

ON TEST THIS MONTH

P74 >

ETAP 46

The distinctive Etap design has undergone a leap in size – James Jermain finds out whether this boat is as practical as she is striking



P78 > BOAT SECURITY

Imagine a boat that could text your mobile when it was in trouble. Toby Hodges tests it out




P82 > NEW GEAR

Fresh from Southampton Boat Show, YM's Technical Editor, Toby Hodges, rounds up the latest new gear



Not just another cat

A welter of catamarans are designed for the blue-water charter market, so it's nice to find a pure cruiser that is aimed at the private buyer. James Jermain finds out what makes this thoroughly modern creation so different



'Lower and sleeker than her predecessors, she is certainly no heavyweight and is lighter than several of her competitors'

Apart from the rig, which is like nothing currently on the market, the Broadblue 385 could be mistaken for one of the modern cruising catamarans popular in the charter hotspots of the world. But don't be fooled, this is not just another charter cat. On the one hand she is designed to be at home pottering with the

family around the coast, dipping into shallow creeks and running up on to sandy beaches. On the other she is intended to be capable of ploughing across oceans, home for a pelagic lifestyle, safe, strong and easily handled.

We expect Broadblue catamarans, as successors to the famous Prout range, to be well out on the conservative wing of multihull

design but her looks, and her dimensions, show that in most respects she is a thoroughly modern creation. Lower and sleeker than her predecessors, she is certainly no heavyweight and is lighter than several of her competitors. But her beam is comparatively narrow, her bows have more reserve buoyancy and her sterns are finer than the current norm.

Apart from the rig, the most obvious hangover from her Prout roots is the full-length rigid bridgedeck. The narrow beam, fine sterns and buoyant bows resist pitchpoling better than beamier shapes, while the solid bridgedeck creates a very strong and durable structure, as well as allowing a longer and more spacious saloon. The boat also remains drier in a seaway.

There are drawbacks to these design principles. The long bridgedeck is more susceptible to slamming though it is well clear of the water. It is not as fast a configuration, particularly off the wind when the stern sections create less lift. But the well-rounded hulls are good at carrying the loads a cruising boat tends to accumulate, particularly for offshore passage-making. The long, low-profile keels provide great directional stability enhanced by substantial skegs and big rudders.

But back to the rig: Broadblue offers two alternatives of which the one YM sailed is the 'standard'. The mast step on the after saloon bulkhead, and the consequent tiny main and large genoa, comes straight from the Prout archive. But it is retained for good reasons. This is a particularly strong part of the boat; control lines fall naturally into the cockpit without friction losses in turning blocks; the huge, heavy main, which often requires at least a two-to-one purchase, if not an electric winch, is avoided. The balance of sail areas and the steeply raked forestay are said by the builders to help lift the bows and reduce the risk of pitchpoling.

Broadblue also offers a 'Sport' rig, which has a more usual, forward-stepped mast with a big, fully battened, fully roached main and small headsail. The mast is slightly shorter in this configuration and the total sail area is very similar. It is predicted there will be little difference in performance between the two rigs except in light airs when the big main will come into its own. Neither rig is over-generous, which is good from the safety point of view. The recommended reefing



regime suggests a first reef at 23 knots, the second at 27 and the third at 33 knots.

UNDER SAIL

We sailed out of Chichester Harbour, in West Sussex, in a generous Force 4 southerly but with only a slight sea running – ideal conditions for a cruising cat. Beating out through the narrow entrance we had plenty of opportunity to test her handiness in stays and she passed comfortably. She will point up to 35° and, when the hydraulically linked helm is put over, she comes round slowly but cleanly. She has sufficient displacement to carry her way well and is quickly back up to speed. The tack can be sped up by briefly backing the genoa but it is not necessary.

