

NZ's launch market might be import-heavy, but international designers don't have the monopoly on class and style. This new Elite 13.5 Sports Sedan has both in spades.

“Sunshine, good company, and the perfect boat for savouring it all.”



# Companion for life

Words by **Sarah Ell**  
Photos by **Bryce Taylor**



 **WATCH IT!**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0LISg02Dq4&t=24s>

This 13.5m Elite – 10.4m on the waterline – is large enough for a family of four to cruise comfortably and has a decent range for adventures around the Hauraki Gulf and Northland coast.

She's also designed to handle in the kind of conditions the Gulf throws up – and at rest opens up into an entertainer's dream, with a generous cockpit for socialising, easy access to the galley and interior, and lots of room for the kids to fool about both fore and aft.

This vessel is a sort of sister-ship to builder Scott Lane's own boat *Odysseia*, launched in 2013, but with a few more bells and whistles. She's been built for a family wanting to get out on the Hauraki Gulf

for summer cruising adventures, a spot of fishing and plenty of socialising and entertaining.

“The clients looked at Scott's boat and liked it, but wanted a few refinements,” Upfold says. “This is more entertaining-oriented, hence the wrap-around seating and the fold-out table in the cockpit. Scott's boat is more fishing-orientated.”

In particular the owners contributed to the interior décor, which features a mix of oiled wenge and blackbean timbers, a pale wood-look vinyl flooring in the galley and super-soft Kindu sisal-look flooring elsewhere, cream leather upholstery and chocolate accents.

“Many of the people attracted to this type of boat have experienced the production-boat market but really want

something special,” says Upfold. “This vessel is about as pimped out as you can get for this size and style of boat!”

The monohedron hull shape is common to Upfold’s other custom sedan designs. It features the signature silent chines to deflect spray when underway and avoid slapping at rest.

“She has a reasonable fine entry, good in a head sea, but the hull shape doesn’t seem to have any bad habits in a quartering or following sea either,” Upfold says.

One design constraint was the need to fit the boat into a 13.5m berth. The owners wanted a hydraulic boarding platform, large enough for carrying the dinghy. To keep overall length down, this lifts up to overlap the smaller, fixed platform at the transom when the boat’s back at home base. At sea and extended, it creates a



LEFT: Anchoring is monitored on the big screens at the helms. ABOVE: the raised dinette offers majestic views through the wrap-around windows. Plush styling – and penthouse-like fittings – guarantees luxury cruising.

large ‘patio’ area at the stern, which can be lowered below water level for easy water access and launching/retrieving the inflatable.

At the other end, Upfold’s done away with the anchor sprit; the anchor passes through a fitting in the stem below the bow, with the winch and chain tucked in a locker up on deck, keeping the foredeck clear. A camera mounted in the bow monitors the anchor on one of the big screens at the helm station. The showpiece of the foredeck is a multi-person built-in sun-lounger.

### ENTERTAINING SPACE

The boat’s expansive 4.3m beam provides plenty of volume in the main saloon and the lower accommodation. Generous headroom down below in the master cabin and comfortable access to the

engine room below the saloon (more on this later) is created by the elevated dining area and helm station, at the front of the main cabin. A raised dining area also means panoramic views through large, wraparound windows when seated.

And it’s one of these windows that really catches the eye – or not. *Odysseia* had a fold-up, awning-style window above the aft-facing cooktop, for easy access between galley and cockpit. *Zagato* takes this a step further by having the window slide down into the aft bulkhead of the cabin. It disappears at the touch of a button. The main cabin door is a slider, too, so with that pushed back out of the way the interior and exterior flow seamlessly.

“It means the chef has a view and feels included,” says Upfold. “Having the galley aft also means it can service both dining areas





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The drop-down window and sliding door create a seamless space – an easy flow from cockpit to galley and saloon. Opposite: the foredeck's sunbed is the obvious spot for solving the problems of the world. A single 567hp Cat powers the new Elite.

easily, rather than having a more enclosed galley forward.”

Also deployed at the touch of a button is a two-stage SureShade ATF (automated tele-frame) sun shade, extending from the rear arch to provide much-needed shelter for the entire cockpit. The cockpit table, also electrically raised and lowered, folds out to double in size.

Beneath the galley window is an integrated barbecue, with a nifty pull-out double rubbish and recycling bin beneath, storage alongside, and under the starboard bench seat is a large freezer and chiller. There's also plenty of storage in cockpit lazarette.

