

COOL runnings

A frugal power catamaran with plenty of home comforts, the Cora 48 is an able contender in this burgeoning market segment, reports Kevin Green.



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Coastal cruising is ideal territory for flybridge powercats. Hugging the coast and even beaching the vessel is in the remit of the new Cora 48 Catamaran, and one of the main reasons the buyer of this vessel – a Queensland farming family – chose it: “We live in Bowen, which is muddy with a long beach, and we plan to tow it up the sand with our tractor,” explained the new owner.

Powercats are prolific in Australia and becoming more popular in New Zealand. At the recent Sanctuary Cove Boat Show, where all the major global brands were represented, the people climbing aboard were often first-time boat owners. The attraction is lifestyle, centred around vast living spaces and relatively easy handling. Add to this, frugal fuel consumption, and vessels like the newly arrived Cora 48 Catamaran make perfect sense.

BUILT IN THAILAND

The brand name might be newly coined but the Thai yard, PMG Shipyard, is a very experienced builder of sail and powercats between 41 and 105 feet. PMG boss Philippe M. Guénat told me: “This is an evolution of our popular Heliotrope boats that we’ve built in a semi-custom way but

review

Cora 48 Catamaran

WORDS BY **KEVIN GREEN**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KEVIN GREEN AND SUPPLIED





specifically tailored to Australian and New Zealand markets.” Given the high degree of customisation, the yard plans to build only about three boats a year.

The Swiss national established the yard on the Gulf of Thailand at Rayong, a few hours southeast of Bangkok in 2004. The management has a strong European flavour, such as naval architect Dr Albert Nazarov, with key Asia-Pacific staff. This includes Kiwi project manager Dean Thompson. After graduating from the New Zealand Shipyard Marine Technical College in Auckland, Dean has specialised in vacuum infused carbon fibre for sailing catamarans, including in a recent 80-foot Berret Racoupeau model.

The other part of the equation – sales – comes from The Yacht Sales Co, which also offers other semi-custom brands

such as the popular ILIAD catamaran range. As boss Mark Elkington explained: “We see the Cora 48 fitting in nicely between our production brand Fountaine Pajot and our high-end adventure brand ILIAD.”

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The semi-custom Cora 48 Catamaran is a displacement coastal cruiser that my sea trial showed to be capable of 1,600 miles on one tank with a luxury fit-out that ensures this is done comfortably. Our review boat was the owner’s version, so the port hull was one entire apartment, while two cabins with ensembles shared the starboard hull. Good aesthetics, apart from being easy on the eye, often translate into an efficient vessel, as they do with the Cora 48. It’s angular, but sloping lines reduce

ABOVE Spacious, well-equipped saloon; The guest cabin to starboard.

FAR RIGHT Flybridge helm; The owner’s suite in the port hull with bed aft and longitudinal bathroom forward, and living area between.

BELOW Huge entertaining areas.





windage and the hull uses a hard chine to minimise drag and offer more volume above its 48-foot waterline. Reverse bows set a contemporary tone.

THREE LEVELS

The flybridge adds windage and on the review hull this was accentuated by the owner adding plastic clears to protect against tropical insects and rain, but the benefits are a cosy third living level with dinette and bench seating aft. Unusual quality features here include twin hand-crafted teak tables with inlays and a large L-shaped wet bar and barbecue. It's a functional yet stylish area for sunset cocktails.

Forward, under the GRP hardtop, is the vessel's only helm position, set to starboard with single adjustable bucket



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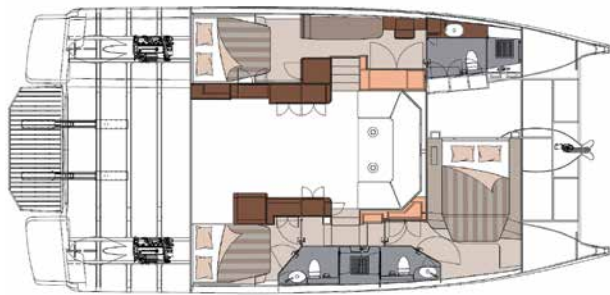
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RPM	SPEED KNOTS	LITRES/PH	RANGE NM
1000	3.9	2.45	3184
1500	6.15	5.15	2388
2000	7.95	9.45	1683
2500	9.35	17.6	1130
3000	9.95	29.3	679
3500	11	48	458
3750	16.05	59.3	541

seat and a couch alongside. Controls are a nice mix of old and new – analogue rev counters for the pair of Steyr 280hp diesels – along with the bow thruster paddle-stick and Garmin navigation screen.

FUNCTIONAL DECK

Descending the flybridge staircase led me safely to the aft cockpit, a large Flexiteek-clad space with transom bench seating behind twin tables, all covered by the flybridge. A bar shelf runs along the inside, adjoining the galley inside – ideal for alfresco dining. Good storage includes under-bench lockers and a compartment under the flybridge steps houses the washer-dryer. Elongated hatches each side give easy access to the engine rooms with large grilles above for the air-intakes. Fittings include 316 stainless-steel for the rails and stylish, branded transom gates. Steps lead down to the hydraulic swim platform, with dinghy chocks, all of it elevated when underway.

Wide side decks and tall guard rails facilitate moving forward on the Cora 48 Catamaran. The raised skylight

covers may not be pretty, but I prefer them over leak-prone recessed ones. The spacious foredeck is Sunbed Central at rest but cleverly reduces windage by using fold-down headrests. Squabs and cushions are stowed below when underway. The foredeck has several lockers, including one for the chain well and vertical windlass attached to the under-deck bow roller and 30kg Delta anchor with 50m of chain. In addition, three sets of cleats each side ensure safe docking.

