



HOUBARA



“When I met my wife, we wanted to go ‘round the world with a caravan. We never thought about doing it on a boat,” says the owner of *Houbara*. For him and his wife, their new Sunreef catamaran represents the chance to realize a dream—although not quite the dream they had first envisaged.

“Five years ago, we chose a motor boat,” the owner continues. “Everyone told us that in the Mediterranean a motor boat was the only choice. But while cruising in 2010 in Barcelona, we saw a catamaran with a flybridge. We weren’t entirely happy with the motor boat but hadn’t realized before then that there was something in between. We went to the Cannes show to find the boat we had seen, but although we saw a lot of cats, none were the same. We talked with Privilege and Fountaine Pajot [both production catamaran builders] who put together proposals for us, and we went to see them in La Rochelle. The boats there had not been designed for us, just adjusted, and we were disappointed. But on the way to view another boat we saw a Sunreef and realized it was the same one we had seen in Barcelona.”

Hence, *Houbara* was born. It was at a subsequent Cannes yacht show where we caught up with the newly launched yacht—the builder’s first 82DD, which is the largest of its semi-custom sailing cat range. It can be a nightmare to find a specific yacht among those crammed into the Old Port at Cannes, but the beige-hulled catamaran, with her mast reaching 112 feet upwards from her 79-foot hull, really stands out from the crowd.

Approaching her at the dock, you feel dwarfed by her topsides that, rising to a maximum of 10 feet, make you acutely aware that the DD suffix stands for double deck. But ungenerous comparisons with public transport are swept away as you ascend the six steps that rise to the aft deck from her two transoms. Here, shaded from the sun by the bridge deck

SUNREEF’S
FIRST 82DD
CATAMARAN
PROVIDES THE
VOLUME AND
STABILITY TO
FULFILL HER
OWNER’S
CRUISING
AMBITIONS.

TEXT BY
ROGER LEAN-VERCOE
AND
TIM THOMAS

overhang and partially protected from beam winds by extensions of the superstructure to port and starboard, there is a distinct feeling of being on the aft deck of a much larger yacht as you take in the eight-seat dining table, acres of sunpads and even a trough for flowers or other decoration. At the head of a spiral stairway, the sun deck is equally spacious and similarly floored with immaculately laid teak. Aft of the helm station, a bar, barbecue and dining table reinforce the impression you are aboard a 50-meter monohull—that is, until you look forward to the twin bows and netting.

With the build-up to the next America’s Cup in full swing—an event raced in cats only a few feet shorter than *Houbara*—sailing catamarans are in the news right now. But, besides their twin hulls, no comparison can be made between those capsized-prone 30-plus-knot Cup speedsters built from featherweight carbon and the solid cruising dependability of the Sunreef 82’s composite hull, well-matched rig and practical sail wardrobe. The only other similarity is, perhaps, *Houbara*’s cutter-rigged mast and trough boom—both built in-house from carbon by Sunreef—which carry a 2,500-square-foot, fully battened, fat-head mainsail. This allows improved sail trimming and a lower center of effort than a conventional sail, which aids cruising yachtsmen just as much as racers. Forward, her 2,800-square-foot gennaker is rolled onto the forestay, while a 1,450-square-foot genoa and 215-square-foot storm jib are also furled onto discrete stays, making them instantly ready for use.

During our sail off the Côte d’Azur, the winds never rise above a disappointing 10 knots true, but *Houbara* happily achieves 7.6 knots speed in 8.3 knots of apparent wind and a wind-angle of 110 degrees. This clearly confirms the captain’s view that he has had no problem in getting 10 to 11 knots out of her in most sailing conditions, while 13 knots is as far as he will



push her. This is slightly more than one might expect from a cruising monohull of this size but, on the other hand, *Houbara* will almost certainly be slower upwind than a monohull. Under power from her two 355-hp diesels, located in twin engine rooms aft in each hull, she will make a maximum of 12 knots when she squeezes a range of 1,300 nautical miles from the 2,112 gallons of fuel she carries. At a more economical 7.5 knots, Sunreef quotes an approximate range of 6,400 nautical miles.

Although there is an interior helm station, under sail she is conned from the flybridge where there is an excellent all-around view. Shaded by a stylish bimini, the helm is clearly laid out and adequately instrumented and is also within easy reach of the halyard and sheets, all of which can be led to well-positioned, appropriately sized power winches.

The layout was carefully conceived with the owners' input. "For eighteen months, we discussed aspects of customization, changing things step by step until we reached the ideal," the husband says. "It took six months to nail the layout, and after six to eight months, when the drawings were done, we went to the yard to choose the fabrics."

The opportunity to customize the build was paramount to the owners, and with the husband's experience in the building industry, this was no hands-off project. The owners spent a lot of time at the Sunreef yard in Gdańsk, Poland, during the build, visiting at least once a month and installing their captain in Poland for the last month of construction.

