

Voyager V930 sports c



power catamaran

big little cruiser

cruiser



**The Voyager 930 was the epitome of a thoroughbred sports boat. (main pic left)
One of the best helm stations I have experienced, on a 'mini' cruiser. (above)**



maran

▼ text and photos by Barry Tyler

EVERYTHING ABOUT A BOAT, EVERY FEATURE, IS a trade-off in one form or another. Nowhere is this realisation more obvious than in the case of the entry-level cruiser category where for obvious reasons, space is at more of a premium. Some manufacturers struggle with the right balance between space, practicality and opulence, others as in the case of the Voyager V930 Sports Cruiser, strike the right 'happy medium'.

There are many who would argue that the catamaran configuration does offer up so many more variables when there are two hulls to spread the load so to speak, but it also requires a finite degree of skill and innovation to truly maximise those available opportunities. If you were to single out the one aspect that people look for in this size range of vessel, it would surely be its ability to accommodate people in an acceptable manner. It is this capacity to address this pre-requisite that at



The cockpit was generous in dimension – appealing to the family situation as well as being fishing-friendly.

the end of the day dictates the perceived 'value for money' appeal of the vessel. Invariably the first thing intending clients ask is, how many people does it sleep?

Once you have stepped aboard the V930 however, it is not too hard to work out why this vessel has endeared itself to people over the years. Yes, you have the accommodation potential for a two-couple or family situation, but there is so much more to this vessel in the way of styling, performance,

handling, efficiency and all the other variables that are the rich tapestry of a '30ft cruising vessel'.

When it comes to styling, many are of the belief that this design profile was before its time. Me, I prefer to think of this model simply as timeless for it enjoys a definite air of individuality with its distinctive aeronautical look about the cabin profile. Surely quite different from other cabin top designs granted, but it is this idiosyncratic look that enables the design to stand that test of time.

Gold Coast-based manufacturers Voyager Catamarans commenced business in 2001 with just this one V930 model in their portfolio and while the range has expanded significantly since, this model remains a popular entry level vessel to the range. So in other words, there must be a lot of other people like myself who enjoy this refreshingly different approach to catamaran design.

The other obvious plus with this vessel is the fact the design was a stand-alone brand new design. Voyager Catamarans MD Derek Appleton went to great pains to come up with a viable alternative to the rank and file often boringly plain and regimented 10m design that with regular monotony was simply a flop or re-hash of another design. My words not Appleton's but sadly in my opinion a poignant reflection in general, of this area of the cruiser market.

Yes, I am sure Appleton gleaned a few good ideas from other vessels along the way, but he makes no apologies for his pre-determined focus to provide what he considered to be the all-round ultimate user-friendly package. One of the ingredients was this low-profile cabin top, the other was the perhaps

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higher than traditional catamaran hull sides which when combined with the full-width cabin and beam of 3m, offers sublime internal volume; more on that later.

Solid look and feel

The other obvious attribute of this design was its apparent structural integrity. Even a tertiary look over the V930 confirms the fact this boat was designed and built like the proverbial brick out-house – sturdy in all the right places. Coaming tops were rigid and substantial, the cabin design was not an after-thought plonked on top, the rear pod for the outboards was an engineering master-piece, and the tunnel-deck under-side featured a central wave deflector which also added additional strength to what is a high-impact area of the actual hull.

With all this extraordinary attention to detail one could be forgiven for concluding the rig may suffer from overweight problems. Quite the contrary in fact, for the whole rig weighed in at a surprisingly modest 3500kg. Again by design rather than accident efficient use of modern-day materials such as woven, roving and other multi-axial cloths, along with various cores, ensures a composite structure of significant strength.

Any wonder then Voyager are able to enjoy the luxury of a modest power plant of twin 200hp 4-stroke Yamaha outboards. Stern-drives are an optional alternative but really I can't see the point of compromising space and weight for little extra in the

way of performance and efficiency and nothing in the way of reliability. Bearing in mind we had a nearly 10m vessel (9.9m overall), performance was impressive – a top speed of 38kts and an efficient and equally impressive cruise speed of anywhere between 25-30kts. Not bad from a pair of miserly 4-stroke Yamahas running 17in pitch Stainless Steel propellers – you would go around the world with the 900 litre fuel payload the V930 carries.

With this seemingly palpable lack of weight I really expected the hull to be more than a little 'flighty' during the bluewater segment of our test, as the bar out from the Gold Coast

All you need and more, in a galley on a 'day' or 'weekender' cruiser. (below left)

Seats four with ease, perfect for a family or two-couple situation. (below right)

This was unexpected, a downstairs head and shower of this size and specification. (bottom left)

The forward berth can be either twin singles, or a whopping king-size berth for. (bottom centre)

The seemingly innocuous doors in the helm and passenger modules revealed yet another surprise on the port side, two berths below bridgedeck level. (bottom right)





for waterline length' gained new meaning for the ride was if anything sensation-less – it just got on with the job in hand! It had this waterline length that helped keep the bow down and it had enough weight behind it (and of course the underhull design shape also), to cut through the water rather than bobbing along on the surface and reacting to every undulation along the way. Good features then, great features, for the ride was easy on everyone aboard – you didn't feel like you were sitting in a washing machine.