SALOON

The single-level cockpit and saloon flow together nicely but can be separated by sturdy sliding doors. Inside, the galley is aft while the lounge-diner is up a stepped level, its elevated position ensuring clear views when seated. Again, practicalities abound, including the elevating table that becomes a bed and a large front window for natural airflow, plus quality Caframo electric fans. Ample headroom and vertical sides make the saloon an airy space, which is essential for tropical cruising.

ABOVE The three-cabin owner's layout (also available as four).

OPPOSITE Kevin at the wheel; Well sorted machinery spaces; Massive rear deck.

BELOW Solar panels help with battery health when cruising.





The aft galley is very workable, thanks to its large island bench able to accommodate several cooks and the composite Hi Max worktops around twin sinks and an in-bench twin-plate ceramic cooktop – there's a convection oven above. There's also space for a microwave.

Along with a tall household fridge and twin freezer drawers, the Cora 48 Catamaran is well-suited to extended cruising. Yet more storage can be found in lockers on the starboard side of the galley, plus deep wells which for our review housed plants. The finish includes light-coloured wood laminate with gelcoat cupboard doors. All the furniture and cabinetry, including the island bench, have rounded ends to minimise bruises in a seaway.

OWNERS' SUITE

Available in three or four cabins, the latter ideal for charter, our boat was a family vessel, so the entire port hull was one suite. Stepping down into the owners' suite, I was met by a chaise longue-style couch that could serve for overnighting, while aft is a crawl-in double berth measuring 1.7m by 2m. Surrounded by tall wardrobes and big cupboards, with lots of natural ventilation, again the Cora 48 is strong on practicalities.

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Walking forward took me past the vanity table with a seat, to the longitudinal bathroom with stylish tiled sides and teak finishes. The shower features a seat and teak grating. Close by lies a secret – a door behind another door, leading into the nacelle. It's a large crawl-in space for the vessel's electrical system which includes Czone digital management – a technician's dream.

Walking across the saloon, in the starboard hull two cabins share a bathroom and shower between them. The forward cabin's bed is oriented athwartships with enough space to allow occupants to sit upright. The skylight provides air. The aft guest bed is like the owners', so spacious with good storage and good natural ventilation. In terms of the fixtures and fittings, good quality metal catches and perfectly fitting doors are the norm on this impressive Cora 48 Catamaran.

BEACHABLE HULL

Australia's far north has some of the largest tides in the world, reaching 10m-plus. Having sailed there and seen vessels beached, I appreciate PMG Shipyard's efforts to ensure the Cora 48 Catamaran can be dried-out. The rudders and hull shoe protect the propellers.

The hull structure is monolithic around these pressure points, with foam vacuum infusion beyond. This creates a fairly lightweight hull more easily propelled by the modest 280hp motors. The engines' alloy construction and front-mounted gearboxes with V-Drives save a lot of space and there's room around the engines to reach all the service points.

Outboard of the engines I noted the sturdy quadrant and crossbeams for the hydraulic steering system. To starboard was the Fischer Panda 15kVA generator while in the port hull was the 160l/ph Stella watermaker and a 64,000 BTU reverse-cycle air conditioning system.

Hull structure includes watertight bulkheads for the engine rooms and bows. Build standards offered by the yard include building to AMSA Australian charter and European CE, as well as Lloyds. Looking at the nacelle height during my sea trial, it looked more than adequate; and is quoted as 0.85m in light displacement. At sea I found the vessel's trim to be fine.

GOLD COAST VOYAGE

Motoring in the calm conditions sheltered behind the islands of Australia's Gold Coast was an ideal, albeit a rather easy, test for the Cora 48. Yet, this is what cruising owners will mostly do. However, the wake from passing powerboats created substantial wave motion which the Coracat easily dealt with, the pressure waves sweeping under the tall bridgedeck.

Performance is modest, as expected for its power-to-weight ratio, but nearly 17 knots of speed was available when I used maximum throttle. At cruising speed – about 10 knots – the Cora 48 Catamaran happily jogs along sipping fuel frugally. I noted total fuel burn figures of 9.45 litres per hour (lph). However, a substantial rise occurs beyond this (17.6lph) for only marginal speed gains – something to remember on long coastal voyages.

The Steyrs were quiet and their gearboxes engaged reverse smoothly when I wanted to spin the vessel round. For experienced powercat skippers the thruster is hardly needed, but it's certainly handy for coming alongside a dock when a side wind is blowing on the boat's tall topsides. Sitting on the bucket seat proved comfortable and the clear plastics protected the helm console, which was shaded by the hardtop.

Overall, the Cora 48 Catamaran is well fitted for purpose: a well-built coastal cruising vessel with moderate power, plenty of functionality and enough comfort – all for a sharp price. **BNZ**



Cora 48 Catamaran

BASE PRICE
USD\$1,450,000
ex shipyard (Thailand)

AUD\$2,530,000
Tax paid

ARCHITECT
Albatross Marine Design

MANUFACTURED BY
PMG Shipyard
www.pmgshipyard.com

HIGHLIGHTS

Three levels provide living space galore

Beachable hull makes it suitable for drying out – for maintenance or overnight stays

Meets Australian and European (CE) build standards.

SPECIFICATIONS

loa 14.75 m
beam 7.23 m
draft (Max) 0.99 m
air draft 6.79 m
displacement (light) 12,800kg
displacement (heavy) 24,000kg
bridgedeck clearance 850mm
standard engines 2 x Steyr 280hp
fresh water 800 litres (approx)
diesel 2,000 litres
waste water Black water 300 litres
grey water 300 litres
CE Certification Category A

