

Iliad 70



Powered catamarans have many attractions for both the cruising boater and day sailor alike, who can enjoy the space, stability and frugality, as found on the ILIAD 70, reports KEVIN GREEN.

Australian Company Multi hull solutions has brought to market a remarkable new line of powered catamarans with the debut of the Iliad Marque in 2019. The ILIAD 70 debut at the Sydney Boat Show has followed on from the ILIAD 50'S arrival at Sanctuary Cove and these will be joined by a 90 Later, according to company boss Mark Elkington who was heavily involved in the conception and design. "I explored about 50 yards around the world for an offshore passage maker style of vessel, that was tough enough to be beached if necessary, but most were using IPS engines, which are too vulnerable so our choice was either forget about this market opportunity or put a team together and build something ourselves."

The popularity of explorer-style yachts has never been higher as people seek to escape busy waterways while embracing the latest technologies that liberates them from onshore services. For motor yachts, fuel efficiency is a key feature and this is where catamarans with their low-drag hulls become attractive.

Among the Iliad design remits is the fact that these are semi-displacement Chinese built yachts that can do double digit cruising speeds while offering vast ranges. "" explained Elkington. The key to this a wide array of engine choices, suited to customers needs, all shaft-driven. But this is not just another powercat, as Elkington explained: "The Iliad complements our Fountaine Pajot range (which has dedicated powercats up to 50 foot), which are IPS driven boats ideal for coastal cruising, a very different market from the ILIAD buyer where we start

at 50 foot because you need that size to have all the equipment that a true passage making boat requires.”



The squared-off hull and superstructure creates vast space throughout the three levels of the Iliad 70; including the enormous flybridge. Compared to the Iliad 50, the 70 felt huge which indeed it is according to the stats which show it to be 60 tons fully loaded compared to about 30 tons for the Iliad 50. But what you get with the 70 footer is a superyacht catamaran with a ballroom sized saloon and accommodation for 10 people in five cabins plus ensuite crew quarters in the port forepeak.

The accommodation highlight is the owner’s decklevel suite that has panoramic views forward and uses most of the 9.15m beam. This layout requires the inside console to be perched high above it, with a second steering position on the flybridge. Throughout the topsides, vertical bulkheads with tall windows ensure plenty of natural light and views when seated at the lounge or working in the galley.

The saloon layout has the galley aft to port with lounge opposite, and flows seamlessly out to the deck where diners sit at a twelve person teak table under the flybridge extension. A cockpit wetbar and grill complements the inside galley as well. The sizeable galley befits the superyacht proportions of the ILIAD 70 with space for several chefs behind the bench which also supports them when rolling in a seaway. Cooking is done on a five burner gas stove with electric oven underneath and microwave overhead.



Stylish finishes included lacquered doors and precise joinery with various cubbyholes to maximise storage. There's also spacious Corian worktops and two deep stainless sinks nearby the small dishwasher. Large cupboards overhead and under the worktops are ideal for victualling long-term and also has a dishwasher, while a tall double door fridge will hold a lot of perishables; plus a second set of drawer fridges are in the hull. Other white goods include a washing machine installed in the starboard hull. My only complaint was the lack of fiddles to prevent crockery rolling onto the parquet flooring.

The lounge couches are sumptuously upholstered in cream Ultra leather including a chaise lounge and face the galley bench which also supports a large flatscreen television. Adjoining the lounge on starboard is a separate cubby with desk and custom chair. Walking around this loft style saloon revealed some interesting details not usually found on production boats, illustrating the level of customisation available – such as mirrored finishes, customised chairs and unusual materials which gave a definite 'bling' factor to this first hull. "The owner asked for this level of finish that even included us cutting raw stone for sinks and a very high amount of customisation but this is what we can offer owners," said Elkington.



At the business end of the Iliad 70, a climb to the portside console gives me clear views over the foredeck and beside the helm there's even a small lounge for guests to accompany the skipper on a single bucket seat. Two Raymarine screens dominate the console with electronic throttles and thrusters (on each bow). Other essentials fitted include the autopilot and Quick windlass controls. Flir cameras give the steerer good awareness both inside and out as well. Underneath this elevated area is the main electrical board.

Generous living space is the essence of large catamarans but using the full beam by creating a deck-level owner's suite gives the Iliad 70 an outstanding feature. It has a forward facing queen bed for panoramic views through the tall windows which have curtains to ensure privacy and shade. Storage is included in the back bulkhead which has two sliding doors to seal the area off but when open it gives vision through the boat and that essential airflow required for tropical waters. There's also under-bed storage for the owner and more down in the starboard hull which has steep staircase to the ensuite bathroom. The long staircase reminds me how large the Iliad 70 is when I go down to check the bathroom. Ablutions include a separate cubicle, electric head and needless to say space is plentiful. The hulls have four double cabins plus a crew berth. Accessed from the middle of the saloon on both sides, the main hull accommodation comprises two aft cabins which are symmetrical with athwart ships queen beds and bathrooms behind them. Again, there's spacious ablutions with large shower cubicles and good natural light but no opening hatch.

The starboard hull's forward berth on our review boat came with two single bunks and a walkway between, to the forward bathroom. It's corridor contained bench space and a washing machine in a lazarette. Climbing over to the portside forward cabin reveals a small double bed with ensuite alongside and

even desk space. Yet more good use of space is in the adjoining corridor which has double Vitrifrigo fridge drawers and storage. Throughout the cabins, tall wardrobes are ideal for long-term packing but were marred by only having rather weak magnetic closing but only a small blemish on what is otherwise exemplary accommodation with an outstanding finish.