New for 2008

As noted earlier this model has in fact been around for a while now, but in keeping with Appleton's 'game-plan' of providing modern styling and practical layouts within tried and proven hulls, the interior of the Voyager V930 Sports Cruiser is all new for 2008.

Myself, I really struggle to provide the absolute finite description of the V930's interior: Unpretentious is one thought, wholesome is another; entirely functional and practical yet another; but I would however stop short of describing it as luxurious – it just isn't that type of boat. This was a boat that you could use for all occasions!

As is typical with most outboard-powered catamarans, the mounting point for the outboards was a separate full-width pod that joined to the actual transom of the hull. The top of this pod is enclosed between the actual outboard mounting points so as to provide an effective aft boarding feature for boarding or when in the water swimming. I can only hypothesize as to the possible configuration when the mode of power is stern-drive but I would venture to suggest the outboard configuration would not only be the most cost-effective but also the most non-intrusive upon space – it is what I would choose.

For boarding purposes when tied up in a marina situation or when coming alongside another vessel, the portside side-opening cockpit door is an optional extra that I would be insisting on – so practical, so user-friendly. Once onboard you are confronted by a cockpit that could only be described as a fisherman's paradise. An uncluttered area with plenty of locker space, the (removable) carpet on the floor, the 'suitable' coaming pads to protect your thighs, and the locating holes in the aft coaming in which to mount your removable bait station or barbecue, would all be appreciated by the serious bluewater fishermen amongst us. I guess if you were really imaginative you could even fit a game chair within the cockpit confines – who said you couldn't go fishing in comfort and style!

The new overhead extended hard-top would be another optional extra I would insist upon. Not only does this feature enhance the looks of the vessel, the protection from the elements it delivers whatever the weather conditions, is a luxury I would not want to be without.

Open plan

It goes without saying that with an 'open-plan' configuration such as this, without aft saloon doors, the cockpit flows

Safety-plus on the foredeck, for those who wish to venture forward. (top)

The side-opening cockpit door was a welcome feature, especially with the twin outboard configuration! (above)

Seaway entrance on our test day was 'performing' to say the least. Consistent with my other findings thus far, again I was pleasantly surprised for at 30kts-plus it remained at a most acceptable angle of attack over each wave. Both up-hill and down-hill the hull handled the conditions in its stride, and stability when approaching from a three-quarters angle was very good.

Two traditional catamaran traits were missing however. One was the tunnel slap or in some cases pounding, as it powered through a head sea. The other was the 'outwards lean' when cornering, so typical of most catamaran configurations when cornering at speed – in this instance it was non-existent for the hull rode level when turning aggressively.

The nimbleness and agility of the V930 was very much akin to that of a trailerboat, but the old cliché, 'there is no substitute

immediately on into the galley, dining area and helm. This is the area I alluded to earlier; that was practical without being overly 'flashy'. By practical I in no way mean to denigrate this area though for the 'features' here were built well, of high specification and certainly very well presented.

Well ventilated with fore and aft opening side windows, overhead hatch and central windscreen opening, to portside was a small lounge with forward of that again the galley module. Consisting of a two-burner stove, Granicoat bench-top and sink with hot and cold water above, and generous

close to the action whilst underway, portside and directly opposite the helm station was yet another L-shaped lounge which seated at least three adults. Elevated so as to provide good visibility, features here included a nice stainless steel foot rest and below the actual seat base, Beech timber drawers for cutlery, crockery and further food storage.

Forward of this helm bulkhead, was the bow cabin. Functional and well presented without being flashy, the berth was twin single so as to provide easy daytime access up through the deck hatch, onto the foredeck. Come night-time,



cupboard and drawer storage below, this was more than enough to satisfy the whims of four people away for a weekend – or longer! A nice touch here was the Canadian Beech timber cupboard, drawers and fiddle around the bench-top, which added a certain touch of class to this module.

Opposite this was a comfortable and nicely presented dining setting in the form of a wooden table and L-shaped settee which again comfortably handled a complement of four. Forward of this dining area was the helm station, complete with two-person skippers bench seat and a well-laid out and entirely user-friendly dash arrangement. Again very much akin to a trailerboat scenario, this safe and secure helm position very much painted the right picture with its comprehensive array of Yamaha remotes and instrumentation, Muir winch remote, Northstar electronics, Seastar hydraulic steering, Kenwood stereo and BEP switch panel. As well as the comfort factor, visibility was very good from this entirely ergonomic driving position.

Speaking of electronics, there wasn't of course a Genset fitted to this vessel (no need to). Instead, power was generated courtesy of the Yamaha outboard alternators which fed, via a three-way isolating switch, the Absorbed Power 200Ah AGM house battery and two 75Ah engine batteries. When combined or isolated this was more than enough power for all the electronics and peripheral electrical equipment such as the winch, lighting, head and stereo.

