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HORIZON V68, AXOPAR 37 SUN-TOP, EMBARKING ON THE CRUISE OF A LIFETIME, LIFE RAFTS

VOLUME 110, NO. 7

HORIZON V68

Maximum volume in a 68-footer creates a mini-superyacht.

WHEN HORIZON YACHTS DECIDED to grow its V Series, it made the decision to go smaller while at the same time turning up the volume. Not in an "if it's too loud you're too old" sort of way, but rather in a "make the absolute most of the space" way. And it teamed with renowned yacht designer Jonathan Quinn Barnett to create a "superyacht" capable of being handled by a couple.

Volume was achieved in a couple of ways. The most obvious, visually, is the plumb bow. It extended the waterline to 65 feet, 2 inches, which is actually 2 feet longer than the V72's and only about 3 and a half feet shorter on the waterline than the V80. The extra waterline length and plumb bow created plenty of forward volume for a VIP stateroom worthy of the designation.

Throughout both interior decks, Horizon's penchant for quality wood- and stonework is on display. Even in the beach club, every surface looks and feels high end. The flybridge is a highly social area, whether open or enclosed.

The second volume producer is the beam. At 19 feet, 6 inches, it is only a foot narrower than the V72's beam — and the V80's beam, for that matter. Having so much beam creates nice interior volume *and* leaves room for adult-sized sidedecks, wide enough for my 6-foot, 6-inch, 240-pound frame to move fore and aft comfortably.

As a semi-custom builder, Horizon gives buyers many choices, from exotic wood to luxury stone to plush fabrics, and from the number of staterooms to the layout to the use of the aft beach club space. And since the builder has positioned the V68 as a motoryacht with superyacht attitude, it made sure the yacht has larger-yacht touches, including a chilled-water cooling system; redundant navigation, electrical and mechanical systems; three places for eight people to dine; and the beach club. Other features include four ice-makers, six Fusion stereo heads (the third volume producer?) to run the entertainment systems, C-Zone digital switching, a 450-gallon-per-day water-maker, two wet bars and Oceanair remote-control blinds on the windows.

It's a good thing those sidedecks I mentioned are easy to transit, because passengers are going to have a difficult time deciding whether they want to spend their time on the bow or at the stern. Both areas have social-friendly amenities and offer expansive views.

At the pointy end, passengers will find a forward-facing settee and a sunpad. A removable backrest can turn the head portion of the sunpad into an aft-facing bench and still leave room for sunning. The twin settees then face each other across a table — room for eight people — and create a conversation area. I counted 10 cupholders. High bulwarks provide a sense of security, and a hidden windlass and chain locker keep the deck free of toe-stubbing hardware.

Any wannabe chef will be right at home in the luxury galley.

Opposite the spacious bow is the cockpit — transom settee, table that can accommodate eight for dinner with the addition of deck chairs, stairs to the flybridge, side boarding gates, full flybridge deck overhang — that measures almost 11 feet from the transom to the salon door. But it's not the most interesting social space at the stern. Below the cockpit, behind a watertight transom door that spans the area between the twin sets of stairs from the swim platform to the cockpit, is a beach club. It's a comfortable retreat with a great view and a water-level patio (the swim platform), on a yacht less than 70 feet long. On our test boat, hull #1, the beach club

Tester's Opinion Given Horizon's goals of creating a "superyacht" a cruising couple can run and a yacht that can actually cover some distance and encourage long-range cruising, the V68 seems to hit the mark.

Horizon makes sure the luxury touches are everywhere.

— down three steps from the swim platform — included an L-shaped settee to starboard, which was raised to offset the sunken nature of the space and offer a better view, and a small galley with a sink, cupboards and a refrigerator.

The space can alternatively be outfitted as crew quarters or a utility room, depending on the buyer's needs. No matter which configuration an owner chooses, through a bulkhead door is the spacious, well-laid-out, well-lit engine room — one fashionable and functional touch is a light behind each of the six fuel filters (engines and gensets) that makes monitoring contaminants easier — home to the twin Caterpillar C-18 ACERT diesel engines that crank out 1,135 hp apiece.

SPECS

LOA 68 ft., 6 in.
Beam 19 ft., 6 in.
Draft 5 ft., 6 3/8 in.
Displacement 110,451 lbs.
Fuel 1,200 gal.
Water 300 gal.
Power Twin CAT C-18 diesels, 1,135 hp each
Price (as tested) $3.8 million

Orange Coast Yachts ordered an enclosure for hull #1, to give the yacht versatility, but it looks great open too. Beneath the spacious cockpit, behind a garage-style door, is a beach club.

