

LOA: 73'9"
Beam: 28'4"
Draft: 5'11"
Displ.: 163,142 lbs.
Fuel: 2,000 gal.
Water: 400 gal.
Test Power: 2/1,150-hp Caterpillar C18 ACERT
Cruise Speed: 19 knots
Top Speed: 23 knots
Price: \$6.6 million



CREATURE COMFORT

THE PC74 FLAGSHIP FROM HORIZON POWERCATS IS READY TO TAKE GUESTS TO THEIR DESTINATION IN COMFORT.
BY LOUISA BECKETT



One of the design goals for the Horizon Power Catamarans line, which ranges from 52 to 74 feet, is for each model to look as much like a monohull as possible when viewed in profile. But as I prepared to board the builder's new flagship PC74 Open Flybridge from the transom, it was clear this was no monohull. High, wide and handsome, the four-stateroom vessel spanned a 28-plus-foot swath from sponson to sponson. It was a catamaran, all right, and at nearly 74 feet LOA, one of the largest I'd sea-trialed.

The concept for this capacious cruising power cat dates back more than a decade, when sailing catamarans were rapidly growing in popularity, especially with charter fleets around the world. Sailing industry veteran Stuart Hegerstrom saw an opportunity that led him to start The Powercat Company in Ft. Lauderdale in 2009.

"I realized that in the marketplace there was no high-end power cat," he said. He and company co-founder Richard Ford wrote a set of parameters for their first model, the PC60, that included owner-operation, charter-friendliness and performance. They asked Naval Architect Angelo Lavranos of South Africa to design a semidisplacement hull. Lavranos, a racing sailboat designer, had also created a line of successful patrol boats with catamaran hulls.

"We wanted it to be very economical at hull speed, but with a top speed in the low 20-knot range," Hegerstrom said. "That's a big ask."

Lavranos developed a hull form with a fine entry and a planing wedge at the back of the boat that helped raise the rudder and reduce draft. "The volume of the bridgedeck, the beam, the height, the shape of the tunnel and the spray knuckle were all crucial measurements," Hegerstrom said, adding that they used tank-testing and Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD)



analysis to refine the data points. As a result, the PC60 met its top-end performance target with a cruise speed in the 19-knot range.

The Powercat Company considered several yards in the U.S. and overseas to build the concept PC60. Then, a customer interested in purchasing the first hull referred them to Horizon Yachts. "Our client had a longstanding relationship with Horizon. He bought the very first boat Horizon ever built," Hegerstrom said. "He got excited about [the project]. We flew off to Taiwan and [Horizon CEO] John Lu took it on."

The first PC60 launched under the brand Horizon Power Catamarans in 2011.

"It's a full-fledged Horizon product," said Hegerstrom. "The Powercat Company is the exclusive distributor for North and South America, the Caribbean and the Bahamas."

As Horizon Power Catamarans continued to add new models, it became clear this company was the ideal builder for the line, not just because of its international reputation and marketing reach, but also due to the weight savings achieved by its high-tech, patented SCRIMP resin-infusion process.

"Weight can be a killer for catamarans," Hegerstrom said. Referring to the new PC74 we were on, he continued, "This boat has a dive compressor and dive tank storage. There are five fridges on board. It has two generators: one is the main, the other is a night generator. Resin-infusion saves you a tremendous amount of weight and if you come within your weight range, you can add back some amenities."

Take the flybridge that sits atop the PC74. It is sheltered by a large hardtop attached to the three-piece windshield. There is a teak dining table for eight plus a sunpad (or watch berth) to port, and a U-shaped bar with swing-out stainless steel stools to starboard. Appliances behind the bar include a sink, fridge, icemaker, drink box/freezer and even a dryer for bar towels. The boat deck aft includes an E51500 Steelhead Marine

The extra width afforded by the power cat's impressive beam gives the PC74 a huge main deck, where the salon, galley, dining area and master stateroom are all located.



