



CURRENTS

NEWS & NOTES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



COURTESY SUNREEF YACHTS

HEAR THEM ROAR

The big cats are getting even bigger, with the term superyacht now being applied to catamarans.

BY KIM KAVIN





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OFTEN, WHEN MONACO-BASED IMPERIAL YACHTS is part of a deal that involves a custom yacht, it's a noteworthy monohull. As just one example, the company recently announced it was representing the Lurssen *Flying Fox*. At 446 feet length overall, that yacht immediately became the biggest available for charter worldwide. ¶ But "big" can have a lot of meanings, and one of Imperial's latest deals proves it. The company is teaming with Poland-based Sunreef Yachts to build a custom 160-foot power catamaran. The trideck design is expected to come in at 1,350 gross tons with a beam of nearly 56 feet, making it the most voluminous luxury catamaran ever launched. It will dwarf the sailing cat *Hemisphere*, which, at 145 feet length overall, was renowned as the world's largest private catamaran when she launched in 2011. ¶ Francis Lapp,



SIZABLE POSSIBILITIES

Olivier Racoupeau—who worked with Royal Huisman on the plans for its 116-foot sailing and 119-foot power "supercats"—says the sheer volume of catamaran hulls allows naturally for the type of wide-view, indoor-outdoor experience that monohull builders are trying to create. "The current generation of big motoryachts have fold-down balconies to create extra space," he says. "Our supercats have fold-up windows instead, and the practical effect is even more spacious."

ROOM TO RELAX

The Royal Huisman 119-foot power "supercat" is drawn with accommodations for 10 guests and open main areas for entertaining.

Sunreef's president, calls the project "an ambitious endeavor to build a yacht that the industry has never seen before." That's really saying something at a time when numerous builders, including Sunreef itself, are pushing the size boundaries on custom- and production-catamaran construction alike. ¶ At the most recent Cannes Yachting Festival, Sunreef unveiled Hull No. 1 of its 80-foot production power catamaran. Around the same time, Dutch builder Royal Huisman, known for iconic monohull sailing yachts such as the 295-foot *Athena*, announced a partnership with Berret-Racoupeau Design in France to create 116-foot sailing and 119-foot power "supercats." ¶ "This is not a change in direction; it is an expansion of possibilities," according to Royal Huisman CEO Jan Timmerman. "There are very few multihulls in the superyacht world, but that could easily change." ¶ Indeed. ♥

119'0"
LENGTH
OVERALL
—
47'0"
MAXIMUM
BEAM



PREVIOUS SPREAD: COURTESY LAGOON; THIS SPREAD: COURTESY SUNREEF YACHTS (LEFT), FONTAINE PAJOT

Power catamarans have always had hardcore fans,

and we could all argue for the umpteenth time about whether powercats are better than monohulls. *Yawn*. The truth is, there's a relatively small but dedicated group of powercat lovers who will never agree with the monohull crowd. Trying to persuade one or the other to change their minds is akin to locking Rush Limbaugh and Rachel Maddow in a room and saying, "Go." ¶ A more interesting debate is about what, in any particular catamaran's design, triggers such dedication. I say particular because one of the great judgmental errors naysayers make is lumping all multihull boats into the same category. Nobody would say

all monohulls are alike, yet powercats are often painted with an exceedingly broad brush and then dismissed or embraced on the whole. ¶ Truth be told, whether you're considering a 40-foot center-console cat with quadruple outboards or an 80-foot cat cruiser with the elegance of a Trumpy, the ability of a designer to take advantage of the twin-hull platform is often the key to the design's success—or lack thereof. ¶ "The design work on a cat is far more involved than on a monohull," says Larry Graf, who started off his design career by creating Glacier Bay powercats and, today, designs and builds Aspen

A catamaran's twin hulls provide inherent stability underway and at rest.

Dutch builder Royal Huisman designed this 119-foot power "supercat" with Berret-Racoupeau Design in France.

COURTESY ROYAL HUISMAN



MULTIHULL MARKETS

Despite their advantages and their dedicated fans, power catamarans have never seemed to live up to their marketplace potential, especially in the United States. According to MarketWatch, as of 2017, 33 percent of the approximately \$1.15 billion global powercat market was in Europe, while 28 percent was in the States. That's quite an imbalance, considering that the United States accounts for about half of the global recreational-boating market. The uneven popularity has also affected where all cats are produced, with 60 percent being built in France.

OFFSET HULL DESIGN

The Aspen Power Catamarans line maybe one of the most unique powercat designs around. Rather than have two hulls that mirror each other, the port hull is 35 percent thinner than the starboard hull, and only the starboard hull is powered. This proa design, which creator Larry Graf says initially "made people think I'd gone bonkers," results in 50 to 70 percent lower fuel consumption when compared with a typical deep-V monohull. The 42-foot-6-inch-long, 22,500-pound Aspen C120, for example, cruises at 16 knots while the yacht's single Volvo Penta D6 diesel burns just 10 gph.



PREVIOUS SPREAD: COURTESY SUNREEF YACHTS; THIS SPREAD: COURTESY AQUILA (LEFT), NICOLAS CLARIS/LAGOON

CONTINUED FROM P. 47 showers between them. You can take two couples with you, and nobody feels that they're getting the short end of the stick." ¶ The elimination of shared bulkheads increases privacy quite a bit on that Aquila, but examples become even more stark as you consider larger yachts. One of Sunreef's newest offerings, the 80 Sunreef Power, for example, can have six staterooms—all separated by full heads or companionways, with no two staterooms sharing a common bulkhead. ¶ The ability to have more staterooms that are more private is in large part a function of beam on a cat, designers say. ¶ "Beam is gained for the whole length of the boat, and the cross-deck provides a huge space," says

Mathias Maurios, a naval architect at VPLP Design in Paris, a firm known for designing twin-hulled yachts. "And while, yes, the individual hulls are narrower than a single monohull body, on the whole, usable space is larger than with a monohull. The width allows for more of the valuable interior and deck space." ¶ Maurios points to the Lagoon Seventy 8 as an example. "The staterooms are the size of the cabins in a much larger motoryacht," he says. ¶ The other big advantages many cats can claim relate to seakeeping, speed and efficiency. Again, no two powercats are alike, but a close look at specific models is illuminating. As we reported in *Yachting's* review of the Lagoon Seventy 8, for example, at a 10-knot cruise, the

The riding comfort and entertaining space available on catamarans have made them popular for private owners and charter enthusiasts alike.