

ASIA FIRST FOR FAIRLINE FLAGSHIP

Fairline's upgraded Squadron 68 has already debuted in Asia and been handed over to happy owners, although the official world premiere of the British builder's flagship is at the Cannes Yachting Festival in September – when another hull is set to arrive in this region.

WORDS NICK HUNG PHOTOS SIMPSON MARINE





Pictured in the Gulf of Thailand, Asia's first new-edition Squadron 68 shows the model's new hull glazing and streamlined hard top with sliding sunroof

Fairline was one of the first yacht builders to reveal its line-up for this year's Cannes Yachting Festival, announcing that it would stage not one but two world premieres from September 6-11. The British builder will unveil its all-new Phantom 65 at the six-day show, while its other debutant will be the upgraded edition of its flagship Squadron 68.

The Oundle shipyard displayed the original Squadron 68 at the last pre-Covid edition of the Cannes show, in 2019, when its other global debuts included the F//Line 33. Last year, Fairline released a reconfigured, hard top version of the F//Line 33, while this year it's the turn of its flagship model to re-emerge new and improved.

The 2022 edition of the Squadron 68 includes a modernised exterior, but the main changes are the hard top and sunroof, a fresh interior layout with multiple lower-deck options, as well as new materials and lighting.

Paul Grys, Fairline Yachts' CEO, says: "Having taken onboard feedback from customers to further improve the Squadron 68, we're confident buyers will fall in love with it as much as we have."

The model's Asia premiere was held three months *before* its world premiere, with Simpson Marine displaying the first unit in the region in

June during TYS Pattaya. The dealership then handed over the yacht to its owners, with the family-and-friends celebrations including a scenic cruise around islands near Pattaya, where the boat is kept at Ocean Marina Yacht Club.

The Squadron 68 in Thailand tops 30 knots with the standard 1,150hp Cat C18 engines, a solid return for a yacht with a dry weight of 43 tonnes, while Fairline also offers 1,622hp Cat C32 engines for a couple of extra knots.

STREAMLINED RESTYLE

The new hull glazing reflects the design also seen on the Phantom 65, the first model of the brand's new sportbridge line. A thin black line runs from the swim platform before widening around the midships hull windows before a thinner band of glazing continues to a forward point. The new shape of the glazing reflects better the shape of the superstructure and hull.

The new hard top does the same. Instead of thin struts, the hard-top mast features elegant forward-raked supports that extend the flow of the aft superstructure on the main deck, highlighted on each side by Fairline's recognisable triple-fin signature.



The Pattaya-based hull includes the aft electric sunshade integrated into the hard top as well as a foredeck sky bimini, also pictured on the right



The enormous flybridge features an aft seating area (not shown), a central sofa with large dining table (left) and a forward lounge under the sunroof (right)

The original Squadron 68 was a tall-looking boat, but the new glazing and hard top disguise the height with a sporty, dynamic profile that benefits from exterior lines going in consistent directions.

Its features become apparent as you board the hydraulic high-low swim platform, which has a 500kg capacity so can carry and deploy a Williams TurboJet 325, for instance. Symmetrical stairways lead up to the aft cockpit, which has a C-shaped sofa and teak dining table, plus two bar stools by the galley window, which can flip up into the ceiling.

As we move along the starboard side deck, we're shown the side door by the lower helm, a new and important option according to Howard Prime, Simpson Marine's Country Manager for Thailand.

"The starboard side door is a key new feature," Prime says. "It means you can ventilate the helm really easily, but also those at the helm can get out to the side deck far more easily than having to walk out the back first."

KEEPING COVERED

The foredeck is an elegant and flexible social area, with a C-shaped sofa and a table facing a very wide sunpad area. The aft part of the sunpads contains a fold-up backrest that creates a two-seat sofa that

faces the table for a more rounded social gathering. The unit in Thailand includes the optional sky canopy for the foredeck, a useful extra in Asia.

The flybridge has always been a key highlight of any Squadron and the new 68 retains the excellent original layout. There are three separate social areas, starting behind the port-side stairs where modular seating can be arranged to face aft through the clear balustrade.

On the starboard side, there's a wet bar behind a large three-sided sofa that's cleverly angled to face across to the forward port corner, where there's a similar but smaller seating set-up in reverse. The twin-seat helm station is to starboard.

