

From Youngest to Something Unusual

We found something unusual, to say the least, on the drawing board in France.

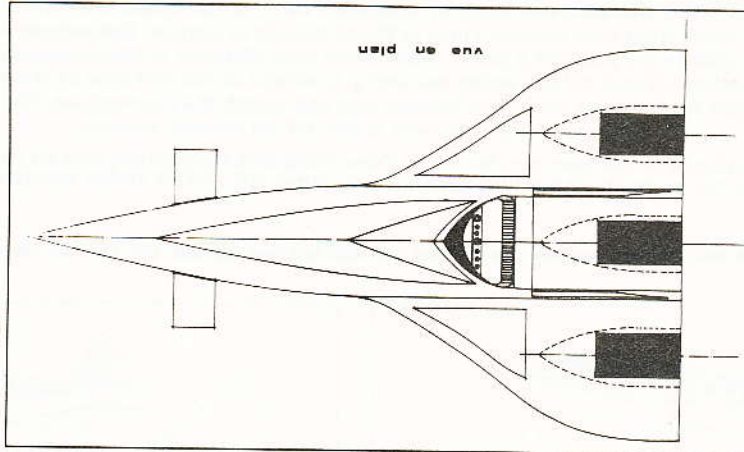
A trimaran measuring 12.70 metres in length and 7.00 metres at its widest point. Constructed in carbon and kevlar it will incorporate on three seats side by side in the cockpit and will be powered by SEVEN Mercury EFI outboards.

The two flaps at the front (see diagram) are apparently operated by microprocessor in the cockpit and the nose of the boat, to offer the best aerodynamic equilibrium.

Behind this venture is Gilles Fontora and we hear the

construction is well under way for a budget of 2 million French Francs.

Offshore racing holds it breath. . .



Neither a bird nor a 'plane and certainly not Superman, this strange looking craft was spotted off Cowes the other day, heading eastwards under tow. It is in fact a research project built by BP's boffins at Sunbury-on-Thames to examine the Lippisch effect. For those who don't know, Lippisch effect is a reaction between the wings of a low-flying craft and the water; rather like the lift that a circuit racing catamaran gets by trapping air between its hulls. The effect means that it is possible to use lower powers to carry heavy loads cheaper, faster and more economically than hovercraft or hydrofoils. The Cowes craft is being used for flying trials to examine the transition from water to airborne travel and to ascertain the feasibility of producing a larger version. It is powered by a Gnome gas turbine engine so if you see it coming towards you, duck — it can't climb very high