Ensuring the entire complement of crew and guests were

The shallow draft allows you to fully explore and enjoy the hidden beauty of our coastline.

an insert slips conveniently into the centre of this U-shaped berth configuration to form a huge berth covering the full area of this cabin. What an absolute passion pit, or conversely if you and the lovely spouse weren't talking you could get well away from each other. Either way this tastefully lined cabin complete with overhead hatch, lighting, ventilation fan and wooden storage cupboards – was a most congenial area of the boat.

Maybe a little footnote here; with no walkways down each side of the V930, this overhead hatch in the bow cabin offered the only access onto the foredeck. While there was a full wrap-around bow rail which provided some form of security on this foredeck, in reality you would not be spending too much time up on this foredeck. The fact there was a Muir winch remote at the helm station, and the fact there was no access down the sides, suggested to me that this quite angled fore-deck was not designed to be used other than in emergency situations. There was plenty of safe and easy access, from the rear.

A pleasant surprise

Okay, I had noted the interior layout from bow to stern and as practical and well-presented as it was there just appeared at the time to be something missing, "Where was the ablution



At a base price of AU\$215,000 and an as-tested price of AU\$269,900 when offered complete with luxury package of extended hardtop, side opening cockpit door, freezer, Cook-out S/S barbecue, aft dodger and full storm covers – it is not hard to work out why the Voyager V930 appears on many a 10m 'shopping list'.

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SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Design Name | Voyager V930 Sports (Extended Hardtop) |
| Year Launched | May 2008 |
| Designer | Derek Appleton |
| Builder | Voyager Catamarans |
| LOA | 9.9m |
| Beam | 3.0m |
| Draft | 0.45m |
| Displacement | 3500kg |
| Max Speed | 38kts |
| Cruise Speed | 25-30kts |
| Construction | Solid F'glass, Composite sandwich, and Cored panel |
| Fuel Cap | 900 litres |
| Water Cap | 300 litres |
| Engines | 2 x 200hp Yamaha 4-Stroke Outboard |
| Propellers | Yamaha S/S 3-blade 14 x 19" pitch |
| Anchor Winch | Muir Atlantic VRC 600 |
| Anchor | 27lb galv. Plough |
| Steering | Seastar |
| Controls | Yamaha |
| Lighting | Halogen |
| Paint | FGI Gelcoat |
| Paint (Antifouling) | Altex |
| Hatches/Ports | Lewmar |
| Wipers | TMC |
| Windscreens | Alfab |
| Heads | TMC electric |
| Timber | Canadian Beech |
| Upholstery | Fabtex padded marine vinyl |
| Stainless Steel | Boatfit |
| Batteries | Absorbed Power – 1 x 200Ahr AGM house, and 2 x 75Ahr AGM start |

ELECTRONICS

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| GPS/Plotter | Northstar (Navman 8120) - 12" Colour |
| Depth Sounder | Northstar - Dual frequency |
| VHF | Icom |
| Entertainment System | Kenwood ... AM/FM/CD |
| Instruments | Yamaha |
| Software System | C-map MAX - Wide |
| Switch Panel | BEP Marine |
| Base Price | AU\$215,600 |
| Price as Tested | AU\$269,900 |

block?" I enquired. Appleton offered a nod of the head towards a seemingly innocuous Canadian Beech door in the side of the helm module.

Thinking originally that it was nothing more than an albeit rather large inspection door for the mechanicals behind the dash, imagine my surprise when the door opened to reveal a generous-sized step-down bathroom. Now this was innovatively-effective use of hull space, for this easily accessed full GRP bathroom 'liner' featured moulded access steps, a vanity, lighting, shower, TMC electric macerator head and an opening port-hole. Very impressive!

Picking my jaw up off the floor I was then inspired to check out the other equally innocuous portside door opposite, in the same walkway between the forward bulkheads. Yet more innovation, for this bloody great 'cavern' was home to two full-length king-single berths. Fully lined and with nice access steps down onto the lower floor level, features within this room included lighting and reading lamps at each end, a fan and an opening porthole. This elongated deceptively spacious cabin offered real privacy for the other couple or indeed for the kids who needed somewhere to hide, away from the boring old farts of adults!

Conclusion

The solidness and inherent durability of the Voyager V930 Sports Cruiser was complemented by innovative design that I felt would appeal to a substantially wider and perhaps more diverse audience than normal. It is not an exaggeration to suggest it is all things to all people, for there were just so many sensible features, so much volume, so much practicality about this boat. The standard of workmanship was impressive and as such I really struggled to come up with a 'negative' about this vessel, other than perhaps the front-on view which as noted earlier, was definitely not its best angle!

For me the ultimate compliment for this boat, completely unsolicited, came from a potential client who just happened to be out with us on the test day. For various reasons looking to down-size from his current apparently substantial cruiser down to the Voyager V1250 Conquest model, so impressed was this person with the performance and bluewater sea-keeping abilities of this particular V930 Sports model – that he now thinks he might down-size even further; to this model which he suggests is the equivalent of a 12-13m monohull as far as usable volume is concerned.