

# ROUND THE YARDS

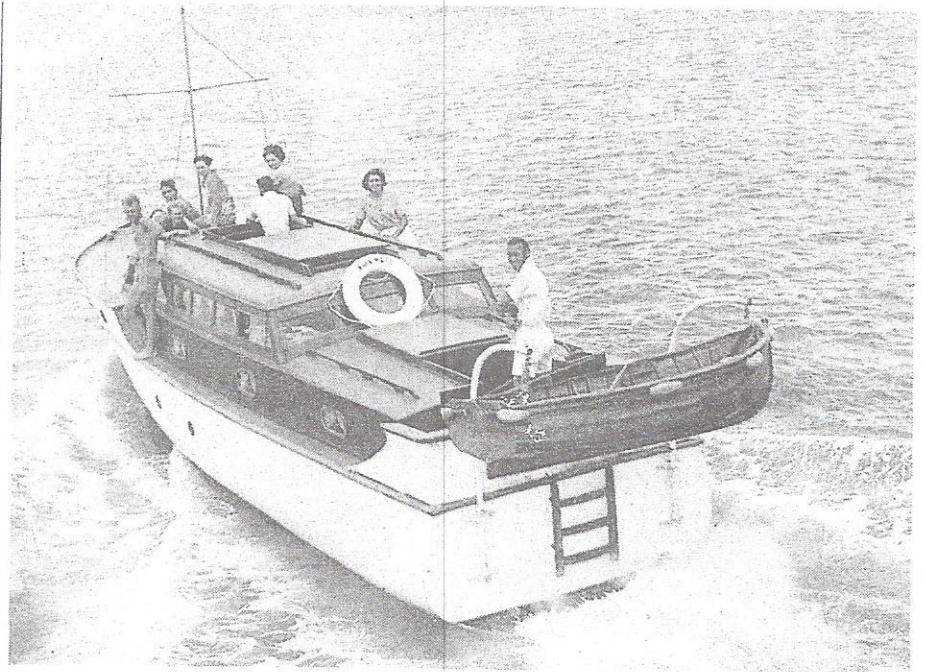
## Classic Sam Ford restoration

The first launch ever built by Sam Ford, the *Maka-Maile*, still owned by a member of the Farrell family, is undergoing a thorough restoration.

Ken Farrell took over the launch when his father, Bob, died a few years ago. The restoration of the old family launch started off being one of those "two-month" jobs, but grew into a complete gutting and rebuild after Ken decided that *Maka Maile* needed refastening. Ken is being assisted by Stuart Blake.

With *Maka Maile* having been in the Farrell family since her launching in 1937, most of her history is known - and it is quite a story.

The design was obtained by Robert Farrell by writing to an American Magazine, possibly *The Motor Boat*, and was considered radical for its time. Most launches then were a maximum of 8ft beam, and *Maka Maile's* 9ft 6in beam set the waterfront tongues wagging. The *Maka Maile's* overall dimensions are 36ft



*Maka Maile* pictured in 1939; her launch set the waterfront tongues wagging.

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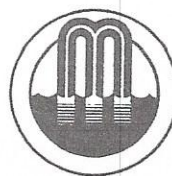
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long, 10ft 6in beam, and 3ft 9in draft.

*Maka Maile* was built by Sam Ford's "Invincible Boat & Engine Co," and the original contract, signed by Ford and Farrell, is still a family heirloom. It specifies that the boat be "first class and executed by first class workmen in all constructions," the price to be 165 pounds, paid in stages. *Maka Maile* was the fore runner of a line of launches from Ford, based on the same design, and it featured the double porthole amidships between the waterline and belting which became a Sam Ford trademark.

The keel and deadwood are heart kauri and the stem natural bend pohutukawa. The ribs are 2 x 1in Birch spaced at 8in centres, the floors 1 1/2in kauri, and the gunwales 3 x 3in kauri. The planks are all full-length heart kauri, 7/8in thick, and the transom is two layers of kauri. The cabin side coamings are 25ft long, 18in high and an inch thick - one piece of kauri.

Patterns for all the fittings such as struts and rudders were made by Bob Farrell, an engineer, and cast for him.

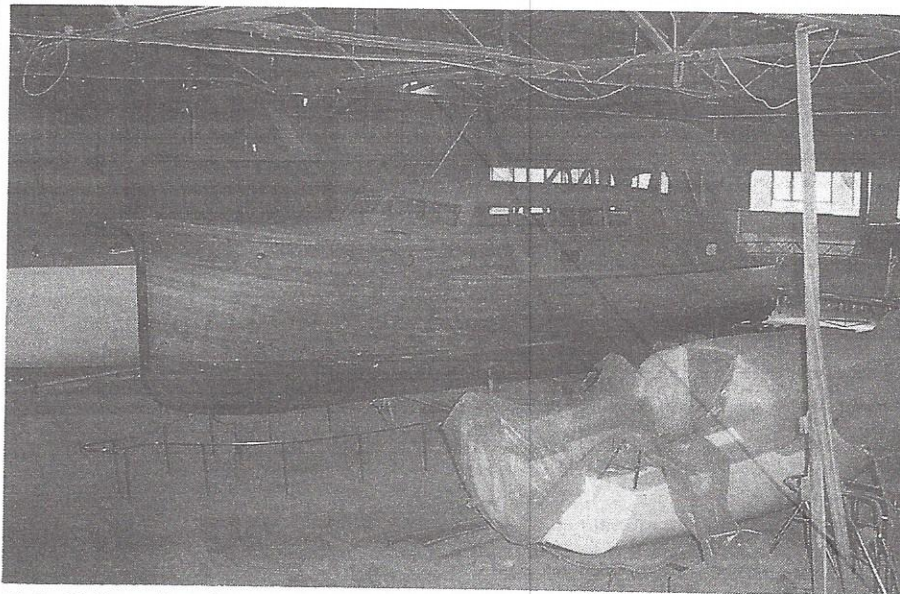
A story of *Maka Maile's* construction told by Ken's mother is how Sam Ford, after making a rough cut of the keel shape, took an adze and trimmed to the marked line without having to make two swings over the same piece of timber. Another is how a writ was attached to *Maka Maile's* mast on her launching at Panmure for debts owed by Ford which

