

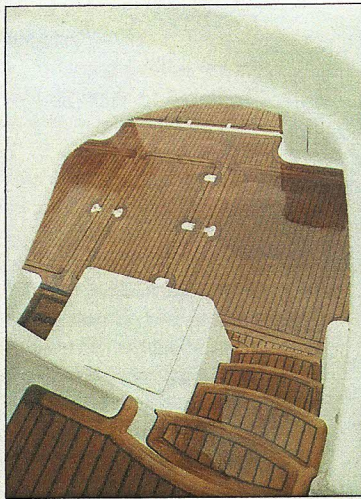
REVIEW: UPFOLD ELITE 15M MID-PILOTHOUSE



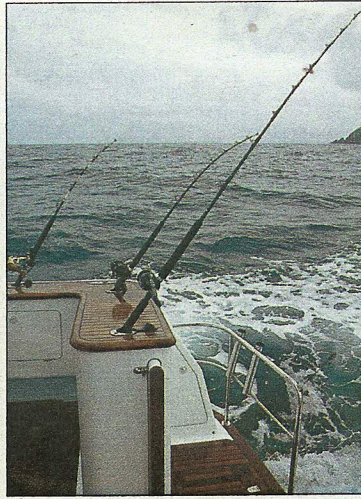
Red-blooded



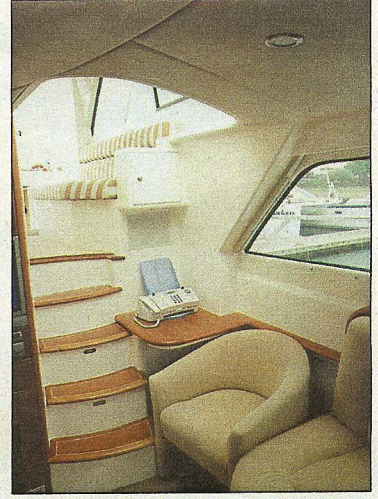
The stainless steel barbecue is the focal point of the cockpit entertainment area.



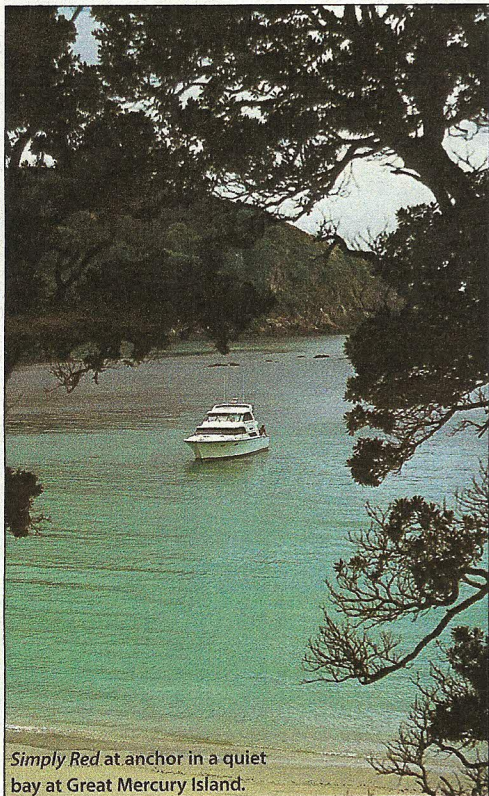
Stairs rather than a ladder connect the cockpit with the pilothouse.



Simply Red in fishing mode wide of Great Mercury Island.



Fax, phone and computer facilities are located beside the stair between the saloon and pilothouse.



Simply Red at anchor in a quiet bay at Great Mercury Island.



“YOU HAVE TO MEET THE FAMILY TO UNDERSTAND,” designer Bill Upfold offered as an explanation for the name of his latest 15m mid-pilothouse Elite, *Simply Red*, which doesn't have a bit of red anywhere.

This is the second Upfold of that name for the owner. His first boat was a 14m Upfold Sedan model. We joined the Scott Lane-built boat at Whitianga on a torrid day characterised by torrential downpours interspersed with brighter periods. A warm, wet wind was blowing from the northeast, predicted to build as the day progressed, but we thought we might sneak a few hours' trolling behind the Mercs before the seas picked up too much. We hoped to shoot photos between showers. Not long after 9am we slipped out of the marina and down Whitianga's well-marked channel into Mercury Bay.

