

# THE OFFSHORE 45

by Peter Brady

The development of the Offshore 45 began when we were visited by a couple who had recently sold the sailing catamaran they had owned for five years. They had loved the stability and the deck space of the sailing cat, but being retired with grandchildren they wanted something more suitable for our climate with more spacious accommodation and more deck security in the form of bulwarks for both themselves and their grandchildren. Moving regularly between their residences in Victoria and Queensland also meant the boat needed range, performance and to be offshore capable as this length of coast can be unforgiving at times. They had pretty much looked at everything on the market and so by the time they visited our yard, knew exactly what they did and didn't want. We showed them over the West Coast 49 under construction and then talked through the features of all the other models in the Pathfinder 'M' range. They particularly liked the owner's stateroom with walk-around bed on the Offshore 49 as well as the trawler style side doors and security of the bulwarks. Unfortunately their marina berth restricted the length of a new boat to around 45ft and so asked if it was possible to have all the features of the 49 plus en-suites to the mid-cabins rather than a bathroom at deck level in the 45ft length.

**What makes a full width owner's stateroom with a normal domestic sized bed so desirable in both monohulls and multihull power boats?**

It is the feeling of normalcy and user friendliness when moving around the

cabin and getting in and out of bed. Now this may not seem such a big deal to younger more physically active people, it is however important to older boaties as this ease of movement and the safety it provides may just be the difference in continuing boating for another 10 years of their lives. The location of this owner's stateroom forward and on a single level floor on the power catamaran makes it superior to monohulls where it is predominately located under the saloon floor where foot traffic noise from above can be annoying and the floors are either multiple levels or angled to fit the shape of the hull. This arrangement on the Offshore 45 effectively provides the owners with a private living space large enough for a king-sized bed and reading seats if desired. There are opening portholes on the front and one side for cross flow ventilation and light, plus the en-suite also has portholes on two sides. There is a large amount of space for storage including a full height hanging locker, with full height mirrors used on the aft wall to create the feel of an even larger cabin by reflecting the light around all areas.

**So why is so hard to fit a full width stateroom on bridgedeck level in a 45ft power catamaran?**

Mainly getting the looks right as full headroom on top of good bridgedeck clearance creates height and this height is right up near the bows where it is hard to either disguise or blend away. On a longer boat this forward cabin height is less of a design challenge as the cabin can be set back further from the bows which makes it less noticeable. The other option I had

was to keep the cabin shorter and just have headroom for a couple of feet at the aft section of the cabin with multiple floor levels as some other power cats do, but having listened to people commenting at boat shows about having to duck and weave to avoid hurting their head and neck on suddenly diminishing headroom, I was determined not to go with the half-headroom option. This meant a great deal of juggling with sheerline heights and styles in combination with the cabin profile and proportions to get it to work and as the Offshore 49 and now 45 are a modern take on the Gentleman's Express Cruiser, they have quite a masculine, purposeful look anyway and so I was even able to include some more practical features such as the cabin top overhangs into the design. In many ways these boats are just a 21st Century version of the ever popular Reef Cruiser in Australia and the Gulf Cruiser in New Zealand that have been providing quality family power boating for over 70 years, with the added multihull advantages of stability, performance and range.

Surprisingly getting the looks right with the owner's stateroom forward was the easier part of the design brief: the more difficult part was fitting the en-suites into the hulls for the lower bedrooms whilst keeping privacy, because my displaning hulls are narrower than some of the newer semi-displacement power cats coming on the market that trade performance and range for greater hull room. I managed to fit a good sized bathroom each side by nibbling a little from the aft corners of the master state-room under the side decks,

with the next challenge how to keep each hull private so that guests could move from the bedroom to the bathroom unseen. To date we have separated the en-suite from the bedroom usually by the access stairs and just accepted the loss of privacy while moving from the bedroom to the bathroom. I am not a fan of the sliding L-shaped doors that are used on some production cats as they rattle and are not particularly private or intuitive to use being suspended over the stairs, so they were not an option. It took some time to find a solution in the form of a conventional bi-fold door at the bottom of a U-shaped set of stairs that both created a large doorway into the cabin and ensured complete privacy from the rest of the boat if closed. Even when the door is open, the bedroom has visual privacy and there is also a door to the bathroom so it can be closed off from the bedroom when in use as a toilet or shower. I have set one of these bedrooms up with twin single bunks and the other as a double, however they could both be doubles or singles to suit individual's needs.

With the bathrooms now shifted from deck level down into the hulls, the wheelhouse is completely open plan with 360° visibility from the helm station forward. The trawler style doors each side allow quick access from the helm, to the side decks for docking and sliding windows on the sides and back provide light and ventilation, yet are shaded from the sun and rain by the cabin top overhangs. A large sliding door provides access to the aft deck providing a seamless connection from the wheelhouse to the aft deck. As the wheelhouse floor is above the hull cabins, it can be arranged to take full advantage of the power cat's beam with an L-shaped galley and island bench to starboard that would put many apartments to shame with its facilities and storage. To port is a large L-shaped dining and lounging area with a deep back cushion that can be removed to create a day bed so the helmsman can always have company at night or on long passages.