The flybridge covers nearly half the hull so is spacious for both people and the tender. Long-range cruisers want tenders clear of the water and only deployed for longer periods, so the Iliad 70's sits on the back of the flybridge in chocks to be deployed by crane. For regular use it could be kept on the hydraulic swim platform. Some day-boating owners may prefer a jacuzzi up here or a cocktail bar, "just ask us" says Mark Elkington. The flybridge is dominated by the central lounge with sunbeds and the galley wetbar with barbecue which even has its own drinks bar with stools. Impressive. Seating twelve people in style while also catering for them with the barbecue, makes this a convivial area, protected by the hardtop bimini. The skipper can also enjoy this area as well, seated at the starboard side console. Controls are a replica of the main console but handily on the opposite side so ideal for docking whatever side-to you require.

A single set of wide stairs guides me down to the Flexiteek clad deck where I walk along wide side decks with deep bulwarks to the bows. The effort is worthwhile when I stretch out on the foredeck lounge sunbed then sit upright on the sunken flooring to write my notes. Around me are storage lockers for fenders and ancillary gear plus the essential anchor arrangement; but a rather small Quick windlass with good rode that included a sizeable Ultra anchor. Ideally a larger windlass with capstan and a second roller should be added for

those coral atoll adventures. Other key deck gear included aft capstans and sizeable cleating all round.



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The infused hull is built to CE A category standard and has solid fibreglass base and mini keels to allow a grounding (or hull scrub on a tidal beach). Watertight bulkheads are used throughout – in the engine room, the central hull and in case of, collision on the bows. "It's a full vinylester hull, not just below the waterline but above as well with monolithic or solid glass around the keel line and key parts," said Elkington. Elsewhere, PVC closed-cell infusion has been used by the experienced Xinlong yard, who were subject to visits by independent European CE inspectors at key stages of the build.

Engine room access is via two large hatches on the aft decks where a tall ladder takes me down to the Volvo Penta D11-725. These are in-line 6-cylinder units, 10.8-litre capacity fed by diesel unit injectors with twin-entry turbos that vent via a water-cooled exhaust manifold – that proved quiet during our time at sea. Diesel storage in separate alloy tanks.

Again, space is at a premium so room for the technician to access the service points, including Racor fuel filters and in the starboard hull, the 22KVA

generator which powers the owner's dive compressor plus watermaker. Other quality electrics included Victron charger/ converters and a bank of eight AGM gel house batteries (200ah). The electrical panel is positioned high up on the bulkheads and a fire suppression systems (supported by Flir camera monitoring) finishes off these well thought-out engine rooms.

The ILIAD voyage of classical history sadly would have to wait as our time only allowed a sojourn on Sydney Harbour before new owners were to have their maiden voyage. So without further ado skipper Leon and I cast-off from Birkenhead Point. Having sailed the ILIAD 50 with Leon, I asked him his thoughts on handling this larger sibling: "Yes she's a much bigger boat but her weight keeps things under control, so she handles just fine." Pushing us off the quay required the bow thruster and one engine, all smoothly done aided by the Seastar hydraulic steering wheel on the flybridge. Accelerating clear of the no-wash zone we sedately motored under the Sydney Harbour bridge with only a faint murmur from the Volvos as we cruised at 8 knots (giving an impressive 2,000 plus mile range).

Snug behind the tall console and aided by clear plastic spray screens the alfresco steering was enjoyable, with enough vision to give me confidence to accelerate. A roar from the Volvos and distinct rise of bows was felt as the ILIAD 70 sped up to its fast cruising speed of 17 knots which greatly increased the apparent wind, which I used as an excuse to try the inside console as we approached Sydney heads.

SPECIFICATIONS

Boat Design Name:	Iliad 70
Year Launched:	2019
Builder:	Xinlong Yachts, China
Designer:	Riccardo Bulgarelli
LOA:	21.08m
Beam:	9.15m
Displ: (Light):	46,000 kg
Max Speed:	21 knots
Construction:	GRP
Fuel Cap:	7600 litres
Water Cap:	1300 litres
Engine Make:	2 x Volvo Penta D11-725
Drive Train:	Shaft
Generator:	Cummins Onan 17.5KW
Thrusters:	Sidepower
Tabs:	Zipwake 450
Underwater Lights:	Aqualuma
Anchor Winch:	Quick
Aircon:	Climma
Watermaker:	HRO Seafari
MFD:	Raymarine GS165 15" MFD x 4
Autopilot:	Raymarine RMK-10
Rise & Fall Platform:	Besenzoni
Priced From:	USD\$3,300,000
Certification:	CE Cat. A-12, B-12, C-20, D-30

FUEL & PERFORMANCE DATA

Fuel capacity: 7600 litres

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/NM	Range(NM)
600	4.1	6.5	1.600	4200
1000	7.8	20	2.600	2600
1500	10.9	63	5.800	1100
2000	14.5	150	11.000	620
2200	17.0	180	11.000	620
2500	22.4	260	12.000	570

Range is calculated on 90% of the fuel capacity.

Inside, and perched high up on the single helm seat, again vision was good, including being able to duck down to see aft or simply view the Flir camera on the Raymarine screen. A tendency to oversteer was my short experience at the helm but of course many owners simply click the autopilot on when going in a straight line.

For the record I pushed the throttles fully down to watch the numbers rise to an impressive 22.4 knots while noting that the vases on the galley work bench didn't budge an inch. Of course there was only small chop met at the Sydney heads but the tall bridgedeck clearance (1.25m) should also ensure comfort even in a bumpy seaway on the Iliad 70.

Undoubtedly an accomplished cruising catamaran and a credit to Australian ingenuity. Can't wait to see the 90 though!