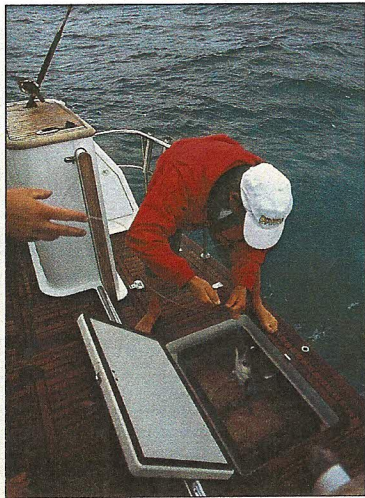
Skippering the boat for the day was its designer, Bill Upfold, with builder Scott Lane acting as his able deckie.

Simply Red is a beautifully finished boat. Scott Lane Boatbuilders built her over 18 months on an hourly-rate basis, rather than working to a fixed price, which is reflected in the choice of materials, fittings and general standard of finish. The owner was prepared to spend a bit more to get the best and the end result is an outstanding motoryacht.

A good example is *Simply Red's* extravagant use of sound insulation. It's used everywhere: extensively in the engine room and under the saloon sole, as you would expect, but also under the lazarette in the form of special, sound-deadening paint, on tanks to minimise resonance – even inside hollow engine girders.

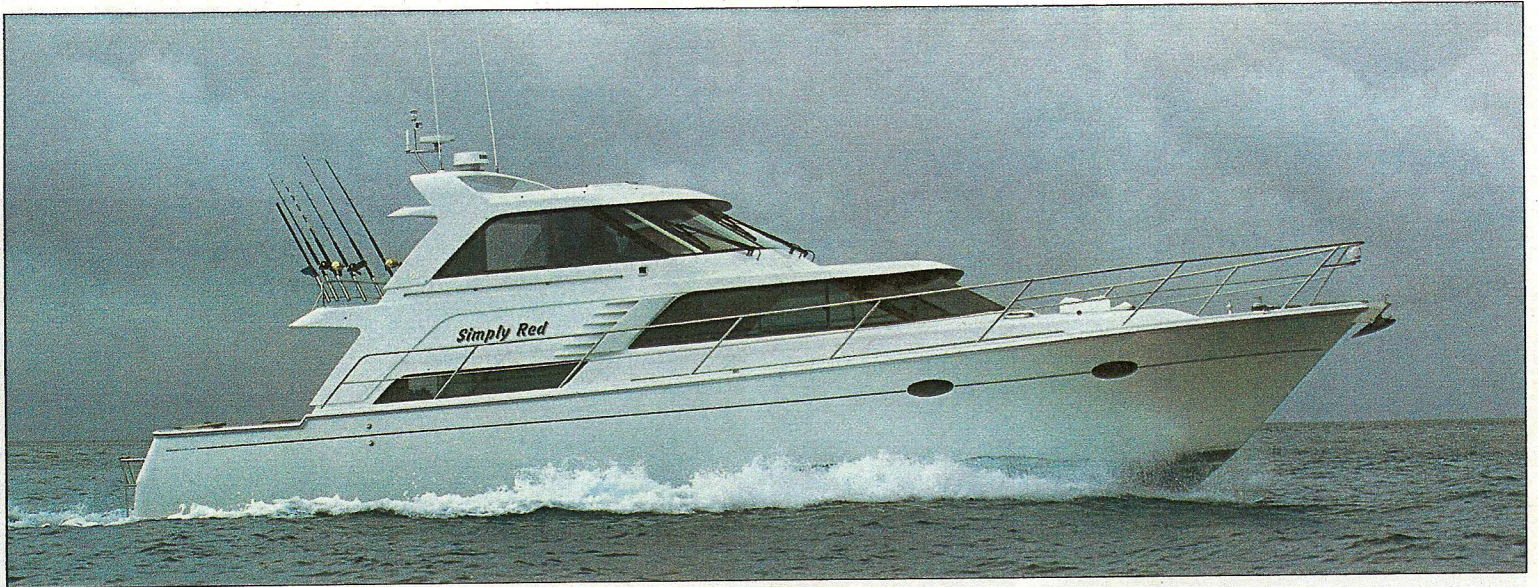


Side decks offer easy access forward.



A small albacore finds its way into the boat's bait tank.

STORY BY JOHN EICHELSCHEIM | PHOTOS BY MIKE HUNTER



Another example is the choice of Aquadrive couplings, which deliver smooth, almost clunk-less gearshifts. Brunton five-bladed propellers are manufactured to Class One specification, guaranteeing optimum performance.