The 16sqm (153sqft) covered back deck is larger than most 20m (60ft) monohulls and features a eutectic fridge-freezer and washing machine-drier in a cabinet on the starboard side that also acts as servery in combination with the window over the galley bench. The transom beam is fitted with a barbecue, sink, deck shower, large storage lockers for fenders and ropes and a step down each side for access to the water or the tender. On the foredeck, the anchor winch is located under the central section of the deck seating storage units,

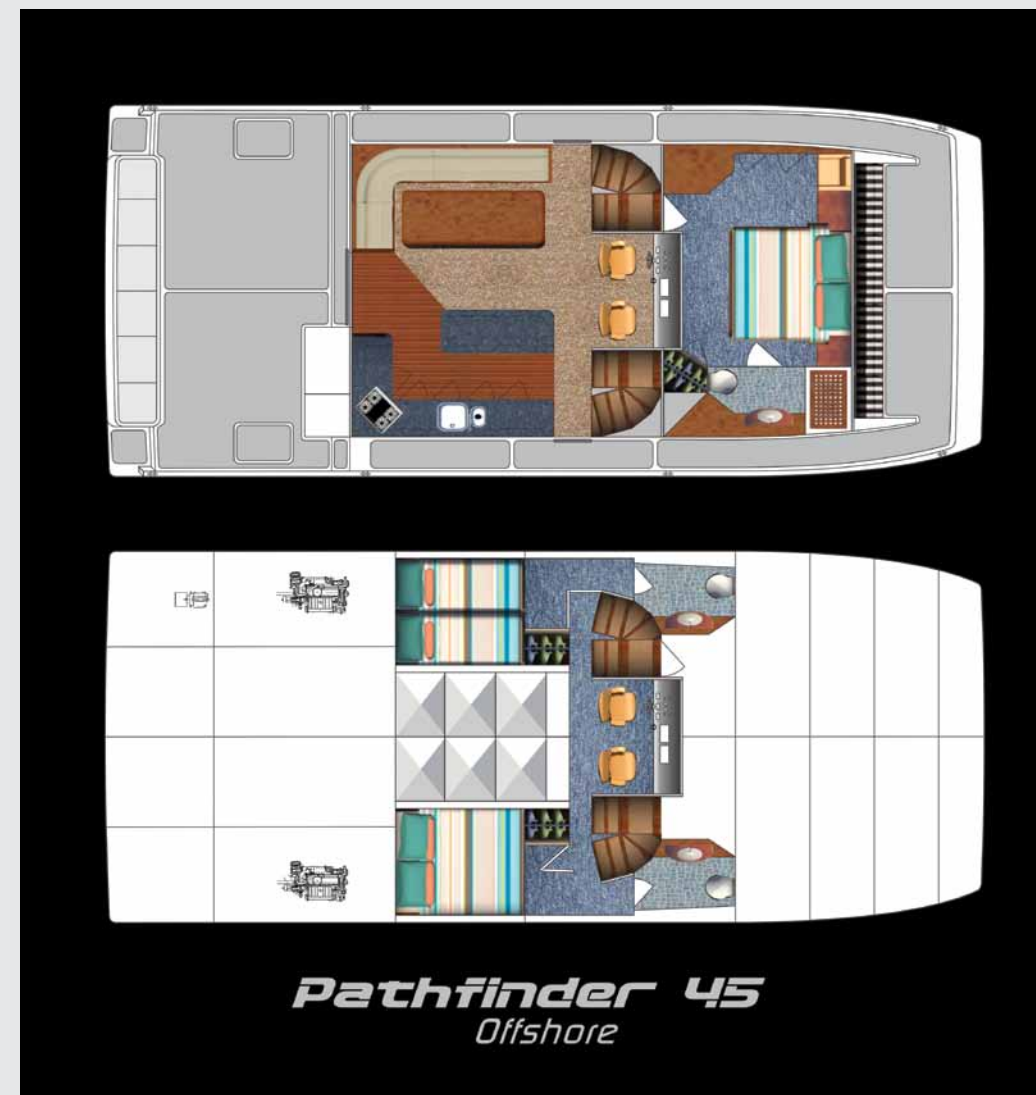
again with plenty of room for fenders and ropes without having to get on your hands and knees to get to them.

The Offshore 45 is powered by 2 x Yanmar 4LMA-STP diesels producing 240hp through Yanmar 2.5:1 ratio gearboxes, with a top speed of 22kts and cruise effortlessly at 17kts, sipping 44-48 litres per hour in total. We have used the same tank location up on the wingdeck as the Pilothouse 17.4 and the West Coaster 49, providing 2,100 litres of fuel in total and 1,100 litres of water, but there is the room and option to change to smaller water tanks in combination with a watermaker if an increase in fuel capacity is desired.

Construction will feature a moulded hull and a new modular moulded deck and cabin construction system I have been developing using infused vinyl-ester resins and foam cores with the first boat built to the NSCV rules in commercial survey. The fitout will be our signature 'tropical modern' using waxed Teak timberwork in combination with softer textured panels to create a contemporary ambience that is modern yet definitely marine.

I expect the Offshore 45 to be a very popular model as it includes so many

features that clients have been requesting over the years. Its low height off the water will allow it to go under bridges that restrict access to many waterfront developments and its shallow draft and ability to take the bottom safely with its full length keels makes it perfect for exploring new cruising grounds. It has a high enough top speed and the facilities to make a fine day cruiser, yet has the range, strength and seaworthiness to long-range cruise offshore around Australia or out into the Pacific Basin. Its stability and ride quality make it perfect for those less physically able or with less robust stomachs. With the protection of bulwarks all around, the Offshore 45's decks will not only feel safe, they will be safe and the combination of excellent visibility and ease of movement from the helm to the side decks will make the Offshore 45 very easy to handle for one to two people. With a day crowd on board, the three separate entertaining areas will work well with privacy for different generations while still keeping all areas visible from the helm. Not only is the styling of the Offshore 45 reminiscent of an earlier era, so too is its design and construction ethos with its focus on practicality, seaworthiness and strength rather than being a slave to fashion.



**Pathfinder 45**  
Offshore