



ILIAD 62

## OBVIOUS APPEAL

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**E**scaping the madding crowd requires self-sufficiency and an efficient vessel – something Australian-owned ILIAD Catamarans knew when conceiving its range of powered catamarans. Lifestyle, of course, is the main driver for the surge in demand for these vessels, and their inherent features, such as frugality and shallow draft, mean they're also ideal explorer boats. The first ILIAD 50 arrived in Australia in 2019, joined in 2020 by an ILIAD 70 in a line-up that includes 53, 62 and 74 models. For 2022, the key milestone has been the arrival of the first 62, which made its debut at this year's Sydney International Boat Show. It certainly made an impression, evidenced by the number of visitors that thronged its three levels and by the fact that one couple from America – Bob and Dolores – flew in and actually bought it during the show. Bob and Dolores have been sailing their Hunter 335 yacht around Tampa in Florida, US, for a couple of years. Dolores, a retired physician, and Bob, a former energy company CFO, had busy professional lives, saying they “lived in 15-minute doses.”

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Although Bob was a non-sailor before buying the Hunter, Dolores has been sailing since the 1980s. The Gulf of Mexico is a moody waterway, which is one reason Dolores got travel ideas, and for that Bob agreed a

larger boat was required. They chose a power catamaran for two major reasons: comfort, and entertaining family and friends. “We have four kids – we want to get them and our grandkids aboard and go places,” says Delores. “We wanted a catamaran instead of a monohull because to get something with the space we wanted, we’d probably need to go to 80 feet in a monohull. Stability was important, too,” she continues. “Our family are non-boaters, so we wanted them to feel comfortable. It’s telling that the first 62 had only been on display for a day before Bob and Delores bought it, despite the fact it was a stock vessel and they’d been keen on a custom cat. It was the level of detailing that changed their minds, something that is characteristic ILIAD.

“Our management team at the ILIAD shipyard continues to strive for perfection, no matter how much customisation an owner wants.” explains Mark Elkington, ILIAD’s CEO and founder, confirming the exceptionally high level of detailed finish and semi-custom build as key market differentiators, along with offering fully optioned base boats. The space that cats offer is also a key draw, and that’s evident from the very top of the ILIAD 62, where a huge flybridge extends right aft.

There’s a semi-covered area with U-shaped lounge midships that seats ten; opposite is a bar with stools that includes an electric plate and bar fridge. Offset to port forward is the helm, featuring a Raymarine HybridTouch screen, which complements another (optional) helm in the saloon. The aft area is open and multifunctional, with options including a tender davit, sun pads and a spa pool. Clears help weatherproof the forward areas under the GRP hardtop but, says Elkington, you can also specify a fully enclosed wheelhouse with internal stairs. One deck down, the aft cockpit makes good use of the cat’s beam, with a wet bar, electric grill and table for eight acting as an alfresco extension to the saloon and aft galley, and a convenient head. Forward, there are twin sun beds, and lockers housing the anchor set-up.

The rode (80-kilogram Ultra anchor) runs under the nacelle, safely away from bare feet, and is controlled by a Quick 3000 W vertical windlass, which I’d prefer to be larger given the 50-tonne loaded hull. A second roller is a worthwhile option on new builds. Moving back aft, each hull has moulded steps into the water, and the hydraulic swim platform can house a tender. Here, also, are the hatches to each engine. The standard fitting is for 440 hp Volvo Penta shaft drives, but several options up to 725 hp are available. “Our slogan is freedom of choice,” says Elkington. “This includes most of the systems, such as engines and electronics, which the buyer can preference, and we’re happy to advise, of course.”

Only leading industry standard components are used, such as Racor filters, Victron Energy inverters and a Sea-Fire automatic fire suppression system. Service access to the oilways and belts is also adequate, as are the quadrant and steering linkages.

Other key systems here include the 17-kilowatt Cummins Onan generator and hot- water system. This is all housed in a sturdily built CE A category hull with a solid fibreglass base and mini keels to allow a grounding (or hull scrub on a tidal beach). The bridge deck clearance is 1.15 metres, a decent height that minimises wave impact on the nacelle.

The U-shaped galley supports the cook in a seaway, but an island bench can be specified. Appliances include a four-plate electric hob with a separate oven, dishwasher, and an impressive array of six-drawer fridge-freezers. Other white goods include a washing machine in the owner's hull.

Two deep stainless sinks sit in the HI-MAC composite worktops. Large cupboards are ideal for victualling long-term, plus there's watertight storage in the nacelle – ideal for maintaining the temperature of your wine. The detailing and finish is remarkable – the joinery is hand-finished in most places and includes rounded ends, curved cocktail tabletops and immaculate stitching in the Ultraleather couches.

The owner's suite takes the port hull. A large island bed is in the stern; ablutions are in the bow with vanity/desk midships. A walk- in closet aft acts as a sound buffer from the adjoining engine room, and the athwartship queen bed faces rectangular portlights that will be bigger in the next hull. Sumptuous American oak panelling gives a cosy feel.

Attention to detail includes quality metal door/cupboard fittings, petite chairs, and a sumptuously padded couch along with strategically placed handrails.

The ensuite benefits from the tall topsides and opening portlights give essential airflow. Forward is the washroom with a washer/ dryer, sink, fridge, cupboards, and a ladder leading to a large escape hatch onto the deck.

In the starboard hull, the two double berths with ensuite bathrooms are equally well appointed. The forward berth leads to another cabin with bunks, and there's natural aeration.

Heading out on hull #1, which was fitted with twin Volvo Penta D6-600s, leaving the berth required little effort from skipper Michael 'Nod' Crook –

just a nudge of bow thruster before gently powering away. Most cats respond to judicious use of the throttles to spin the hulls, but given the windage from the flybridge, a thruster on each hull is welcome.

At sea I took control. Leaning against the bolster seat on the flybridge with the steering wheel at waist height, the views were superb. Steering was instantaneous because of the electric/hydraulic steering system and wide- apart twin rudders.

We started in trawler mode at the long- range speed of 10 knots, which gives a superb 2,000 nautical miles – slowing by a knot increases this to an incredible 3,294 nautical miles.

Throttles down and Interceptor tabs tweaked to ease planing, we hit 21 knots. This speed reduces range significantly but it's good to know it's there if you need it.

Offshore, the 62 didn't groan as we broached a few rollers, while at the saloon helm the steering experience was comfortable but less thrilling. The open-plan layout allows clear views aft, and the comfortable double seat supported me well as we glided home on what is undoubtedly a superb power cat – one that can take you to those distant horizons without worrying about your next fuel stop.

For Bob and Delores, the ILIAD 62 concluded a lengthy search. "We'd been looking for a 55- to 60-foot power catamaran that we can run fairly economically, using solar power and so on, to basically use to explore the world. We started looking at sustainability and eco-boats, but they're still five years off," says Delores.

Having bought the Sydney ILIAD 62, the couple will explore the Australian region, in particular the Gold Coast and Tasmania, before moving the boat to the Caribbean. When we saw the 62, it just felt like our fully fitted home already!" they enthuse.

It's quite a home, being 48 tonnes loaded, so they're starting out with an Australian skipper and crew to show them the ropes. "When I talked up to this boat at the show it was huge, which made me a little nervous, especially with the flybridge as well," Delores concludes. but when I walked on it gave me the feel of a Tell-outfitted home; not something that came at of a factory, and not ostentatious. The ILIAD dis subtle, understated and quality."