶ **max speed** 26 knots
- ▶ **manufacturer**  
Elite Marine Design Ltd  
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