"My wife decided this boat would be designed for us, not for charter, so we chose the décor as if it were our house—a house on the water was the idea," the husband enthuses. "With my background in construction everything had to be perfect. It was nice that everything was made from scratch in the Sunreef yard. Everything that is on this yacht I can say I know how it was calculated and how it was built. Building houses is easy, however, building a boat is not!"

Access from the cockpit to the salon is through a wall of four glazed sliding doors; at the touch of a button they fully retract to create a truly huge indoor-outdoor space. The salon itself is decorated in a blend of rich bubinga and bird's eye maple veneers, which create a rich contrast with the white carpets and bulkheads, while the cream-toned leather used for the furniture upholstery provides a sophisticated edge to this comfortable room.

The salon's arrangement might seem unusual at first, with a raised mezzanine floor in the port forward corner and a huge bar filling the starboard side, aft of the raised pilot area. But in a catamaran of this size the mezzanine area is necessary to ensure the cabin beneath is well sized with sufficient headroom.



As this mezzanine provides a second distinct seating area, you soon get used to the idea.

In the standard layout, the area occupied by the bar hosts the galley, but *Houbara's* owners, who did not anticipate the need for three guest cabins (in addition to the master), moved the galley into the lower deck space normally occupied by the third cabin. The result is a seri-

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The four glass sliding doors, which each rise from floor to deckhead, fully retract to create a large indoor-outdoor space on the main deck.



"I am a perfectionist. Some people, when they order a boat, don't care about the build. But we dreamt a boat, worked on it and then drove Sunreef crazy."
— HOUBARA'S OWNER



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Houbara is decorated to be the owners' home on the water. The master suite includes its own spa pool (left). Guest cabins are comfortable (above) and a crew cabin is conveniently located next to the spacious galley (top) in the port hull.

ously sized bar and a fabulous galley conveniently situated in the starboard hull adjacent to the crew's twin-berth en suite cabin. The owners will run *Houbara* with just two crew. "We don't want so many people on board," the owner explains. "She feels safe and easy. My wife finally agreed to [have] crew, mainly because of the need for cleaning, although ideally we wouldn't have any."

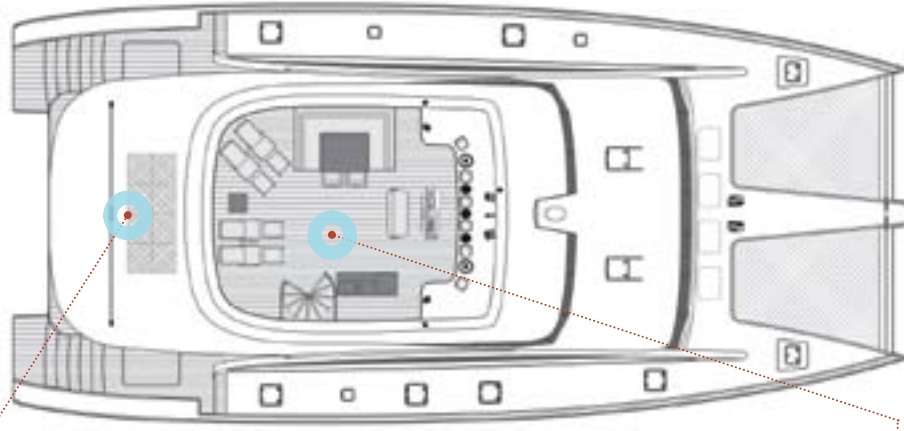
Houbara's two very comfortable guest cabins lie in her port hull. One of these is the large en suite double below the mezzanine, and the second is a twin that makes use of the adjacent dayhead. The remaining cabin, the master, is very special. It fills the forward element of the main deck, where a huge stateroom incorporates a spa pool and a king-size bed. Two sets of stairs descend from here into the hulls, where the port side contains a bathroom with shower and the starboard side a dressing room.

Interestingly, to match the yacht's long-range cruising mission, the owner has chosen to back up the yacht's gensets with both wind and solar power, which allows sustained silent and eco-friendly

running. To this end, a pair of 400W wind generators and eight 100W solar panels are mounted at the aft end of the sun deck. In sunny and windy conditions these deliver up to 1.6kW per hour to the yacht's 1,200A-per-hour lead acid battery bank, permitting silent ship conditions for between 20 and 22 hours—an ideal solution for quiet anchorages or peaceful nighttime sailing.

