

IPHARRA

IN ITS TEN YEARS OF EXISTENCE THE SUNREEF YARD IN GDANSK HAS BUILT AND LAUNCHED MORE THAN 40 SEMI-CUSTOM YACHTS, THE MAJORITY CATAMARANS. WE SAILED THE YARD'S FIRST SUPERCAT, THE DOUBLE-DECKED SUNREEF 102



words: Jochen Halbe
photography: courtesy of
Sunreef Yachts

Anyone entering the site of the former Danzig shipyard (Stocznia Gdanska) in Poland must find it hard to believe that anywhere in these potholed streets, overgrown with weeds sprouting up around rusting railway tracks and fences, they might find a production hall where high-tech yachts and luxury catamarans are built by the most advanced construction methods. It is obvious that the great cranes towering against the blue sky like a warning finger have

not lifted any loads for a long time, and the vast, dust-covered halls appear deserted behind their dark brick facades. Even driving in through the gate is an experience. No barrier rises up silently, activated by some unseen hand; instead the gatekeeper comes out of the gatehouse, unties the rope stretched between two posts and drops it to the ground so that we can drive in over it.

Now is this purely post-socialism, or an unmistakable sign of the

tremendous changes facing the once-flourishing shipyard town of Gdansk? Changes which most of the Western European towns dominated by major shipyards and the shipping industry have already undergone. We are entering a historic site. This is the place where the Second World War began with the attack on the Westerplatte by the German liner *Schleswig-Holstein*; where a freedom movement began with the striking of the workers of this yard, ending in the collapse of

the Soviet empire and with it the communist economic system. It was in this yard that ships of all types were built for the countries in the communist fraternity, along with other large vessels such as the Stena Line ferries which still ply between Sweden and Germany.

And now? Today the yard is carved up into a few individual state-owned companies of varying size under the umbrella of Gdansk Stocznia. The largest of these, Remontowa, keeps afloat mainly by ship



Firstly, he wants to sail the cat himself, secondly, she should be suitable for chartering, and thirdly, she should serve as a training ship for schools

Ipharra's triple purpose as a family, charter and teaching yacht becomes apparent from the large areas of seating and sun loungers on the deck. Anyone lingering in the stern cockpit at night can still enjoy the starry sky above – and guess which of the coloured LED spotlights represent which constellation



repair work. Where once 20,000 people were employed at the yard, now only around 2,200 work here.

In the meantime, the odd private company has rented space in the old offices and production halls – companies such as Sunreef Yachts, established in 2000 by Francis Lapp and his son Nicolas. Director Francis Lapp started up his business operations in Poland ten years earlier with the development and installation of electrical systems and air-conditioning units, and he made so much money that he was able to enter into this new line of business without help from the banks. Nicolas established the charter company Sunreef Yachts Charter, which still belongs to him, before assuming the management of sales and marketing for the yard four years ago.

So it was that in August 2003 the Sunreef 74, the first luxury catamaran

built in aluminium, emerged slowly from one of the old production halls near the pier on an old yard trailer and was lifted into the water by crane. This miracle was made possible by the existing yard superstructure, despite its age, and the many skilled specialists on hand in the various workshops, from metalworkers and welders to shipwrights and painters. Of course, the foundations for this miracle were laid by the yard's in-house design engineering department. Today the yard employs around 450 mostly qualified workers in production, along with a young team of around 30 in the design office.

Ipharra now lies on the quay, rigged and ready for one last day of trials in the Bay of Gdansk, before she is finally handed over to her owner. Never let it be said that big designer names are needed to create a yacht with harmonious and pleasing lines. Admittedly, only a few

have tried their hands at supercatamarans until now. The design team can be proud of their efforts. The hulls slope up from the near-vertical stems to the shroud plates, and then fall away in a long, sweeping curve to the transom. The bridge merges into the deckhouse stepped above it; the flybridge does not look as though it has been added on as an afterthought, but rather forms a sensible conclusion to the superstructure with its roofed cockpit. And the designers have successfully resisted the temptation to impress by using lots of different shaped hull windows. In short, this is a catamaran that does not look ungainly either from the side or from above.

