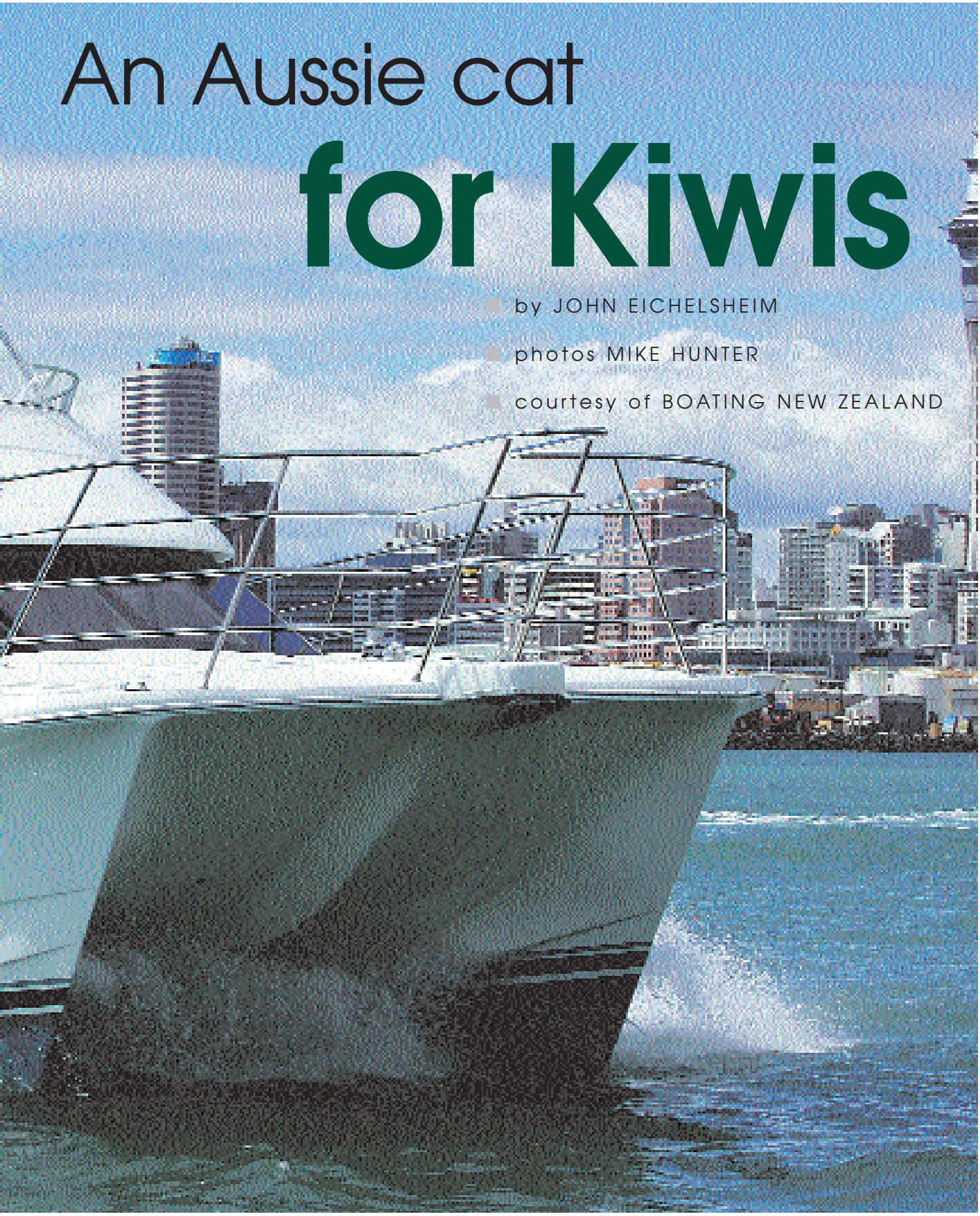
# review: Voyager V1100 semi-displacement powercat

# An Aussie cat for Kiwis

by JOHN EICHELSHEIM

photos MIKE HUNTER

courtesy of BOATING NEW ZEALAND



It's a big beamy cockpit for a 11m boat. (above)

New Zealand importer Richard Wardenburg spied Voyager Catamarans while searching for a boat that would handle the Pauanui Bar, without regularly damaging props and legs – a problem with his previous launches.

He was constrained by a reasonably modest budget, but still wanted a big, family-friendly craft able to fit a 12m marina berth; he also wanted economy, protected props and the ability to take the hard. He was quickly sold on the Voyager.