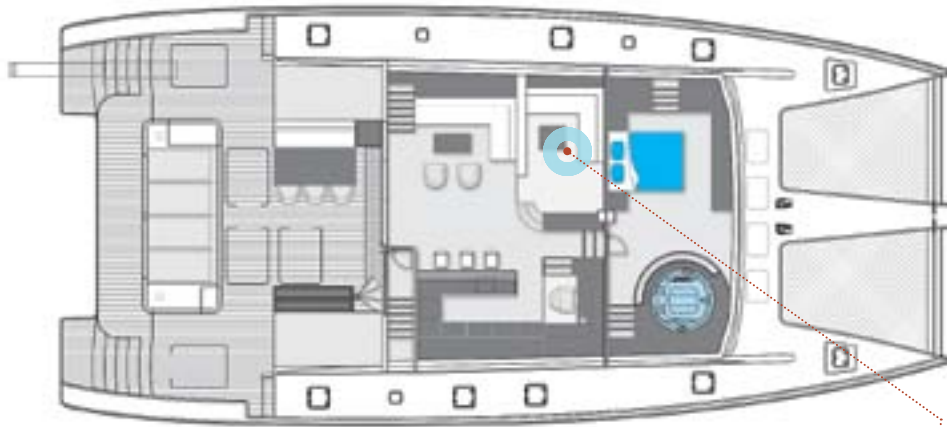
Now that the first part of the dream has been realized, it is time for the second part. *Houbara* headed out into the blue yonder in November 2012. "We told our captain to find every island between Cannes and New Zealand," the owners laugh. "We have a spirit of freedom and adventure with a capital 'A.' There is a sense of freedom being on a cat—silence, space, openness. There's a connection to nature you don't get on a motor boat. There's always something to see and do, and the fantastic spirit of sail and sea and waves and silence—it's beautiful. We have given our odyssey five to six years and don't ever want to go in a straight line."

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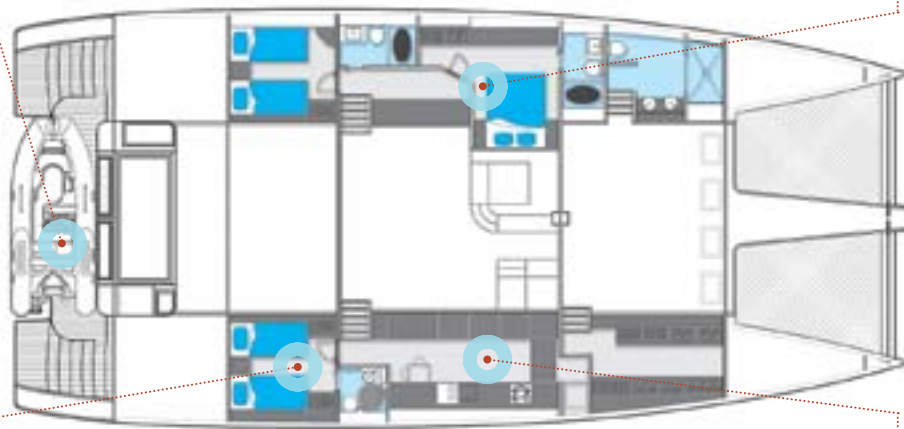
NATURAL POWER: The gensets are backed up by wind generators and solar panels located at the aft end of the sun deck.

SUN DECK: A feature that drew the owners to this build, the flybridge hosts a bar, barbecue and dining table as well as the helm.



TENDER: Stowing the 20-foot Zodiac aft on the bathing platform doesn't disrupt access to the sea from the twin transoms.

GUEST CABIN: The double guest cabin in the port hull benefits from extra headroom afforded by the mezzanine on the main deck.



CREW QUARTERS: The two crew are treated to a cabin the same size as the guests' port-side twin cabin.

GALLEY: Omitting the third guest cabin made a superb space for the galley and left more room on the main deck for a bar.

Specifications:

Builder: Sunreef Yachts
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www.sunreef-yachts.com

LOA: 78' 9" (24m)
BEAM: 36' 9" (11.2m)
DRAFT: 6' 7" (2m)
DISPLACEMENT: 58 tonnes
MAST AND BOOM: Sunreef Yachts
SAIL AREA: 7,000 square feet
SAILMAKER: Incidences Sails
WINCHES: Harken

POWER: 2 x 355-hp Cummins
MAX SPEED UNDER SAIL: 13.8 knots
SPEED UNDER POWER (MAX/CRUISE): 12/8 knots
FUEL CAPACITY: 2,112 U.S. gallons
THRUSTERS: 2 x Side-Power 285
GENERATORS: 2 x 17.5kW Onan
FRESHWATER CAPACITY: 412 U.S. gallons

GRAY/BLACKWATER CAPACITY: 176 U.S. gallons/88 U.S. gallons
OWNERS AND GUESTS/CREW: 7/2
TENDER: 19' 8" Zodiac Medline 540
CONSTRUCTION: Composite with carbon mast and boom
CLASSIFICATION: Bureau Veritas
NAVAL ARCHITECTURE/EXTERIOR DESIGN: Sunreef Yachts