Bob Farrell promptly tore up, as he had bought all the materials and paid Ford labour-only to build the launch.

The original engine was an Adams petrol engine which sat for'ard in the saloon on two 6 x 6in kauri bearers. It was followed by a Chrysler petrol engine and after World War II, by a pair of Scripps V8 petrol engines which were mounted under the pilothouse and ran through 7:4 Grey V drives. New 4 x 4 kauri bearers,

full length from the transom to the mid bulkhead were installed and on top of these were 3 x 3 in angle iron. There were four exhausts out the stern which, says Ken Farrell "must have looked amazing." At this time the aft bridge deck was replaced with a pilothouse.

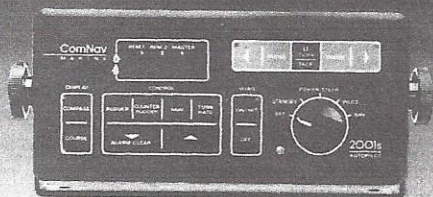
One of the Scripps gave way to a BMC 85hp diesel in 1961 - in those days, overseas funds were needed to buy such engines and Bob Farrell could only afford



*Maka Maile* undergoing restoration.

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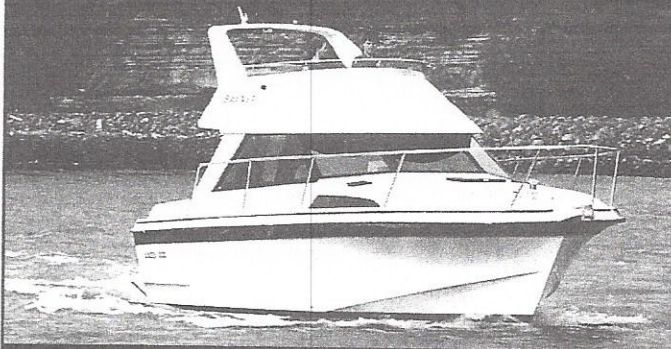
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one. When the second Scripps gave out in 1981 it was replaced with a 120hp Ford diesel. Even with the mis-matched engines and propellers, *Maka Maile* cruised at 12 knots. New engines of between 120 and 150hp will be fitted.

Ken Farrell's father used *Maka Maile* until a few years before his death but for a couple of years the boat sat around and water got into her decks and down below. When Ken took over, he put her up at Vos' in Freemans Bay, Auckland, to have a couple of loose planks for'ard re-roofed. When they saw the state of the fastenings it was decided to completely refasten the boat. The keel bolts were withdrawn and also needed replacing. The decks were rotten but the only rot in the hull was in the top half-plank of the transom.

Ken Farrell says he "scraped here and there," finding more unsatisfactory areas until he decided a complete restoration was necessary.

The hull itself was sound and it is interesting that after two years on the hard at Vos' the hull was put back in the water for its journey to the Geary and Sherson yard at Te Atatu and took in only a couple of cups of water. Ken had a pair of 1400 gallon per hour pumps standing by ready - it is more usual for a dried out kauri hull to shrink considerably and leak like a sieve until it takes up again in the water.

The only structural damage was six cracked ribs for'ard and these were repaired using the Gougeon brothers technique of cutting out the crack and laminating in a new section of rib using a one in eight scarf.

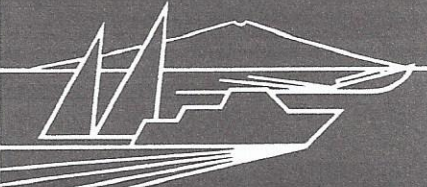
The hull was refastened, with 4000 silicon bronze screws going into the ribs, 800 into the floors and bulkheads and another 300 into the topsides. The keel bolts were replaced with doubled up half-inch aluminium bronze bolts - it took two weeks just to get the old ones out!

The planking was splined - the joins routed out and a thin strip of timber glued in - above the waterline. Below the waterline, it was recaulked with conventional cotton caulking with 3M 5200 replacing the putty. New bulkheads were installed in the gutted interior. New plywood decks were installed and a flybridge section added above the pilothouse. The cabin window uprights were repaired and a doubler of plywood epoxied to the inside to add strength. From the gunwales up *Maka Maile* was faired with microballoons and fibreglassed.

Wherever the hull has been scraped back to bare wood it has been Everdured. Eventually it will all be faired, glassed and painted with modern coatings. Ken Farrell wants the refurbished *Maka Maile* to retain the style and grace of a classic launch and have the low maintenance of a fibreglass hull.

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