It soon becomes obvious to the many people on board that our trip is still part of the actual trial programme. Technicians scurry here and there, adjusting, measuring, tightening, retesting. Some of the

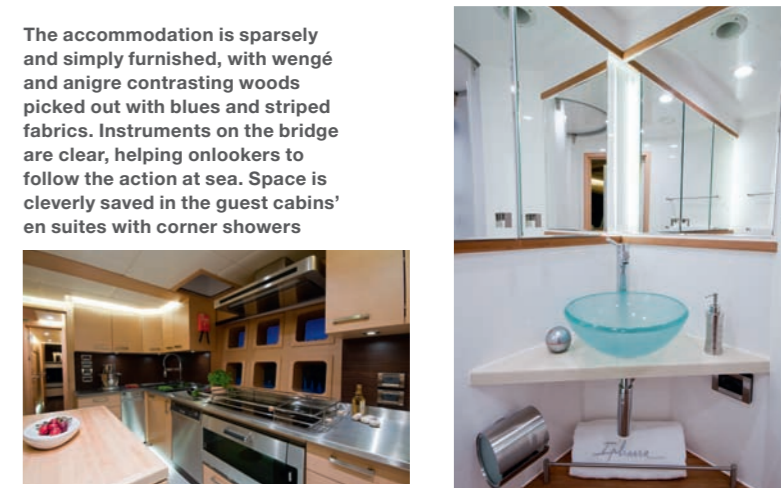
floorboards in the saloon are up, and the droning of the diesel engines penetrates through from the open hatches to the machinery spaces. The sheets are being cut to length, the trim and reefing lines precisely adjusted. All those little jobs required to ensure that the owner receives a completely finished yacht are being done today. Now the electronics technicians have another problem to resolve: the speed through the water does not tally with our speed over the ground measured by GPS. Exact sound measurements are practically impossible with all of this going on, but the 55dBa recorded on the bridge at 8.5 knots suggests that the noise insulation is generally very good, as the hatches to the machinery spaces in the stern were open when these measurements are taken. When they are closed the level immediately falls by 5dBa.

The speed under engine is controlled by joysticks and separate push



One of the main advantages of a twin hull construction is that even in light winds, monohulls heel, and you have to mind that the glasses don't slide off the table. Not so with catamarans: *Ipharra* sails along on a constant level, unaffected by the wind pressure, and no one has to worry about the plates and glasses

From a sturdy armchair the watch has everything in sight and to hand, with incomparable panoramic views thrown into the bargain



The accommodation is sparsely and simply furnished, with wenge and anigre contrasting woods picked out with blues and striped fabrics. Instruments on the bridge are clear, helping onlookers to follow the action at sea. Space is cleverly saved in the guest cabins' en suites with corner showers

buttons which adjust the pitch of the propellers, and also by the Rexroth throttle, while the bowthrusters are controlled by a joystick. All of this happens from the central helm stand on the flybridge; the mainsheet is also trimmed from this position over a Cariboni cylinder winch. The mainsail is set and the foresail trimmed via a bank of hydraulic winches forward of the helm stand, so that the helm has everything clearly in sight but the guests are spared involvement in the sail handling. A further concession to the desired weight minimisation and also to design is the large carbon helm wheel.

Admittedly, the wind seldom exceeds the 10 knot mark, but in a breeze averaging nine knots *Ipharra* makes a good 7.5 knots sailing with the genoa at 40 degrees to the apparent wind, thanks to her displacement of only 110 tonnes, the well-cut Spectra sails from

Incidences in France (fully battened main with lazy jacks), the Kevlar shrouds and the carbon mast and V-boom. This increases to 8.2 knots when we bore away another 10 degrees. The forestay is made from traditional rod which does not twist, as carbon is simply too expensive for this type of cruising yacht, according to project manager Patrick Raub. With the gennaker set, the cat makes just on nine knots in around 11 knots of wind, at an angle of up to 35 degrees to the apparent wind. But as might be expected, given her twin hulls drawing only 2.5 metres, she does not respond as quickly to movements of the helm as a comparable monohull, and tacking takes significantly longer.