Our beat began in 16 knots of apparent wind (11 knots true) in which she made 5.5 knots. As the wind built to 22 knots apparent, speed rose to 6.5 knots. She was feeling stable and well under control. The winches had no trouble taming the big genoa but the distances across the cockpit made it an easier job for two crew to tack her than one. Despite the lack of feedback through the hydraulic steering, she responded reasonably quickly for a cat and, also like a cat, tracked very straight with little need for helm corrections. Her displacement and hull form gave her a softer and slower motion than many cats with remarkably little corkscrewing.

Her windward performance was equivalent to a cruising monohull but once freed off she had a distinct edge over her 'half-boat' cousins. On a close reach she topped 7 knots comfortably, and sustained speeds in excess of 8 knots should be possible. She slowed a little with the wind on the beam and once it was aft of 100° she began to run out of steam until we hoisted the gennaker which brought the needle back over 7 knots. The gennaker can be left furled but permanently rigged at the end of a short 'prodder'. Asymmetric and conventional spinnakers can also be flown.

The Broadblue is never going to be super fast – it's not her role in life and in light winds she may prove a bit sticky. But on all points she keeps going at a good pace and in great comfort. The motion is soft and steady and she is quiet with no slamming in moderate conditions, so she will eat up the miles with little stress to her crew. Gone are the days when cruising cats could be a nightmare to take to windward and the Broadblue will not only point almost as high as most cruising monos but she'll also be a little faster.

BELOW DECKS

Such weight savings as Broadblue makes are almost entirely in the hull and deck structure and there is very little evidence of it in the accommodation, which is full of solid woodwork and plenty of stowage. It's easy to

» BELOW DECKS



Pale oak joinery gives the Broadblue a light and spacious feel and the furnishings are comfortable



One of the aftercabins has an en-suite facility, though you have to go through this to go to sleep!



A bonus for the cook is the view from the galley window

ENGINE POWER

Two 20hp Volvo 2020s are mounted above the aftercabin bunks, which have been lifted to gain access. Once exposed, access to the units is very good. They run quietly and smoothly and provide a maximum speed of 7.3 knots in economical cruising at around 6.5 knots. She can be spun on her axis ahead of the all twin-engined craft, is highly manoeuvrable. However, with relatively little power, she can be a bit of a handful in confined spaces and strong winds.



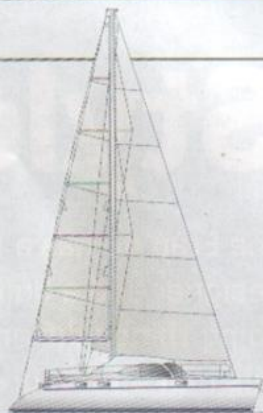
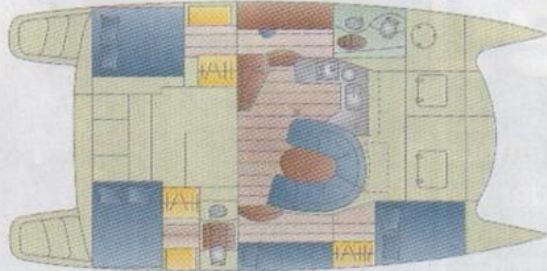
ENGINE	2 x Volvo 2020 diesels with saildrive transmission
BATTERIES	2 x 80ah starters 2 x 100ah service
FUEL	2 x 235-litre (52 gallon) stainless steel tanks

where she gets her 7 tonnes displacement. The interior is light and spacious and this is enhanced by the 2.13m (7ft) headroom in the hulls and over 1.83m (6ft) on the bridgedeck. Two basic layouts are offered. In the 'Owners' versions, each hull has a double cabin aft, a central section – which can include an extra bunk – a dressing table and extra stowage, and a large heads and shower space forward. The 'Standard' arrangement (which we saw) has a third double cabin in place of one of the heads. To keep the heads cup up to two, one of the aftercabins is rearranged to include a small en-suite facility. Unfortunately, you have to go through this to reach the sleeping compartment. In each case the bridgedeck layout is the same and includes a deeply U-shaped dining area, a large galley and smallish, U-shaped chart table.

ON DECK

The cockpit is typically large with plenty of seating. There is a good view of both bows from the helm position but the general seating is quite low. Stowage in the cockpit has been deliberately limited to discourage over-loading. All the sail controls are easily reached and well organised.

