

ASIA'S LEADING YACHTING LIFESTYLE MEDIA

YACHT

style

TOP 100 SUPERYACHTS OF ASIA-PACIFIC 2021 EDITION

SUPER MODEL: 106M AMADEA IN UAE
REVIEWS: AZIMUT MAGELLANO 25 METRI, ABSOLUTE NAVETTA 64,
GALEON 400 FLY, BENETEAU OCEANIS YACHT 54, BALI CATSPACE SAIL
LEADER: PETER McNULTY, FAIRLINE YACHTS
PROFILE: MARINE ITALIA DRIVES AZIMUT IN ASIA
OWNERS: ANSON CHAN, FRANK COLES
WATERFRONT: SILENT RESORTS' GLOBAL QUEST
SPECIAL FEATURE: ROLEX SUBMARINER

HONG KONG: HKD80
CHINA: RMB90
SINGAPORE: SGD12
MALAYSIA: MYR32
THAILAND: THB350
PHILIPPINES: PHP 450
INDONESIA: IDR 125,000
REST OF THE WORLD: USD12



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ISSUE 56



BENETTI 107M LANA

BENETEAU'S SPEEDING BEAUTY

Designed by Lorenzo Argento and Roberto Biscontini, the Italians behind Beneteau's First Yacht 53, the new Oceanis Yacht 54 combines racing yacht pedigree with exceptional comfort on deck and down below.

WORDS **ZUZANA PROCHAZKA**
PHOTOS **GILLES MARTIN-RAGET (RUNNING)**
GUIDO BARBAGELATA (EXTERIOR)
NICOLAS CLARIS (INTERIOR)



'The yacht is beautifully balanced. Once she finds her groove, you can take your hands off the wheel or steer with one finger.'

When Beneteau saw an opportunity to add a little thrill to cruising adventures, it repurposed the First Yacht 53 racer it introduced in 2019 and, with a few fashionable changes, reworked her into the new Oceanis Yacht 54. The result is a performance cruiser that sails like a racer, looks like a grande dame and joins the 62 in the French builder's flagship collection of sailing boats.

Beneteau entrusted Milan-based Roberto Biscontini as naval architect with fellow Italian Lorenzo Argento handling the exterior and interior design, the pair reuniting after working on the First Yacht 53, which has received multiple orders in Asia through Simpson Marine.

Biscontini's two decades of America's Cup experience influenced a balanced hull with a carefully positioned centre of buoyancy. The hull is modern and minimalist with a plumb bow, a vertical and open transom, a low coachroof, and a beam that's carried all the way aft.

The construction combines fibreglass stringers fixed to an aluminium substructure. The hull is cored with balsa to the keel and the infused construction makes the 54 a tonne heavier than her racing predecessor but still light for a cruiser of this size.

ON DECK

The aluminium, deck-stepped Sparcraft rig has two versions: standard air draft at 78ft 9in or the performance mast that adds almost 6ft and 33 per cent more sail area. Sail combinations include a self-tacking jib or 105 per cent genoa – as used on our test boat – and a furling mainsail, although a classic, full-batten main is an option. The sheeting angles are tight and with the composite sprit, you can add a Code 0 or a full spinnaker.

There's nothing on deck to catch a lazy sheet. Six pop-up wing cleats fold down neatly and the Lewmar windlass is mounted below deck.



Instead of one cockpit table, there are smaller tables on either side, allowing a central path; the garage can store an 8ft inflated RIB

The bulwarks are high to provide good footing when heeling. Since the stanchions are mounted on top of these bulwarks, the lifelines are high as befits an offshore vessel. By contrast, the cabinhouse is low, almost more of a suggestion than a real structure, so the deck feels elongated and the forward visibility is exceptional.

There are also two choices of keel: standard at 8ft 2in and shoal at 6ft 7in, which is what our test boat had fitted. Combined with twin rudders, the Oceanis Yacht 54 is beautifully balanced. Once she finds her groove, you can take your hands off the wheel or steer with one finger.

The cockpit is a stunner and superyachts have nothing on Argento's layout. The social area is ahead of the wheels and out of the way of working crew. Instead of one cockpit table in the centre, there are smaller tables on either side, which allows for a clear path from the stairs to the transom. Long sunpads on either side of the companionway and forward are great places to relax and sunbathe during the day or watch the stars in the evening.

Twin-angled binnacles hold the wheels and slim dashboards with

12-inch B&G multifunction displays. Engine controls are on top of the binnacle rather than at knee level, which makes docking simpler. The working cockpit is on a single level and the aft deck provides a great place to observe all the action but still stay out of the way. From here you can walk all the way to the bow with just a step up. It's a very civilised way to reach the side decks – crawling over the cockpit coaming is a distant memory.