Ipharra is not one of your usual luxury catamarans with a conventional interior layout. The European owner has strong ideas in this respect, based on three requirements. Firstly, he wants to sail the cat himself,

with his friends and family; secondly, she should be suitable for chartering, and thirdly, she should serve as a training ship for school groups. The available space is divided up accordingly. The open areas such as the stern cockpit in the shelter of the flybridge and the flybridge itself offer a bar and plenty of comfortable seating. The stern sections of the two hulls also serve as bathing platforms and there are trampolines stretched between the hulls for sunbathing.

The general living space also includes a saloon, accessed via large doors from the cockpit. The port side is first taken up by a pantry bar equipped with refrigerator, coffee machine, two hotplates, an ice maker and a wine cooler, plus an entertainment unit from which the television, DVD player and Bose hi-fi are controlled. Adjacent to this forward is a cosy seating group with L-shaped sofa, coffee tables and upholstered

stools, all surrounded by half-height lockers with cushions on top so you can sit and look out of the windows.

A sliding door in the central lobby near the cockpit and companionway up to the flybridge leads to the owner's suite on the same level to starboard. The double bed is positioned diagonally to take full advantage of the splendid views, which can also be enjoyed from the upholstered window seats above the side lockers next to the front window.

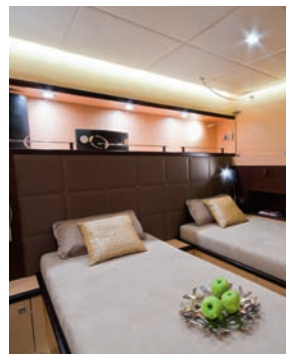
The last communal living area is the bridge, three steps lower, which extends across the full beam forward between the hulls. The central control, navigation and communications console is equipped with screens and a multifunctional display on which you can display all the important ship's operating data. From a sturdy armchair the watch has everything in sight and to hand, with incomparable panoramic views