Davit to launch a tender, custom life raft mounting bracket, another fridge, BBQ grill and storage. Oh, and there's an enclosed head on the flybridge as well.

Despite this major payload, as we traveled south down Florida's Atlantic coast to Ft. Lauderdale, we recorded a top speed over 22 knots. Cruise speed was around 18 knots at 2000 rpm. Sitting in a comfortable Stidd chair at the helm, I enjoyed good visibility around the boat, plus an easy view of the charts and data displayed on the three 27-inch Garmin monitors. Taking the boat off autopilot, I found that steering with the rud-

ders placed so far apart took some practice. I had a tendency to overcorrect, but the wheel was nicely responsive to my touch.

Running in 2- to 3-foot seas, the boat provided us with the smooth ride that has attracted many offshore yachtsmen and women (especially those with bad knees and aching joints) to power cats over the years. The tunnel lets the boat ride on a cushion of air.

Docking elicits apprehension from mono-hull boaters who are new to power cats with their extreme beam. Horizon's Capt. Fred Hample used Side-Power thrusters linked to a joystick to slowly but accurately extri-

cate the PC74 from the boat show docks and later, to slide it into its home slip. There are also docking stations on the aft deck below.

When I asked the captain if he ever had difficulty finding a berth wide enough for a big cat to park in, he said, "We took a PC60 up the coast from Lauderdale to Bar Harbor, [Maine] and we never had a problem finding a place to dock." However, he advised, "you have to plan ahead."

On the plus side, the extra width afforded by the power cat configuration gives the PC74 a huge aft deck that's accessed from the flybridge by a wide, curving staircase.

There is room here for a long settee and a separate dining table that seats up to 10 people. A wet bar is forward, along with a storage locker in the bulkhead that's big enough to be plumbed as a day head.

Open the sliding glass doors to the salon and galley to create a huge indoor/outdoor space for lounging and entertaining. Yacht designer JC Espinosa, who developed the PC74's contemporary interior plan, kept the salon open and the loose, beach-house-style furnishings low in order to draw the eye to the large windows on each side. The headroom is around 9 feet.

Espinosa cleverly disguised the galley, which lies to starboard as you enter from the aft deck, as a long bar complete with swing-out barstools. It's only when you go behind the counter to fix a drink that you discover it doubles as an island and there's a full suite of galley appliances back there, including a dishwasher, refrigerator, range, oven and wine cooler.

But the big salon/galley is not the full extent of the main deck's accommodations. Forward lies a master suite with a king berth that has a commanding view through wraparound windows.

Our test boat had three lower-deck staterooms, reached by a short flight of stairs from either side of the main salon. Anyone who has been billeted in a stateroom inside one of the hulls of a small sailing cat might be apprehensive about the guest sleeping quarters in a power cat. But a visit to the PC74's lower decks quickly put me at ease. Each hull has an identical VIP stateroom forward with a king berth angled to face the side hull window, along with an en suite head. There is also a guest stateroom with twin berths in the port hull that can be converted to a queen, again with its own head. These staterooms are ideal for charter guests who seek privacy and don't want to have to share a shower. If you want to further customize your PC74 for charter or simply to match a personal preference, Horizon is willing to accommodate.

"Horizon not only permits customization, they really encourage it," said Hegerstrom, "to the point where we will actually move bulkheads."

The aft section of the starboard hull houses a separate crew's quarters that includes a captain's cabin, crew cabin and small lounge with microwave. The crew's quarters add the option of full luxury charter operations.

In fact, The Powercat Company offers luxury charter management to clients who purchase its yachts, providing those who take advantage of this service with a nice financial benefit. "When the owner is not using it, we'll charter it," said Hegerstrom. "Typically, if it is chartered ten to eleven weeks a year, all operating costs are covered." □

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The dining area on the flybridge seats 10 passengers in climate-controlled comfort.

