



The 'day bed' sunning area with neat liferaft stowage underneath.



Looking forward. The navigation area to port and an 'office' area to starboard. In the centre is the innovative liquor cabinet.



The helming station is offset to starboard and fully equipped with all the sailing, navigation and communication instruments one requires.

BOAT REVIEW

Two Oceans Open Ocean 740

By Richard Crockett

As I stepped aboard *Skimmer* I was blown away by the vast amount of space in the cockpit and saloon, and just how light and airy the boat feels.

This is not really a revelation as many of the super-cats today are similarly styled as their owners don't want that cluttered and enclosed feeling. Quite frankly I agree with their sentiments.

Having soaked in my first appearances of this luxury cat I happened to look up to enjoy the all-round view when I noticed all the luxury apartments in the V&A and immediately came to the realisation that what I was on was in fact a floating luxury apartment - with the added bonus of being able to move it almost anywhere in the world and having the privilege of being able to wake up to a new view every day - breakfast at one anchorage and sundowners at another. Now that's something owners of the luxury apartments in the V&A don't have - and may well be envious of!

Reviewing a yacht of this nature is never easy as one has to remember that the boat has been 'spec'd' by her owner who has his personal wish-list to be fulfilled for the type of cruising he specifically wants to do, and the areas he wants to visit. And most really don't want to reveal this info or their cruising plans - which I fully respect.

What I like is the 360 degree views one gets wherever you are. Being restricted in view aboard a cat must be one of the most frustrating things as there is always just so much to see.

Impressive too was all the wood with a natural finish and no, not a hi-gloss finish that one sometimes becomes afraid to use a surface in case it becomes damaged. The interior and exterior furniture is teak with a hard-wearing and durable finish, despite it's 'natural' look. The flooring is Afrormosia - a great choice in my opinion as it looks so natural and at home aboard this vessel.

One should, to be correct, refer to the 'lower deck' and not the cockpit

and saloon as really there is no cockpit, and both areas fully integrate with each other. There are generously proportioned areas for specific things, with the dinghy having a dedicated hoist/gantry/crane that puts it into the water and easily returns it to its place on the aft deck. A must, no, in fact a priority I am told by some cruising folk as the dinghy can become such a pain if it is not easily retrievable.

The outdoor entertaining area has two identical tables, one on each side, and both beautifully inlaid with a compass rose. Cockpit seats service these tables, as do 'captain's chairs' which can be brought from the saloon. In this area is a braai grill and wash area, plus equipment lockers and an icemaker - all to port. To starboard are two really large freezers, nicely tucked away, that will take all the bulk stores.

What I did like about this area are the two sunbeds, for want of a better name, on the outer extremities of the outside entertainment area, and both with some protection. Sun lovers can lounge here without taking up seating space.

Inside, the saloon is generous in size, despite accommodating the galley as well. It's all pretty well planned as guests should never be in the way of the galley slaves!

A large galley island encroaches into the saloon, with another counter on the extreme starboard side. The saloon side island has a hob, oven, fridges/freezers and sink. Additional freezers/fridges, a microwave, and the dishwasher take refuge on the starboard side, leaving the port side exclusively for guests.

Cleverly, the preparation area of the galley is 'hidden' by a raised area with wooden top which can either be on which to place prepared dishes, or even as an eating area using high bar stools. Next to the sink are two 'chutes' one going directly into the rubbish bin, the other going directly overboard for biodegradables. It's a clever idea as one can immediately get rid of the smelly biodegradables when at sea.



Looking forward from the aft open entertainment area. The companionway to starboard goes up to the sailing area, while forward is the galley area to starboard.

For me, I found that the storage lockers beyond the starboard galley to be anything but easily accessible. I suppose that's something one would get used to, and not store day-to-day items there. In every boat storage space becomes a trade-off, with the out-of-the way areas having to be utilised come what may.

Overall, the galley looked functional, and easily has the space, tools and more than a gourmet chef would need.

Interestingly, between the two galley counters was an escape hatch covered with a duckboard. I queried its position and was told that when at anchor in hot climates, once that is open a cool breeze off the water wafts through - cooling things in the galley and the saloon in general. A nice touch.

On the port side of the saloon is an intimate settee and entertainment

area. It's a generous area with table, settee seating as well as chair seating. In the bulkhead that separates this area from the stairs going down to the cabins is a large TV screen which cleverly recesses into that bulkhead.

On the forward bulkhead is the nav area to port, a cleverly designed feature bottle and glass holder which disguises where the mast is stepped. To starboard is a desk and chair which I suppose could be an 'office' area for guests wanting work on computers and more. The desk has generous storage.

Accommodation is owner-specified and consists of two en-suite cabins to port, separated by a workshop/utility room where the washing machine is housed. There are three cabins to starboard, and crew quarters accessible from the deck.

I was impressed with the size of the bathrooms which are pretty



AUTONOMY THANKS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY



Watt & Sea Hydrogenerators

95% of the boats of the Vendée Globe 2012-2013 used our hydrogenerator.

Watt & Sea is the inventor of the new generation of hydrogenerators: a key system to produce energy offshore. Respectful of the environment, our hydrogenerators offer the best solution for cruising or racing with freedom and safety.

Used by the best sailors, in the most extreme seas of the globe, the Watt & Sea hydrogenerators are recognized around the world as the most advanced and efficient!