Four Harken winches manage the lines, which are led aft to the helms where the driver can manage them easily while sitting astride the small outboard seat. The aft garage is accessible via a cockpit hatch or when the transom is lowered electrically and can hold an inflated 8ft RIB or a deflated 9ft one.

LAYOUT & ACCOMMODATION

The Oceanis Yacht 54 is a semi-custom build, so you can personalise much of the interior by swapping in equipment like a bottle fridge, dishwasher or generator. You can also tinker with the furniture



L-shaped benches at the helms offer multiple seating areas; the two cockpit tables can be lowered and covered for larger lounging areas



The garage is accessible via a cockpit hatch or transom, which can be lowered electrically to double as the swim platform



The interior by Lorenzo Argento is available in walnut or oak, the latter shown in these pages; the two double guest cabins are aft of the stairs

and add a navigation station in the forward port corner of the saloon.

The layout on our test boat included three cabins and three heads. The alternative layout is to forego the port head and elongate the galley, a good choice for those who want to entertain aboard, although it means both guest cabins sharing a bathroom. A crew cabin can be added in the forepeak.

Below, as on deck, the approach is minimalist, with necessary functionality tucked away discreetly. Beneteau's Ship Control, a highly customised Schreiber digital switching system, reduces the number of visible switches and controls. Appliances are hidden and the seating is multifaceted so additional people can be accommodated for an elegant dinner.

There are two steps that interrupt otherwise flat flooring. One step down is into the galley and the other is into the master stateroom forward. Here you'll find a large island berth, a split head and shower, an impressive amount of stowage space, plenty of light from the hull windows, and 'his and hers' overhead hatches.

Our test boat had the darker walnut finish, while a light oak colour

is also available. A detail worthy of mention is the double rail at the companionway that came in handy when we moved in and out of the boat in our gusty conditions.

UNDER SAIL AND POWER

It's a delight to report that, for once, we had the perfect conditions for a test sail. Warm sun, flat water and a breeze of 15-20 knots allowed us to really see what this yacht could do. In 17 knots of true wind, we made 9.1 knots at 65 degrees apparent wind angle. When we hoisted the Code 0 and fell off to a beam reach, we topped out at 10.2 knots of boat speed and never reefed.

She's slippery and exhilarating. The one thing an owner will never be with this yacht is bored.

Turning a race boat into a cruising yacht can be tricky. The original is meant to sail fast and heel hard. We were on our ear almost right off the dock. This may appeal to some, but it can be a sporty ride for cruisers used to keeping their gear and bodies in place.



The photos above show the layout without an ensuite bathroom for the port guest cabin (left), with the space used for an extended galley (right)



The galley and desk are to port, with the dining area to starboard

Our boat was fitted with the upgraded 110hp Yanmar turbo diesel and a straight shaft, although standard propulsion is an 80hp Yanmar with saildrive. The larger engine makes this big boat nimble, while the retractable Sidepower bow thruster helps in narrow fairways and tight slips. Beneteau's Dock & Go joystick steering system is an option with the 80hp engine, but with just a thruster, she's quite manoeuvrable and turns on a dime.

We motored at 9.2 knots and 3,300 rpm at wide-open throttle, while a more economical cruise can be found at 8.6 knots and 2,400rpm.

Given her racing origins, it's no surprise that the Oceanis Yacht 54 is an exciting boat that delivers a fast cruise. With the beautifully redesigned cockpit and depowered rig, she's classy and a slightly tamer option for cruisers who want to arrive everywhere first but in absolute comfort and style. ⚓

www.beneteau.com
www.simpsonmarine.com

DECKS & SPECS



Three-bathroom version shown; alternative layout replaces port bathroom with extended galley

Length overall 17.12m (56ft 2in)	Air draft 24.0m (78ft 9in); 25.8m (84ft 8in) for performance rig
Hull length 15.98m (52ft 5in)	Sail area 128sqm (1,378sqft) with furling mainsail
Length waterline 15.39m (50ft 6in)	Fuel tank capacity 400 litres (106 US gallons)
Maximum beam 5.00m (16ft 5in)	Fresh water capacity 720 litres (190 US gallons)
Draft (standard/shoal) 2.5m/2.0m (8ft 2in/6ft 7in)	Engine options Yanmar 80hp (saildrive) / 110hp (shaft)
Light displacement 16.6 tonnes	



The forward master suite has two skylights, an ensuite bathroom to starboard, plus masses of storage and hanging space