Upfold's specifications allowed a couple of engine options. *Simply Red's* owner has opted for the larger motors: two, six-cylinder, 430hp Cummins. These engines propel *Simply Red's* fully-

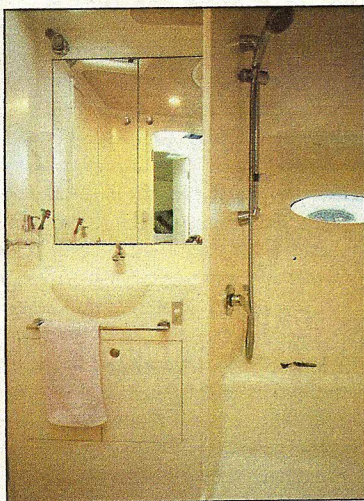
laden 16 tonnes to around 29 knots at 2600rpm.

Simply Red doesn't skim in any area, so she's not a lightweight craft. The timber, plywood, balsa wood and E-glass composite in her construction are one of the reasons Lane enjoys building Upfold designs – the boats are mostly timber construction, so, painting aside, the workshop remains clean and largely fume-free.

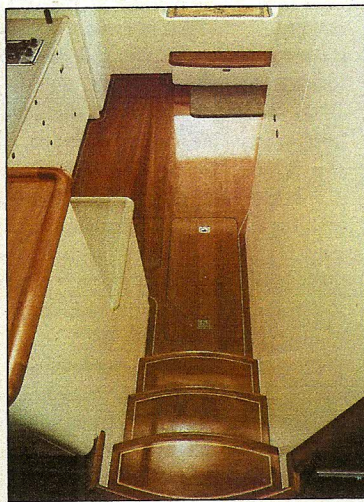
Lane oversaw *Simply Red's* engineering, its building and painting. His influence is apparent in the well appointed and neatly laid out engine room under the saloon sole. Upfold has ensured plenty of space for the big Cummins, with room leftover for refrigeration compressors, hot water cylinder, pumps, a full-size washer-drier – even a clothes drying rack. There is room to crawl right around the engines; exten-

sive non-slip surfaces and excellent lighting aid servicing and monitoring of vital functions.

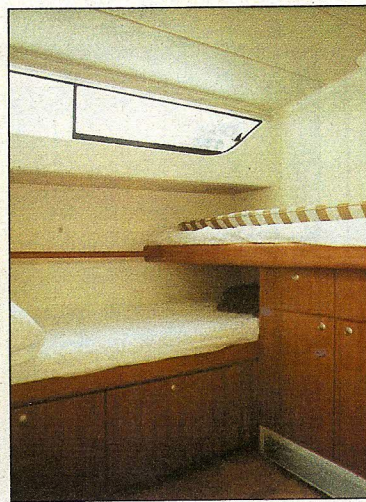
Because the mid-pilothouse layout has the engines well forward – almost amidships – Upfold has pushed the boat's tankage aft to help balance the boat. Holding tanks are at the aft end of the engine room beneath the toilet pumps, fuel tanks are under the galley sole and water tanks behind those again.



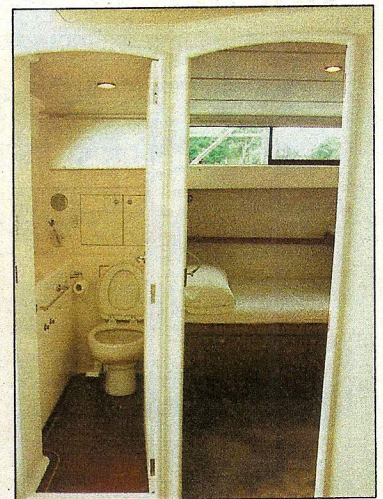
The semi-ensuite head, shower and vanity servicing the master and guest cabins forward.



Three steps lead down from the saloon into the galley.



The guest cabin, aft, with bunks opposed at 90-degrees.



Second heads with basin and vanity alongside just inside the cockpit door.

The boat's layout is interesting. The emphasis is definitely on family cruising rather than sportfishing or diving, though the owner and family are keen divers and fishers – a dive bottle air compressor is part of the boat's equipment. *Simply Red* achieves a good balance between the cockpit, living space, entertaining and service areas. The flow is excellent, stepping down from the cockpit to the galley, aft cabin and heads, up

into the spacious saloon, then down into the forward accommodation and heads. The pilothouse is accessed via an internal stairway from the saloon or externally via stairs from the cockpit.