The sidedecks are quite wide and the cabin roof is accessible. The big, moulded foredeck is good for sunbathing and mooring duties. There are big storage lockers in the bows but they should only be used for light items. There are also watertight compartments fore and aft, which make the boat unsinkable unless both bows are severely stove in.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE	£164,494	FUEL	2 x 235 litre (52 gallon) stainless steel tanks
LOA	11.78m (38ft 6in)	WATER	475 litre (104 gallon)
LWL	10.90m (35ft 8in)	RCD CATEGORY	A
BEAM	5.98m (19ft 6in)	SUPPLIER	Broadblue Catamarans, Oulton Broad, Suffolk, Tel: 01502 518002; www.broadblue.co.uk
DISPLACEMENT	7,000kg (15,432 lb)		
DRAUGHT	1.05m (3ft 5in)		
SAIL AREA	(cruising rig with main and genoa) 69m ² (742sq ft)		
BERTHS	6-8	FOR	• Solid construction • Good seakeeping • Well-built interior
ENGINES	2 x Volvo 2020 diesels with saildrive transmission	AGAINST	• Less spacious than some cats • Modest performance • Poor chart table
BATTERIES	2 x 80ah starter batteries. 2 x 100ah service batteries		

THE RIVALS



PRIVILEGE 395	
PRICE	from: £239,726
LOA	11.90m (39in)
LWL	10.83m (35ft 5in)
BEAM	6.56m (21ft 5in)
DRAUGHT	1.20m (3ft 9in)
DISPLACEMENT	7,500 kg (16,534 lb)
SAIL AREA	(main and genoa) 82m ² m sq (882sq ft)
ENGINES	2 x 28hp Volvos
BERTHS	6
RCD CATEGORY	A
CONTACT	Patrick Boyd Multihulls Tel: 01329 288257 www.multihulls.co.uk



LAGOON 380s2	
PRICE	approx £200,000
LOA	11.56m (37ft 9in)
LWL	11m (36ft 1in)
BEAM	6.53m (21ft 4in)
DRAUGHT	1.15m (3ft 8in)
DISPLACEMENT	7,120kg (15,697 lb)
SAIL AREA	79m ² (850sq ft)
ENGINES	2 x 18hp Volvos
BERTHS	6
RCD CATEGORY	A
CONTACT	Ancasta International Boat Sales, Tel: 02380 450000 www.ancasta.co.uk



ATHENA 38	
LOA	11.60m (38ft 1in)
LWL	10.54m (34ft 6in)
BEAM	6.30m (20ft 7in)
DRAUGHT	1.00m (3ft 3in)
DISPLACEMENT	5,800kg (12,787 lb)
SAIL AREA	(main and genoa) 85m ² (914sq ft)
ENGINES	2 x 20hp Volvos
BERTHS	8
RCD CATEGORY	A
CONTACT	Multhull International, Tel: 01243 512111 www.multhull.co.uk

CONSTRUCTION

The Broadblue 38 is built in Poland with the interior joinery sent out for final fitting from Broadblue's parent furniture-making company in Lowestoft. The mouldings are largely conventional in construction with a solid GRP laminate below the waterline and a balsa core

above. Isophthalic resins are used throughout. Unidirectional and bidirectional rovings are used to distribute loads in high stress areas and Kevlar is also incorporated when appropriate. Bulkheads and some joinery are foam cored and vacuum-bagged. The bridgedeck is a one-piece moulding that is bonded to the hulls. ▲

» THE VERDICT

This is a boat for the discerning cruising multihull sailor. She is fitted out to a much higher standard than most of those currently available and will work well both for family pottering and long-term voyaging. There are those who will want more performance, particularly in light airs, but she will be

comfortable and unstressful on passage. As in the monohull market, there are models designed for speed and rewarding performance and others for safety, easy handling and comfort. The Broadblue, while no slouch in the performance department, is mainly aimed at the latter category.