

CATMAN

can do

WORDS • PHOTOS WARREN STEPTOE

Excellent rough water handling coupled with quality workmanship and an open plan layout allow this cat to prowl the high seas in style





One of the more enjoyable aspects of boat testing, especially tests on boats from lower volume builders such as Voyager Power Catamarans, is they tend to create individual boats for individuals. This means that not only does the *Modern Boating* crew get to spend time testing a boat, but it's generally with the people who own these creations.

Gold Coast dentist Barry de Leeuw owns this Voyager V930. It's fascinating listening to him talk about his boat and how his lifestyle relates to her and vice versa.

Barry lives in a high-rise unit overlooking southern Moreton Bay. And luckily for him, his boat *Catman* waits in the marina downstairs.

With such easy access, his main difficulty is forcing himself to free up enough time away from a busy practice to enjoy the boat.

He has Moreton Bay on his doorstep, but like most of us the demands of life limit his spare time. So his all too brief interludes onboard *Catman* tend to last a single day, or the occasional weekend afloat.

But today he's off and only too pleased to show us what his cat can do. So, after

a quick photographic session inshore, the Seaway beckons and *Catman* heads out wide. Offshore the conditions are lousy for boating, but absolutely perfect for boat tests. There's a multidirectional chop, big swell and wind gusts exceeding 20 knots — perfect.

These are the kind of conditions that

mono hulls hate, or at least their occupants do. It's real cat country — *Catman* can do!

Catman, in typical power catamaran fashion, revels in the big sea. Given a big enough fistful of throttle to keep the hull up and running she demonstrates how a good power cat can more than match a much bigger mono hull vessel's offshore performance.

This hull holds its tunnel high out of the water, running on a fine forefoot, while the flare and chines treated the conditions with contempt, throwing spray well away from the hull.

At rest Voyager has a easy movement underfoot without any sudden, unsettling snatches and jerks.

Running back in a following sea with the



ABOVE: Talk about cockpit space. You could play a game of footy out there on this Voyager.

RIGHT TOP: Helm station is extremely well laid out and positioned to allow the skipper to join in on the fun along with the passengers.

FAR RIGHT: The ladies will give this loo the thumbs up. It's bigger than most household en suites.

RIGHT: Like the aft cockpit, the saloon is spacious and well lit by natural light.

wind gusts up our tail, there is no evidence of mist, caused by the station wagon effect when spray is sucked into the passenger area.

The only real disappointment is powering back between the Seaway walls into calm water again. The fun's over!

But there's more to *Catman* than just top rough water handling. The layout is exactly as Barry wanted, not how the builder thinks the boat should be set-up.

It doesn't have a galley, because experience with previous boats taught Barry that the full galley, normally fitted in a boat like this, sat there occupying precious space and rarely got used.

But *Catman* does have a stainless steel barbecue stowed away until needed. In moments the barbie can be fired up out on the back deck. A matching stainless steel preparation/serving bench drops into a similar mounting on the opposite side. That's Barry's style. Precious living space is not wasted. Barry and his friends can enjoy laid back days out on Moreton Bay with plenty of room to move.

The sleeping arrangements are also fairly laid back. There is a lounge in the bow that converts into a comfortable double bed with the addition of infill cushions.

Down in the port sponson there's also a completely separate second set of double-decker single beds.

In the opposite sponson, reached by stepping down a couple of stairs, is a spacious head. Barry confesses that many of his guests aren't what you might call boating people.

Ladies especially, can be pretty particular about the loo, but this one would beat many a household ensuite hands down, it's so big.



Barry and friends can spend many laid back days out on Moreton Bay in plenty of style and comfort

Aft is the immense space created by a catamaran configuration. It's all open living area. Open in terms of space, but protected from the weather by a solid hardtop that's surrounded by glass. "Airy" accurately describes the living areas of *Catman*.

The *Modern Boating* crew are quite impressed by how much natural light illuminates the boat's interior, even in the loo. This is achieved by the clever use of hatches and diffuser panels to let in light and control ventilation.

Those of us that live in southern Queensland tend to be a bit one-eyed about the great weather. But to be completely honest, yes, even here, the sunshine sometimes turns to liquid. And

we do think winter mornings are chilly even if Mexicans reckon we don't know the meaning of the word.

The winter westerlies only blow for a few weeks, but they are bitter by any standard. But they can bite as hard as they like against the solid glass, but *Catman's* occupants will still enjoy their day. And with all the sliding windows and overhead hatches closed the rain has no chance of dampening Barry's hard earned days off.

Then, when the sun shines again, *Catman's* solid roof and a soft-top extension over the aft cockpit keep the burning Queensland sun at bay.

In seconds you can slide the hardtop's big windows open and open the hatches





in the cabin's roof to let the breeze through to cool summer heat.

Even if Queensland's weather goes from great to not so great and back again, the Voyager V930 allows the weather to be enjoyed, or shut out if required.