The boat's owner does a lot of work from the boat, which is well set up with fax, telephone and computer facilities, in the saloon near the staircase to the wheelhouse. The boat is air-conditioned throughout with separate regimes for

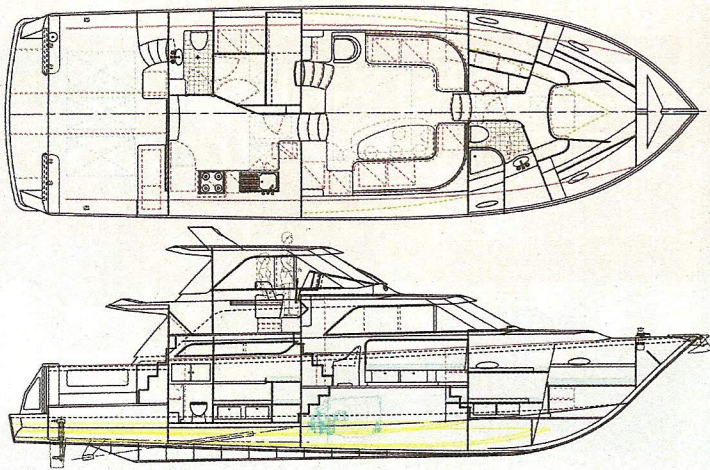
the wheelhouse, saloon/galley and forward accommodation. Vents at the base of the clear, raked windscreens ensure the glass stays free of condensation at all times; three huge and highly efficient wipers keep it clear on the outside.

We needed the wipers in the occasional heavy showers and later, as we headed out into building seas wide of Red Mercury Island. In the sheltered water of Mercury Bay Upfold dialled up 2200 revs

on the electronic, synchronised throttle control and *Simply Red* covered the ground at a no-fuss 22 knots.

Top speed is 29 knots but 20-24 knots is comfortable in most conditions – we dialled back slightly, later in the day when the sea was at its roughest, but the boat feels capable and has already made several long distance journeys between Auckland, Tauranga and Whitianga.

The wheelhouse is the place to be



The rocket launcher accommodates up to six rods; six flush-mounted rod holders are fitted in the coamings and across the transom.

though the odd beam sea sent spray cascading over the wheelhouse and into the cockpit. At trolling speed, things were a lot better, and for a while the sun even peeped out between the clouds. Two engines at idle drive the boat along at nearly eight knots. With the wind

behind us we trolled on one engine to keep the boat speed down so the lures would track properly.

No billfish came our way, but our short troll did account for a couple of small albacore, quickly consigned to the livebait tank in the swimstep, and an

unidentified strike on the Rapala that emptied 200m of 15kg line from the spool before becoming disconnected.

A series of nasty-looking squalls inshore convinced us it was time to call it quits and we cleared the gear as the rain came down in earnest. The air-

conditioned wheelhouse was definitely the place to be, oversize wipers and window demisters ensuring visibility was as good as the conditions allowed while the huge chartplotter display ensured we had no trouble navigating in the squalls.

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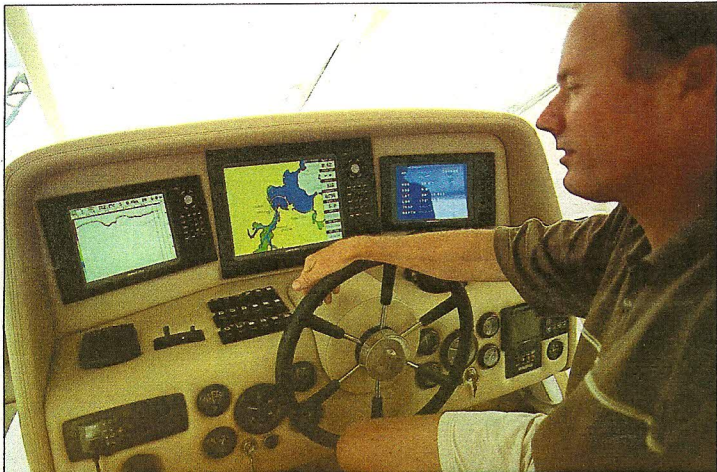
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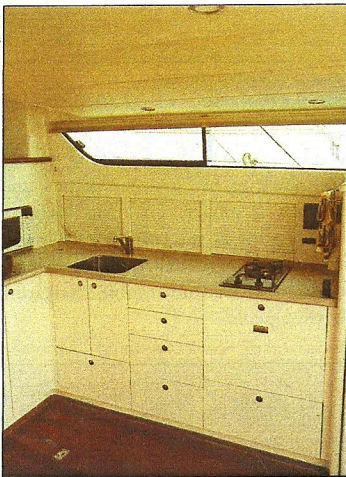
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Simrad electronics take pride of place on *Simply Red's* imposing dashboard. The binnacle was enlarged to incorporate the chartplotter in the centre.



