

# Basic Detail Report

---



**00055409**

**Title**

Plane from the Halvorsen boat yard

**Date**

1930-1960

**Medium**

Wood, metal

**Dimensions**

Overall: 60 × 200 × 75 mm, 516 g

**Name**

Plane

**History**

Four generations of Halvorsens have been active in designing and building craft in Australia since the founder Lars Halvorsen arrived in Sydney in 1924. They are known nationally for their motor launches with a classic style that gradually evolved over many decades. Lars Halvorsen came to Sydney after a short period working in South Africa. He immediately set up a boatbuilding business, and was soon joined by his sons. Lars and his family were originally from Norway, but he also gained experience working in American yards. He had been forced to sell up and move from Norway to South Africa in 1922 after a failed business venture involving an uninsured vessel that was lost at sea. In 1924 he moved to Sydney, where the Lars Halvorsen's boatyard was soon known for the excellent workmanship and the fine design of their motor launches and sailing yachts. Lars was the principal designer, and his sons worked in the yard as soon as they were old enough, learning the trade as they grew up. Lars died in 1936 and the family business continued as Lars Halvorsen Sons Pty Ltd from 1937 with eldest son Harold as principal designer and managing director and other family members as directors. The firm was originally based in Neutral Bay, and then established additional premises at Ryde, where they continued to produce launches of all sizes. During World War II Halvorsens were contracted to build hundreds of vessels for military purposes including Fairmile launches, crash boats and patrol boats. Their workforce rose from 24 to 350. Harold Halvorsen designed many of these vessels. The highlights were the luxury motor launches, some up to 27.4 m (90 ft) long. For a brief period after World War II a small number of these were exported to the USA, where the boats were lauded by the press. But despite the success of this venture it was not continued for very long and only four craft were involved. Whilst the firm has always been well known for its elegant launches, throughout its existence Halvorsens also built tugs, trawlers, mission boats and other commercial craft. At one point they owned a business Halvorsen Fisheries Pty Ltd, which operated between Eden and Sydney. The launch hire business they ran from premises at Bobbin Head near Sydney gave them access to the Hawkesbury River and Cowan Creek waterways. This gave many people the

opportunity to get out on the water and enjoy recreational boating for the first time. The simple but classic boats remained in service for many years. The business closed as Lars Halvorsen Sons in 1975, and became Kong and Halvorsen operating in Hong Kong and China. In 1986 it was purchased by the Halvorsens and renamed Halvorsen Boats Pty Ltd with Harold's son Harvey as Managing Director. Harvey also ran a US based dealer network for the Island Gypsy range. In 2000 Harvey Halvorsen returned to Australia and took over the Bobbin Head marina after the death of his father. In 2006 Halvorsen Boats Pty Ltd sold the marina and Harvey retired as General Manager. Harvey also continued the tradition of excellent motor launch design, initially working in California. When he returned to Sydney he launched a new range of handsome powerboat designs into the Australian and international market. Harvey's son Mark is working with the business and will carry on the family tradition. Halvorsen vessels are collector's items and a strong club is active in maintaining and displaying their craft. Many have been restored around the country and are kept in superb condition.