Hard top aside, the biggest change in the flybridge is above, where Fairline has replaced the slatted sunroof with a 3m by 2.3m sliding fabric sunroof, which offers much better ventilation and light when opened. An integrated electric sunshade can extend cover aft, while an optional sky canopy supported by poles can cover the entire aft flybridge.

SUMPTUOUS INTERIOR

The new edition also comes with the option of a tri-fold saloon door into the interior, where Fairline has changed things extensively,



The aft cockpit has a large C-shaped sofa and teak dining table, bar stools by the galley and new tri-fold saloon door



Aft view of the saloon, which features carpeted flooring and fabric-covered sofas; woodwork is in high-gloss walnut and maple

while the wood options remain impressive.

The hull in Thailand features high-gloss walnut and maple, while other options include satin walnut and lighter choices like satin oak or high-gloss oak. Flooring is in oak and available in white, smoked and Nero versions, while interior mood lighting is among other options.

The beautiful timber flooring and hand-crafted cabinetry is seen as soon as you step inside. The galley on the port side has a new design that maximises workspace and increases the fridge/freezer capacity, while there's the option of a dishwasher below the sink.

The dining area is to starboard and includes an adjustable table, an L-shaped leather sofa and matching low stools, which fit under the table when not in use.

Walk forward and the switch from timber flooring to carpet signifies entry into a saloon dominated by a large C-shaped sofa and a foldable, high-low dining/coffee table on a slightly elevated floor to port. This main lounging area faces a starboard two-seat sofa and a retractable television. Both saloon sofas are available in a range of fabrics.

The forward area includes the twin helm seats to starboard and companion seating in the form of a cosy, forward-facing corner sofa port side of stairs to the lower deck.

OPTIONS APLENTY

The steps arrive at the lower-deck lobby before a U-turn takes you to the owner's suite midships. The full-beam stateroom features a king-sized bed, bureau and drawer storage to starboard, and a large port-side sofa.

Forward, the en-suite guest cabin to starboard has more width than in the previous model plus the option of an electric bed conversion to switch between twin berths and a double bed. The VIP suite is in the bow and features hanging cupboards on both sides.

There are four options for the room port side of the staircase, including the utility room selected for the unit in Thailand. Alternatively, the area can be a day head, a fourth guest cabin with bunk beds, or even part of an extended VIP suite.

Fairline's options list is immense, and Asia's first unit is well specced, with tropical-strength air-conditioning plus television



The high-low saloon table (left) is also foldable; the aft galley neighbours the starboard dining area (right), which has a leather sofa and stools



The en-suite VIP cabin in the bow includes wardrobes on both sides

and movies running on a built-in wireless router. There's also an integrated Sonos audio system with three Sub stages, flush-mounted speakers, roaming speakers, amplifiers and subwoofers, as well as mobile waterproof Bluetooth add-ons.

Simpson Marine is already looking ahead to the arrival of a second Squadron 68, potentially as early as September, as the multi-brand dealership continues to build the profile of a shipyard it represents across Greater China and Southeast Asia.

"Each Fairline has a sleek, attractive exterior and features beautiful woodwork and attention to detail. However, they're also well-built and very seaworthy, with robust hulls, so they get lots of compliments from crew and clients on their handling," Prime says.

"Fairline is deservedly renowned as one of the top British builders and its range of models from about 30-70ft covers a very popular market segment and are great value considering the quality." ✂

www.fairline.com
www.simpsonmarine.com



Note: Lower deck shows utility room to port; the area can also be a day head, fourth guest cabin or part of an extended forward VIP suite

DECKS & SPECS

Length overall 21.12m (69ft 3in)	(285 US gallons)
Maximum beam 5.23m (17ft 2in)	Engine options 2 x Cat C18-1150;
Draft (unloaded) 1.57m (5ft 1in)	2 x Cat C32-1622
Air draft 6.13m (20ft 1in)	Maximum speed* 30 knots /
Dry weight (approx.) 43 tonnes	32 knots
Fuel capacity 4,177 litres	Capacity 16 people
(1,103 US gallons)	Berths 6-10
Water capacity 1,080 litres	* Depending on engine options



The full-beam master suite has a forward-facing king-size bed, sofa to port and bureau to starboard, while aft is the walk-in wardrobe and bathroom