The galley is large and well equipped. Sliding louvre doors behind the bench conceal lots of handy storage.

plenty of under-bunk storage, good natural light from sliding windows and easy access to the spacious and well-appointed head/shower immediately inside the cockpit doors.

Underway, the cockpit is not a bad place to be. Because the engines are well forward, the exhausts exit underwater, and so much attention has been paid to sound insulation, it's relatively quiet, even at full throttle. Except when conditions get rough, it's also dry.

At rest, the cockpit serves as another entertainment area. It's well equipped with mod cons like a stainless steel barbecue, huge chest freezer, lots of storage, including a pair of cavernous under-floor lockers, a sink and a shower for swimmers coming aboard via the dive ladder and wide swimstep. Transom doors slide away into the gunwales, which should also make pulling game-

SPECIFICATIONS

boat name	<i>Simply Red</i>
design name/type	Upfold 15m Elite mid-pilothouse
designer	Bill Upfold
builder	Scott Lane Boatbuilders
construction	plywood-balsa-E-glass composite
loa	15m
lwl	13m
boa	4.8m
draft	1.1m
deadrise aft	11-degrees
displacement	15,800kg
max speed	29kt
cruising speed	22kt
fuel capacity	1950L
range	454nm @ 22.5kt
water capacity	1600L
black water	200L
engines	Cummins CTA 8.3L 430hp x2
gearboxes	Twin-Disc 5075A 1.77:1
propellers	Brunton 5-blade, 24.5in x 28.5in
genset	Onan 9kVA
inverter	Victron 3000

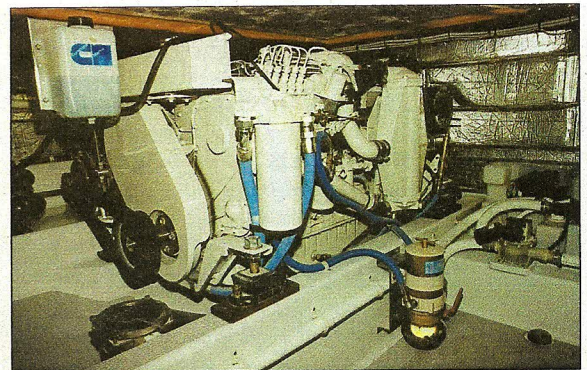
fish aboard easy. Like the rest of the boat, there are no sharp corners, just covered joints, radiused edges and curves.

Although fishing is not the boat's primary purpose, the cockpit is plenty big enough to accommodate some serious angling. We ran five lures. No outriggers were fitted so we ran a couple of big lures off the angled rodholders in the coamings, a medium-sized lure from the starboard corner and a deep-running Rapala and a small tuna clone close-in.

Conditions were rather unpleasant, but the big Upfold took it all in stride,



The outboard for *Simply Red's* tender is secured on a sliding cradle in its locker.



The engine room is spacious, well lit and covered in non-slip rubber.

Lumpy seas accompanied the squalls, so Upfold knocked the speed back to around 14 knots, which still allowed us to cover plenty of ground in reasonable comfort.

When we got closer inshore, he opened the throttle again and we completed the last leg into Whitianga at more than 20 knots.

We tied up late in the afternoon in pouring rain. We'd been a bit lucky to get our photos before the weather packed it in completely, but it had been good to

get out in some sloppy seas to get an idea of how the boat behaves in real life.

Simply Red's owner has already enjoyed extensive cruising since taking delivery before Christmas. He intends to do a whole lot more before summer ends and into winter, too. *Simply Red* is a solid performer, comfortable, well built and well equipped with a versatile and practical layout. She's not a bad looker either.

Suppliers to *Simply Red* include – Advance Trident: Simrad autoplot, GPS-plotter, sounder, VHF, repeaters; Lusty and Blundell: Exalto wipers, Muir winch, Sea Star steering, Sealand toilets, Bennet trim tabs, Jabsco searchlight, Par washdown, showers; High Modulus: composite engineering; Howick Upholstery and Covers: upholstery; Sallee: carpet; Watercraft Electrical: batteries; Manson Anchors: anchors; Ocean Air Refrigeration; Isotherm fridge, freezer; Air Tech: air compressor; Leach Stainless Steel: stainless steel; Fisher and Paykel: dish drawer; Atlantic Audio: audio-visual entertainment systems; BEP Marine: switchboards, switch panels; Euromarine: Cantalupi lighting; Motorola: cellphone; Pine Harbour Boat Painters/International Paints: paint; Aquapro: BIB tender; Whirlpool: convection-microwave oven; Cummins: engines, genset; Absolute Marine: Mathers ZF engine controls; Alpatron: inverter; Propulsion Alternatives: propellers.