



RISE OF THE MULTIHULL

Outside of the super-console race, no other category of boat has evolved as quickly as power cats. Derived from sailing cats, some of the first power cats were simply sailboats with their masts removed and maybe slightly larger power plants. Perhaps the kindest thing you could call these primitive cats is utilitarian. Yet these often unfortunate-looking boats would find a home in charter fleets where azure water, frozen drinks, sugar-sand beaches and comfort were more important to the guests than how they actually traveled from port to port.

Floating sneakers, Clorox bottles and other unkind monikers followed these first charter boats wherever they roamed. What they may have lacked in sex appeal, however, they made up for with a stable and efficient ride, best-in-category volume and numerous equal-sized staterooms. A common refrain from power cat charterers was: “We’re aboard looking out, it’s everyone else that needs to look at the boat.” Harsh? Perhaps, but hard to argue with.

Taking in the sight of the new Aquila 50 Yacht at rest on the hook in a narrow channel near Key Largo’s Ocean Reef Club, I couldn’t help but reflect on how far the power cat category, and indeed the Aquila brand, has come in such a short amount of time. A shapelier sheerline, enormous hullside windows and a—relatively—more raked profile improves the look of this model exponentially.

And it’s not just on the outside where evolution abounds. Aboard similar-sized power cats I had come to expect interiors that you might again define as utilitarian. But the stateroom brightness, build quality and performance of the Aquila 50 rivaled most other motor-yachts in this size category. I was left seriously impressed.

Eating lunch on the expansive flybridge with the clear Keys water surrounding me, it was easy to visualize myself cruising full-time (not just chartering) aboard this boat with family and friends. More

sustainable efficiency and all the comfort of home paired with the incredible connection to the sea that this boat offers, it’s no surprise that so many builders such as Aquila, Fountaine Pajot, Silent Yachts, Horizon, Lagoon, Leopard, Prestige and Two Oceans—to name just some of the major players—are now competing fiercely for their share of this growing market.

In this issue alone we cover a number of cats that debuted recently including the Sunreef 60 Power Eco, the Silent 62 and the Aquila 50.

Just as we’re seeing this category of what I consider power cat motoryachts enjoying their time in the sun and surging sales, yet another evolution of the category looms on the horizon: coupe-style power cats that boast an even more svelte profile and dimensions that lend more cachet to private owners. At press time, Aquila announced plans to debut a 42 and 46 coupe at the Miami boat show this month. With single-level living, the option for outboard power and a walkthrough to an open bow lounge, it’s a category that aims to combine the best of the catamaran world with the elements that have helped to spur the center- and super-console craze. I predict coupe power cats are a boat type we’re going to see more and more of in the years to come.

Stay tuned here for more in-depth reporting on this quickly evolving category. And for those of you who have a particular passion for this type of vessel, I would like to offer a complimentary subscription to our twice-a-year *Multihull Power & Sail* magazine; just head on over to pnymag.com/multihull and leave us your address.

Like many of you, I’m a lifelong dog lover, but this issue has me thinking that maybe cats aren’t so bad after all. □

See you on the water,

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