Having seen the boat's potential, he was keen to be the New Zealand agent for Voyager Catamarans, so Wardenburg involved Shane Walker of Moorings, who was looking for a manageable, bulletproof, three-cabin powercat for his fleets in New Zealand and Tonga. Walker also liked the Voyager – but not exactly as it was being built for the Australian market.

Walker, an ex-boatbuilder, and Wardenburg suggested some changes to Voyager's builder, Derek Appleton. After bridling a little at first – no one likes to be

told how to do their job by strangers, especially if you're Australian and the strangers are Kiwis – he soon saw the sense in their suggestions.

The result is the Voyager V1100, a longer boat than the base Australian model with extra space in the cockpit, less flybridge overhang – Kiwis want sun, Aussies want shade – a slightly larger saloon with a different layout, and modified, extended forward cabins.

The modifications aren't just tack-on bits, either – Appleton created a new transom mould for the 1100, and new moulds for the saloon and cabin. The new model is proving popular in Australia, with buyers appreciating the extra room.

The boat we tried on the Waitemata Harbour was built to survey and specified by Walker for the Moorings fleet. However, this boat sold at the International Boat Show in March, as did a second boat Wardenburg had ordered for himself. He and Walker will both have to wait.

"They are available in a more luxurious spec with lots of extras not included on this model," explained Wardenburg.

As reviewed, the boat is quite basic, but that may be part of its appeal. The basic spec keeps the price down, but it also means the gelcoat and vinyl surfaces are easy to keep clean and should continue looking good for years. Some of the features specified for Moorings, like open shelves in the cabins rather than enclosed lockers, might be too austere for some. But, as Walker pointed out: "Who actually unpacks a bag when they go aboard a boat for a weekend? They live out of the bag, so all they need is somewhere to stow it where they can easily get at it." Standard spec boats have more conventional built-in stowage.

In other respects, the boat is well endowed. It's a twin station design, with full Raymarine electronics, including an Autohelm being installed for the new owner, repeated at both stations. Morse controls are cable, for cost reasons, but fly by wire is available.

The flybridge helm station features two swivelling helm seats and a moulded console under a fibreglass hardtop with clears all round. The flybridge is a generous size with wrap-around seating forward of the helm station and a wet bar. Access is via moulded stairs rather than a ladder.

**The Voyager shows off her lines on the Waitemata.** (above)

**The saloon helm station is fully equipped. Instrumentation and controls are repeated on the flybridge.** (above)

**The layout is family friendly.** (above)

Downstairs the helm console is forward of the galley, the helm seat folding forward to expand available bench space when not in use.

Cats offer so much usable space for their length, and the Voyager V1100 is no exception. The cockpit is wide and deep, complemented by a wide swimstep, a folding boarding ladder and a freshwater shower. All surfaces are moulded GRP, stippled for a non-slip surface. A central transom unit houses a sink with stowage under and there's a gas locker built into the transom to port.

On either side long, deep, double-doored lockers take advantage of the space provided by relatively wide coamings. I noticed deep gutters right around the cockpit perimeter and under cockpit hatches, along with large capacity cockpit drains aft.

The non-slip fibreglass foredeck is flat and usable, surrounded by sturdy railings. Access is easy via wide sidedecks with well-positioned handholds. In the bows, a

**The boat's practical saloon features easy-clean surfaces.** (above)

large, partitioned anchor locker is accessed by hatches on either side of the fairlead. There's space for two sets of ground tackle, plus fenders and other gear. An automatic Muir capstan is controlled from inside the saloon or up on the flybridge. A foredeck lounger cushion is available.

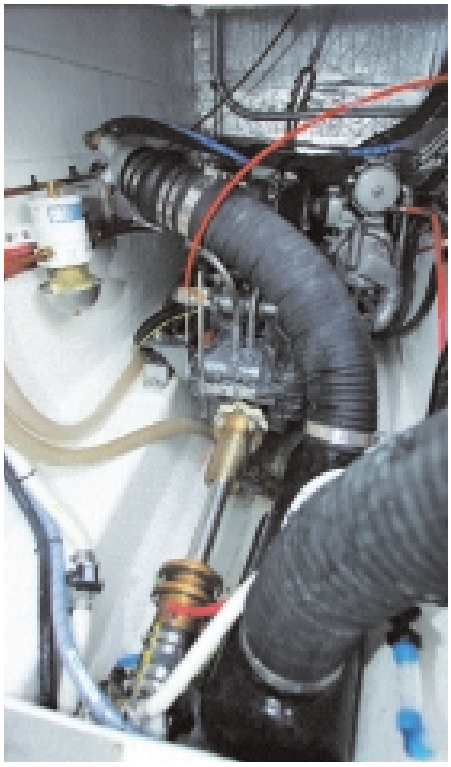
All the fibreglass looks well executed. Everything fits together properly, gelcoat thicknesses look to be consistent and there are no dags or sharp bits inside lockers and other out of sight places. Only heavy-duty hinges and other fittings are used.

