

BOATING

ASIA
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FEATURES

THE FRENCH INFLUENCE AT FASTNET | SIR RUSSELL COUTTS ON SAILGP | WRECK DIVING AT CHUUK | CRUISING HOKKAIDO ISLAND

YACHTS

BENETEAU OCEANIS YACHT 54 | BALI 4.2 CATAMARAN | AZIMUT GRANDE TRIDECK | AQUILA 70 | TURQUOISE YACHTS *BLUE II* | CANTIERE DELLE MARCHE *AURELIA*



THE
**BIG
TEST**
AT FASTNET
2021

JULY/AUGUST 2021



Aquila's ACHIEVEMENT

The Aquila 70 is the new flagship from this growing brand, which used customer insights to design a yacht that pairs a high standard of luxury with the functionality that Aquila is known for

STORY BY RYAN SWIFT



The Aquila boating brand is a unique trifecta of South African inspiration, US design and marketing, and Chinese production capacity. The man behind the brand, Lex Raas, is known for taking a bottom-up approach to design – start with what customers want, then build to match that demand.

Working with US boating giant MarineMax, which has an enormous database of customer input to call on, Raas developed Aquila's boats with massive market input. That has led to some distinctive hallmarks, such as the direct access to the bow area.

The new Aquila 70 is the result of a considered effort at canvassing multihull owners and, perhaps more importantly to a man like Lex Raas, monohull motoryacht owners, what they wanted in a power cat.

“The strong feedback we got was that a power cat needs to look more like a yacht. Not like a box,” said Raas. “It seemed like power cats were not being considered (by monohull buyers) because of the aesthetics.”

Raas reported that many potential buyers were also concerned that power cats didn't have much performance in terms of speed. “Those were the two main drivers for the Aquila 70.”

None of this means that the new 70 doesn't have all the features that have become synonymous with the Aquila brand. There is still the super-handly Portuguese bridge with direct access from the flybridge down to the forward bow area. There is easy accessibility all around the yacht, with wide side passages from the aft deck area forward and high rails for safety. There's the no-nonsense ethic for practical solutions that make life easier for operators.

But the looks of this new Aquila boat were shaped up dramatically, thanks to the sleek exterior lines, which are meant to look like a monohull yacht in profile. Add to that the hard focus on soft touches, like leather-bound grab rails, luxury brand fixtures, touch-sensitive appliances and Italian styling and furnishings in the main salon and the cabins.



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Above: The exterior design aimed at a sleeker, more luxurious look that resembles a monohull yacht





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There are also some intriguing nods to the digital age, thanks no doubt to all that customer feedback. There are iPad and iPhone wireless charging stations placed throughout the boat. Simply lay the phone down on a station, and the phone begins to charge. The engineering systems themselves can all be controlled via an iPad.

Perhaps one of the biggest advantages of the Aquila 70 is the master cabin. The designers placed this just forward of the main deck, with the bed straddling the bridge deck. The closets, vanity, and bathroom and shower are all down in the hulls. The master cabin spans the entire 8.2-metre beam of the Aquila 70, a size you'd expect on a superyacht of about 40 metres length or more.

Guests will also have plenty to smile about during their stay onboard. The VIP cabins have their beds positioned athwartships, facing out large windows in the hulls.

The layout on the main deck of the first Aquila 70 was done for the US market, with a galley up top, just behind the main deck helm station. Big sofas, large windows, a huge galley with extra refrigeration space and open access to the aft deck make this an appealing area.

From the spacious aft cockpit down to the transom, guests and owner are in for a treat. The huge transom/aft deck was designed as a place for a family or a large group to gather, talk, relax and swim. Between the hulls is the ramp, which deploys a custom Aquila 14 RIB tender. The ramp drops down to a slope, allowing the tender to slide off. A hooking system is used to retrieve the tender. While the tender is out, the ramp helps form a continuous area that guests can use to relax.

The aft deck even has a hole where an elegant shower pole can be placed, turning the aft area into a stylish wash-off area for people exiting the water.



Clockwise from top left: The tender deploys via a ramp system; the full-beam master cabin located on the bridgedeck forward; the interior features Italian styling and furnishings

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:
AQUILA 70

LOA
21.3M

BEAM
8.2M

DRAUGHT
1.45M

DISPLACEMENT
54,577KG (FULL LOAD)

FUEL CAPACITY
4,400L

CE CERTIFICATION
CATEGORY A (OCEAN)

ACCOMMODATION
8

MAX SPEED
27 KTS

ENGINES
2 X D13 1,000HP VOLVO
PENTA DIESELS

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As part from the “yacht feel” of the Aquila 70, there is also Aquila’s attention to engineering detail. The bulbous bows yield improved performance and reduce pitching motion, yielding a more comfortable ride. The main deck helm station doesn’t have a wheel; instead, control is maintained via Volvo Penta’s joystick system and thruster control.

Up on the flybridge, which can be completely enclosed, the helm has a commanding view of the surrounding sea for easy passage-making. Oversized display screens, up top and down below, make the captain’s job easier. An option on the 70 is to have pop-up joystick controls added to the sides of the Portuguese bridge, making manoeuvres in tight spaces or at the dock much easier. Aquila says that the 70 can be an owner-operated boat.

That said, there is the option of a crew cabin with twin bunks, accessed via hatchway on the port side of the aft cockpit area. There, the crew will find decent accommodation, plus a private shower and head.

Access to the engine rooms is via large watertight doors. The engineering areas are well lit, spacious and provide easy access to every system.



↑ Above: The 70’s fast displacement bows yield good performance at a range of speeds; Below: Spacious passageways allow easy movement around the whole yacht; Left: The flybridge helm station was designed to make it easier for owners to operate their yacht



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In keeping with the demands from potential buyers, the Aquila 70 can operate comfortably at a wide speed range

For engines, Aquila opted for twin 1,000-horsepower Volvo Penta diesels on a straight shaft, with joystick control over numerous control points for easy handling. In keeping with the demands from potential buyers, the Aquila 70 can operate comfortably at a wide speed range. At full throttle, the 70 manages over 27 knots. Throttling back to about 10 knots yields a range of about 1,000 nautical miles.

The 70 is also CE certified Category A – Ocean. This means that Hong Kong owners can consider trips to the Philippines, Hainan and Vietnam.

“We want everyone to see where Aquila is, and where it is going,” said Alain Raas, Aquila Boats Brand Manager. Aquila’s aim was to encourage luxury yacht buyers to think about the benefits of a power cat. With the new Aquila 70, they’ve given monohull buyers a compelling new option.