Because of the cockpit's large wrap-around seating area, there is only one walk-through in the transom (starboard). With no

space inside the transom itself to accommodate a sliding door, Lane devised an ingenious solution: a single metal rail pull-out to secure the area, locking off with a magnet. This simple yet elegant feature speaks to the level of design detail and clever customisation.

Next to the walk-through is a second throttle and bow-and-stern thruster controls, for short-handed manoeuvring and docking, plus the handheld controls to raise and lower the boarding platform.

The centre of the transom features a large locker – ‘the boot’ Upfold calls it – for the spare outboard, fishing rods, baitboard and other toys, and to port is an integrated sink with pull-out tap,



“Full of thoughtful, personalised solutions.”

which creates an outdoor shower, and attachments for the fresh and salt water washdown.

**INTERIOR STYLE**

Inside, the galley has a white Hi-Macs solid-surface benchtop and an eye-catching black sink, with a pull-out mixer tap. There's plenty of storage, with a pull-out vertical spice rack tucked in beside the cooker, large drawers for crockery and glassware and a special 'wine drawer' under the helm seat. Opposite the bench area is a domestic-size Fisher & Paykel



**The engine room**

The engine room is accessed through a door in the shower wall, through a storage area (“Nice and warm in there from the engine, so it’s good for drying towels and things,” Lane says). Even though you are now officially in the bowels of the boat, the finish is again immaculate.

Power is a single Cat C9 567hp diesel, paired with a ZF 286A transmission and shaft drive in a shallow tunnel, to reduce the shaft angle and improve efficiency.

“Opting for a single engine seems to be a growing trend, especially in this size of boat,” says Upfold. “It just keeps things simple – engines don’t really break down these days. There’s lots more room in the engine space for servicing, and of course it saves weight.”

Zagato cruises comfortably at around 20 – 21 knots, with a top speed of around 27 knots. She’s up and planing at around 12 knots – a comfortable and efficient ride even at lower speeds.

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Forward of the gallery, to port, is the dining area, with U-shaped seating around an angular table. Light comes from two large, sliding sunroof-style hatches above the dining table and helm station opposite.

The steering wheel is low-set on the clear-finish carbon 'dash', and with its stitched chocolate leather trim it looks very 'sports car-ish'. Two large screens above the wheel can display GPS, chartplotter or fishfinder data, or the live feed from the engine room or anchor cam: "You can even watch Sky TV," Lane says.

And in case you're looking for it, there's no switchpanel. The boat has a CZone digital control and monitoring network. Rather than working out what to flick on or off when you're motoring, anchored, or leaving the boat back at the marina, you just select the appropriate 'mode' and the system does the rest, turning off what isn't needed and making sure what needs to be on stays on.

The sleeping configuration sees the master cabin to port at the bottom of the stairs and a 'bunkroom' forward, containing a small double to port with storage under, and two single bunks to starboard. This is ideal for cruising with kids or friends. The bench seat to starboard behind the helm station pulls out to form another double if you have extra guests.

Opposite the master cabin, to starboard, is the head and shower, with a large mirror and freestanding hand-basin – pretty up-spec and a far cry from your old-school, dark and dingy dunny.

The most notable feature about the interior, apart from its harmonious colour scheme and luxurious materials, is the level of finish: attention to detail and obvious care that's apparent throughout the boat.

## UNDER WAY

*Zagato* is named after Ugo Zagato, an Italian designer and style consultant famous in automotive circles for pimping up manufacturers such as Alfa Romeo, Maserati and Aston Martin. *Zagato* appreciated the idea of hand-crafting and making to measure – a concept which appealed to the owners of this

custom-built launch.

And it's the little touches and high level of finish that sets this boat apart. Sure, you could have a production boat the same size for less money, but by working with a Kiwi designer and builder, the owners of *Zagato* have ended up with exactly the boat they wanted to suit their family's boating lifestyle, full of thoughtful, personalised solutions, with custom décor and high-quality materials. Ugo Zagato would have been proud. **B**



## Upfold Elite 13.5 Sports Sedan

- ▶ **loa** 13.5m (including boarding platform)
- ▶ **lod** 12.8m
- ▶ **lwl** 10.4m
- ▶ **beam** 4.3m
- ▶ **draft** 0.9m
- ▶ **deadrise** 14°
- ▶ **construction** Epoxy timber composite
- ▶ **displacement** 10,200kg (full)
- ▶ **engine** CAT C9 567 hp, ZF 286A transmission
- ▶ **fuel** 1,100 litres
- ▶ **water** 900 litres
- ▶ **range** 300 miles @ 20 knots
- ▶ **designer** Elite Marine (Bill Upfold)
- ▶ **manufactured by** Scott Lane Boatbuilders