Construction is a mixture of hand-laid and chopper gun applied solid GRP for the hulls and cored GRP for deck and flybridge moulding. The boat weighs around seven tonnes.

All the stainless steel work is ex-factory and is likewise to a high standard. Lots of handholds and grab rails are a real feature of the boat; heavy-duty railings run right around the decks, to meet survey. Lighter, less industrial railings with bow seats and a bow ladder are fitted to standard boats.

Inside the saloon's sliding aluminium door, the saloon is simply, but practically, appointed. There's a fair expanse of white gelcoat, including the moulded ceiling, complemented by blue vinyl upholstery and mock wood vinyl floor covering. Inset

**The drop-in transom door is on the starboard side; It's easy to see the chines, round bilges and flat undersides to the hulls. These flats, solid fibreglass construction and completely protected propellers exiting from canoe-like sponson ends, allow grounding.** (above)



**Roomy, easy clean, fully moulded head and shower compartment. Access to the engines is OK. There's more room in there than you'll find in most cats.** (above)

halogen lights and lots of sliding windows provide light and air. Everything is designed for easy maintenance and liveability: ideal for a family or two families who want to step on and off the boat with minimum fuss.

The galley is a reasonable size – bigger with the helm seat folded forward – with in-bench and under bench stowage. A two-burner gas hob and gas stove cook the food; a good-sized under bench fridge keeps it cool, supplementing the cockpit bulkhead freezer.

In this boat, power is 12-volt only, though an inverter will be fitted for the new owner, along with a microwave oven. Other options, including gensets, are available, with solar panels being popular in Australia.

The saloon settee, facing the galley, is big enough for five or six. It wraps around the table, which drops down to provide a fourth double berth.

Access to the sleeping accommodation down in the hulls is forward of the settee

and helm station mouldings via steps. To port are two double cabins. The vinyl-lined, aft cabin quarter-berth is fairly cosy and without a door, but the separate forward cabin is spacious. The aft cabin has underbunk stowage, plus a small, inbuilt locker, but the forward cabin has just a shelf for bags, as specified by Moorings. Hanging lockers and underbunk lockers are options.

On the starboard side the head/shower is roomy with enough headroom for the tallest person to shower standing up. All surfaces are moulded for easy cleaning and there is ample natural light from the ports. The third double cabin forward is a mirror image of the port cabin.

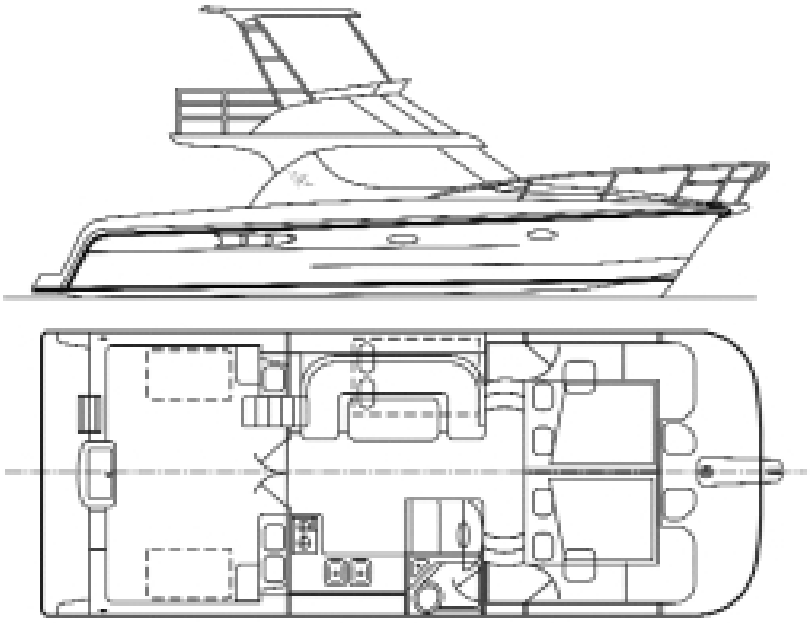
In Australia, Voyager usually fits Steyr diesels to its powercat range. Wardenburg and Walker specified Yanmars for this boat, since Moorings runs Yanmars across its fleet of charter boats. The engines are 150hp four-cylinder turbo-charged units. Access to the engines, set deep in each hull, is OK via cockpit hatches and ladders, and unlike most cats, there's reasonable space around the compact, four-cylinder engine. Service points are easily accessible and the hatches expose the rear half of the engines and the gearbox. Engines can be removed for major repairs.