Apart from the cockpit, which has been left open for standing room, there are seats all around the living area.

Down the port side there's an L-shaped

A quality compass, LCD sounder and a GPS unit sit in-line-of-sight in front of the helm. There's a Yamaha twin binnacle control mounted on a moulded shelf conveniently under the skipper's right elbow.

The helm is well thought out and allows for a comfortable driving position seated or standing.

The layout of the helm and the saloon lounges enables the skipper to remain part

with eight people onboard there is ample room to move about.

The amount of glass around the helm gives excellent vision and a big wiper on the windscreen keeps it clear even if the weather is not. There's a big moulded footrest beneath the wheel, complete with inlaid teak strips to give the skipper something to brace against. Although we find this would be rarely necessary as *Catman* blasts out over

The winter westerlies only blow for a couple of weeks, but they are really bitter

lounge, a built-in bench and sink unit and another lounge leading back to the open cockpit. A 170lt icebox hides underneath this lounge. Of course there's storage under the forward lounge and beneath the sink and bench top.

On the starboard side the helm station is positioned against the cabin bulkhead. Barry has kept things simple by staying with the excellent digital instrumentation supplied by Yamaha for the pair of 200hp four-stroke outboards on *Catman's* transom.

of any conversation, while there's ample room on the helm seat for Barry's partner to perch beside him while under way.

Barry said, "running out to the 'Pin with friends on board, my partner and I sit on the helm lounge while the friends are over there on the L-shaped lounge and the conversation just flows naturally. It's great!"

Barry deliberately set out to enjoy his guests' company and not be left at the helm in isolation as "the driver". But even

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SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH:	9.9m
BEAM:	3m
WEIGHT:	3480kg
FUEL CAPACITY:	900lt
FRESHWATER CAPACITY:	300lt
POWER RATING:	Twin 150-200hp
inboards or outboards	



Excellent rough water handling
Open plan layout
Standard of workmanship



Low headroom in cabin

the Southport Seaway.

Aft of the helm is the dinette, or L-shaped sun lounge depending upon whether the table is in place or not.

There are also storage lockers set into the cockpit sides. Derek Appleton from Voyager Catamarans came along to help out with the photography and takes great pleasure in pointing out the crawl space along the starboard side to service the steering and instrumentation. There's even more storage located in cavernous spaces under the living area deck. This is where Barry's matching barbie and serving/preparation bench disappear when not in use.

Derek runs through some of the alternate layouts they have put together for V930 clients who prefer a perhaps more conventional galley set-up along the port side.



TOP: Once the infill cushions are in place the forward bunks convert into a luxurious double bed.

ABOVE: Twin 200hp four-stroke Yamaha outboards give this powercat the poke to out perform even larger mono hulls.

RIGHT: Galley size has been reduced on *Catman* to give more living room. A portable BBQ is all Barry needs.

ENGINE ROOM

The pair of 200hp four-stroke Yamahas on *Catman's* transom are separated from the passengers by a solid aft bulkhead making riding in the boat seem as if these normally quiet and smooth powerplants weren't there at all.

Spinning a pair of standard Yamaha stainless steel 17" props, *Catman* eased onto the plane at 10.4 knots and 2600rpm. At 20 knots the Yammies were whispering away at 4200rpm and noise levels barely increased when they were churning out 5900 revs and pushing 36.1 knots. That was against both a slight current and the wind gusts so we ran down wind/current to record 37.6 knots.

We ask if Voyager have built a flybridge version of the V930 yet. But apparently most of the Voyagers built to date have been for Gold Coast residents. They apparently shy away from the flybridge configuration, because of the number of bridges across waterways in their part of the world.

The rounded lines of the V930's cabin may not appeal to everyone and there's no denying that the headroom in the forward cabin is too low to stand up.

But in the flesh the boat's looks are more appealing than they appear in the two dimensions of photos here.

Gold Coast Naval Architect Paul Stanyon drew the Voyager V930. It's a state-of-the-art power catamaran hull with more flare in the bow shoulders than most cats and a wave breaker leading into a high set tunnel.

The sponson's outer chines are quite wide as the hull swells out from the forefoot before tapering away into the bow. Above them a secondary chine around the shoulders works on any spray not



deflected by the primary chine.

The motors are mounted on fabricated aluminium pods, which integrate almost unnoticed into a broad transom platform extending out between the motors from the cockpit bulkhead.

This has a low central section fenced in by a tubular stainless steel barrier that splits into two halves. Either can be folded down to form a boarding ladder for access from the water.

Prices to park one of these beauties in the marina start at \$146,960, powered by twin 150hp two-stroke outboards. This boat as tested with many upgrades, deluxe fit-out and twin 200hp Yamaha four-strokes cost approximately \$188,680.

According to Voyager Catamaran's Derek Appleton most Voyager V930's go out the door around \$165,000.

For more information contact (07) 3206 1732 or visit www.voyagercats.com.au.