IPHARRA

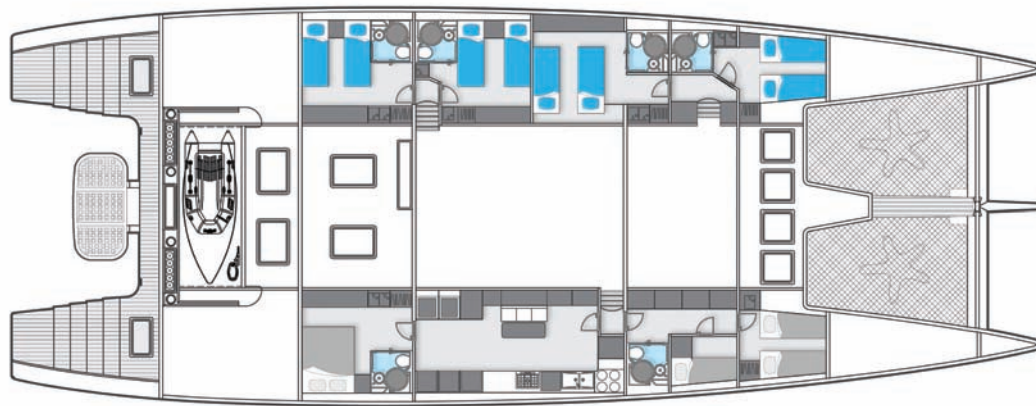
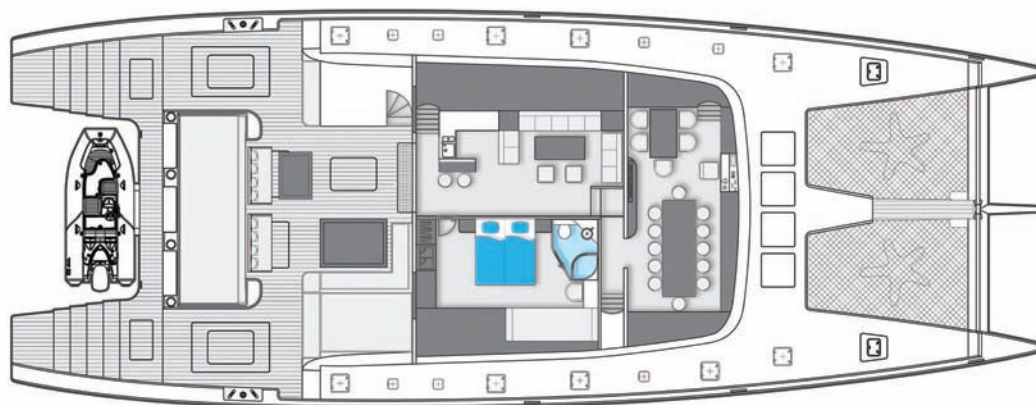
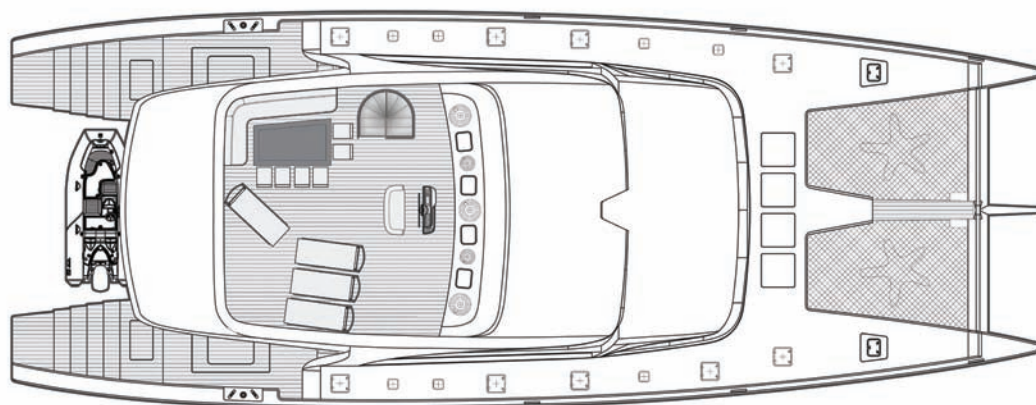
thrown into the bargain. The starboard side of the bridge is occupied by a long narrow conference and chart table with high stools, for conferences or tuition, while the dining table is situated to port.

The whole of the port hull is taken up by the cabins of various sizes, with double, single and Pullman berths for guests and school parties. The forward cabins are accessed from the bridge, and those in the stern from the deck. All have their own en suites. The starboard hull is reserved for the crew. Besides the professionally equipped galley it also accommodates the small crew mess and the captain's and crew cabins.

With her modern, open, yet functional interior style, limited to a few harmoniously matched colours and materials *Ipharra* has turned out exactly as her owner wished. Add to this the solidly constructed veneered sandwich walls and floors, the well laid-out machinery spaces and sophisticated lighting effects and you have to acknowledge that the yard has succeeded in creating a real supercat.



Guest cabins are neutrally decorated and feature some twin and Pullman berths for school parties learning to sail



IPHARRA

LOA 31m
BEAM 12m

LWL 30.6m
DRAUGHT 2.5m

DISPLACEMENT
110 tonnes

ENGINES
2 x Cummins 455hp

SPEED (CRUISE)
14 knots

RANGE
3,000nm

BOWTHRUSTERS
2 x 40hp hydraulic

GENERATORS
2 x 45kW Kohler

FUEL CAPACITY
2 x 6,750 litres

FRESHWATER
2 x 1,800 litres

SAILS
Incidences: main 285m²,
gennaker 350m², jib 90m²,
genoa 185m²

FURLER
Bamar

OWNER AND GUESTS
12

CREW
4-6

OWNER'S PROJECT MANAGER
Rafal Lenartowski

CONSTRUCTION
hull and superstructure are
aluminium; mast and boom
are carbon

CLASSIFICATION
Bureau Veritas; MCA

DESIGN ENGINEERING
Sunreef Yachts

EXTERIOR DESIGN
Sunreef Yachts

SALES AND CHARTER BROKER
Sunreef Yachts Charter

CHARTER RATES
€55,000 per week + APA

BUILDER/YEAR
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