As we cruised along at 25.4 knots (just a tad less than 30 mph), the plumb bow sliced through the 2- to 3-footers and the pronounced chine and spray rails kept the boat dry. Even trying to get wet didn't yield any splash effect. Fuel burn at top speed, roughly 2360 rpm, was 116 gph, which yields a range of 236 miles (with a 10 percent reserve). Owners will want to be judicious about how much time they spend at WOT, but they'll be comforted knowing the big CAT diesels can move the yacht quickly when it's necessary. And the near-70-footer turns smoothly and evenly at wide open, thanks in part to the ABT-TRAC stabilizer fins.

At the other end of the speed spectrum, the V68's range stretches to 820 miles at 9.1 knots, 1000 rpm. It can easily cover the distance from San Diego to Cabo or Seattle to Ketchikan, Alaska, on a single tank of fuel. At a little less than 80 percent, where the CAT C-18s were turning at 1800 rpm, the V68 was moving at 17.9 knots, and their 60 gph fuel burn yielded a range of 322 miles.

Up on the flybridge, which can be accessed via cockpit or interior stairs, is the yacht's lone helm. There, the operator has use of all the modern conveniences, including two Garmin 8000 22-inch multi-function displays, the C-Zone monitoring and switching system, engine throttles and thruster controls, and the Garmin GRIB panel, which provides control of the MFDs from the captain's perch. He doesn't have to lean forward to manipulate the touch-screens; he can do everything with a few buttons and a stubby joystick. A companion seat is to starboard.

Horizon offers the flybridge in two versions: Open and Skylounge, both under a sturdy hardtop. The Skylounge is enclosed by glass all around, including the aft doors. The Open version, which out test boat was, has the same layout (though the bar can be moved forward) but comes without an enclosure. Orange Coast Yachts had a clear canvas enclosure designed and installed for this V68, giving it the versatility to cruise in adverse conditions.

Captain and companion won't be alone on the bridge. A portside loveseat occupies the space between the stairs from the galley and the day head, and a dinette settee is opposite it. With room for six to eight people, depending on their cozy factor, the dinette is served by an interesting table. Not only do its wings fold down to allow easier access for passengers, but its top slides toward and away from the settee, creating more room for folks to get situated. A TV swings down out of the hardtop over the loveseat. All of this is under the hardtop.

Aft of the enclosure is a wet bar whose amenities include two stools, a sink, a refrigerator, an ice-maker and a propane barbecue grill. Our test boat had a couple of chaise lounges all the way aft, but owners can select a rather large aft settee and table, for yet another dining and social area.

Huge windows define the living space on the V68's main deck. The run of glass pretty much encircles the superstructure, and the windows in the salon are cut low enough that seated passengers have an unobstructed view. A wet bar and crystal cabinet in the aft starboard corner serve both the salon and the cockpit, when the window is pulled out and up and secured overhead. Six passengers can rest comfortably on the L-shaped sofa to starboard and watch the 50-inch TV in the entertainment center in the opposite corner. Two chairs are opposite and can be situated anywhere.

Forward and up a step are the galley and country kitchen dinette. High-end appliances — Jenn-Air, GE, Sub-Zero, Bosch — dominate the space, while the granite countertops and floor only add to the high-end look and feel. I counted 12 drawers and one pull-out pantry that's as tall as the full-size refrigerator. Any wannabe chef will be right at home.

Down a set of portside stairs is a foyer that leads to all three staterooms (a fourth stateroom is an option). Immediately to starboard is the guest stateroom, which includes single berths that can slide together, a hanging locker a TV and an *en suite* head. Forward is the VIP, which takes full advantage of the plumb bow. The queen berth is an island walkaround, and there's room for nightstands on either side at the head. Two hanging lockers flank the foot of the berth, a TV is mounted to the bulkhead and a door leads directly to an *en suite* head that doubles as the lower day head.

Amidships, through an elegant foyer that houses a hidden washer and dryer, is the full-beam master stateroom. The hull windows are at least six feet wide and contain an opening porthole, bringing light and air into the retreat. Centered on the aft bulkhead is a king-size bed, flanked by nightstands. Along the port hullside is a loveseat/chaise lounge, and to starboard is a vanity flanked by bureau drawers. A 40-inch TV is mounted to a bulkhead that serves as the aft wall of the walk-in closet. A granite countertop, sole and shower enclosure provide high-end amenities to the *en suite* head. To all three belowdecks heads, actually, since Horizon makes sure the luxury touches are everywhere.

DETAILS

Standard & Optional Equipment
Consult with a dealer, as the builder provides semi-custom yachts.

Builder
Horizon Yachts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan; horizonyachtusa.com

West Coast Dealers
Orange Coast Yachts, Newport Beach, Calif.; (949) 675-3844; orangecoastyachts.com

Emerald Pacific Yachts, emeraldpacificyachts.com
San Diego, (619) 497-2993
Seattle, (206) 587-0660