WATT & SEA STRENGTHS
Our hydrogenerators use the speed of the sailboat to turn an immersed propeller. Covered by a 2 year warranty, they are the most powerful, reliable and lightest.

- 120W production (10A @ 14.2 VDC) from 5 knots
- Large range adapted to many sailboats and speeds
- Ultra light thanks to the brushless alternator developed with Leroy Somer
- Mounting and dismounting is simple
- Propeller is behind the leg, protected from UFO
- Hydrodynamic design: unperceivable drag, not affecting boat speed
- Very silent for everybody's comfort
- Fast and easy to use





PowerSol DISTRIBUTOR OF PREMIUM BRANDS

Contact us for your nearest dealer | info@powersol.co.za | Tel: +27 21 552 1187

generous in comparison to some cats. Useful too is the wooden bench in the shower compartments as sometimes when at sea it is far easier to sit and wash than to try and stand.

All cabins and bathrooms have locker space, but for me there appears to be not enough locker space to store clothing and more should one be living aboard for an extended period, or permanently. Again, an owners choice, and in this instance it appears that the boat will be used as a fly-in, enjoy and fly-out kind of boat. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that concept. However should one be looking to live aboard, the storage may need to be addressed, but then the spec and layout would likely be very different anyway.

Something that one often does not give much thought to is where the electrics, batteries and systems are housed. Often these are scattered into different places where space permits. Aboard *Skimmer*, forward of the main bulkhead is a very large waterproof compartment in which a person can work without being cramped, and where all the key electrics are housed.

LED lights are plentiful and energy efficient. I was impressed with the light switches which in fact are push button controlled, but surrounding each button is a subdued light to make it easy to find the switches at night. A small touch, but a very necessary one, especially when new guests have just joined the boat.

I have purposely left the sailing aspect until last, as quite frankly most people looking at a cat of this size are so obsessed with the cabins, galley, entertainment areas and more, that they forget about the sailing!

To starboard of the aft entertainment area is the companionway up to the top deck, and this is where all the sailing action takes place. It's a pretty generous area where guests can have the sun on your body and the wind in your face in an exclusive area, while not getting in the way of the sailing crew. The skipper has his own area for the offset wheel, and where all his engine instruments, B&G Chart Plotter and wind instruments and a vast array of other controls are situated. In front of that area, and in the middle of the boat is a pedestal with two large electric Harken winches being fed various control lines and halyards from Spinlock rope jammers. It is here that the sailing crew operate.

Oh, and don't let me forget that there is another fridge up here for the cold beer, as sailing is thirsty work!

This is a big boat, with a powered furling genoa, and a large main which is furled into an in-boom furling system. I was specifically interested in the in-boom furling, as one does sometimes hear horror stories about them. This is a system custom built by Southern Spars and used on many big boats around the world. Quite frankly I was impressed as the main went up the mast pretty effortlessly, and came down without anyone breaking a sweat or gnashing their teeth and cursing the system.

Incidentally, for the 'techies', the mainsail furls around an in-boom furler, which follows modern trends in the superyacht world. This was an owner driven decision for ease of sailing. Where possible, halyards are secured using Karver Locks which not only secures them safely, but allow the halyards to be downsized for ease of handling.

With main up and the genoa unfurled we trundled along at a steady 12 - 17 knots of boatspeed in 25 odd knots of wind. Not bad for a cruising cat, where luxury finishes and not performance is often a priority of the owner.

There have been several iterations of this design by Anton du Toit already launched. For this boat the owner had Mike Giles advise on certain aspects of the build. Giles is a racing sailor, so excess weight is a problem in his life as additional weight affects performance negatively. As a result, this boat is about 6 tons lighter than the previous one launched. It has also had its saloon ceiling lowered a little so as not to make the top sailing area too remote from the water - as these areas can become pretty high off the water.

The lower ceiling does not detract from the saloon area at all, and if one was not aware of this, it would not be noticeable anyway as neither does it detract from the all-round visibility one has from inside.

One thing I did not mention was, I suppose for want of a better expression, the 'closed' walkways down the side deck to the bow. I like them as they do give one a sense of security, and made traversing to the bow pretty easy. Plus they may also keep some water off that area too.

Overall, it's a great boat, well built by Two Oceans Marine Manufacturing, on which the owner and his mates will undoubtedly enjoy their time aboard. I just hope that my perceived lack of stowage space, not just inside, but outside too for things like diving bottles, aquatic toys and more which do take a lot of space, do not become real issues in the future.

I know that I could enjoy myself on board, sailing from anchorage to anchorage, chilling and unwinding from the stresses of the world. That's when my perceived lack of stowage becomes completely irrelevant! ↴

**SMALLER QUIETER
LESS VIBRATION
DISCOVER WHAT'S
MEANT TO GO
UNNOTICED**



At Kohler, we are guided by a singular purpose: your experience. Those quiet moments when you forget your generator exists. That's why our new marine generators are exponentially quieter with even less vibration. The most advanced, most reliable machines we've ever made.

KOHLER. Marine

KohlerMarine.com

SEASCAPE MARINE SERVICES (PTY) LTD

Sales & Service: Tel +27 (0)21 511 8201
124 Marine Drive Service Road Paarden Eiland
Email: jdejong@seascapemarine.co.za
www.seascapemarine.co.za