The Yanmars propel the Voyager 1100's semi-displacement hull to a maximum of 22-23 knots, depending on loading and whether the clears are up or down. According to the designers, the boat is capable of up to 30 knots with enough horsepower, but twin 150s allow comfortable cruising at between 16 and 20 knots. At 17 knots the engines are using a total of around 1.5 litres per nautical mile, Wardenburg told us.

In practical terms, that means a trip with the family from Westhaven to the bottom end of Waiheke Island or up to Kawau Island should cost around $50 in fuel each way – more economical than many trailer boats, let alone 35-foot launches; 600 litres of fuel gives a useful range.

Performance is good. Unlike a pure displacement catamaran, there is definitely a sense of climbing onto the plane when the boat accelerates. There's some squatting under power, but it's not excessive, and the bow remains in the water at all times. Apply the power and the boat gets up to

**Forward cabins have full-size double berths and doors.** (above)



**The boat's practical saloon features easy-clean surfaces.** (above)

cruise speed smartly. At 18 knots it feels relaxed; at 15 knots and 2800rpm, it's just loping along.

The long, skinny hulls are interesting. Symmetrical hulls feature fine bow sections with deep forefoots. Although they're relatively narrow, they have plenty of lifting surfaces, including a single, wide chine running their full length, helping to control squat under power. Two more spray rails and flat bottoms to the hulls add further lift. The hull flats and propeller position allow the boat to take the ground, or it can be beached; a bow ladder, though not fitted to this boat for survey reasons, makes it easy to get on and off by the bow.

The after part of the hulls tapers back to a canoe stern with the propeller exiting centrally. This arrangement ensures good water flow over the props, as well as a straight shaft angle for maximum efficiency. Naval Architect and co-designer Paul Stanyon attributes changes to the wave breakout pattern and the ability of the boat to break free of its own bow wave to this aspect of the hull design. A flat section of hull behind and above the props, a continuation of the full-length chine, provides buoyancy aft and acts as yet another planing surface.

The boat seems dry; we had a flat, windless day for our review, but assiduous ferry wake crossings from every angle couldn't get any water on the deck. Nor was there evidence of spray sucking back into the cockpit – a common catamaran vice.

Although the wing deck looks relatively low, we were assured it never bangs. We tried to make it thump by attacking the biggest wakes we could find at speed; there is a slight checking as the boat hits the wake before the bows lift, followed by a huffing noise and plenty of spray – all directed outwards – but no banging.

The ride seems soft; in Australia, Voyager catamarans have a reputation for a soft ride and the boat answers the helm extremely well, turning sharply right through the speed range. There's little outward leaning in the turns, as would be expected in a planing power cat, and the boat rides flat under power, unlike many monohulls.

The Australian built Voyager 1100 offers one-level daytime living in a solid, generously proportioned boat that's suitable for summer and winter boating – a self-propelled bach or beach house. The layout is practical with many clever touches; the engineering is relatively simple and the interior features robust, easy-clean, family-friendly decor. Lots of gelcoat and vinyl inside and out should make getting off the boat at the end of a trip a matter of minutes rather than hours. With minimal care, the boat should look just as good in five years as it does when it's new.

The Voyager V1100 is also available in a sedan version while a higher spec standard version of the flybridge model is available for much the same price as the review boat.

With an as tested price of $559,000 plus GST, which includes $30,000 worth of costs to meet survey, it would seem a well priced alternative to a holiday home and good value compared to new and second-hand launches and yachts currently on the market. ❖

| specifications | | |
|---|---|---|
| **design name/type** | | Voyager V1100 flybridge |
| **designers** | | Paul Stanyon/Derek Appleton |
| **builder** | | Voyager Catamarans |
| **construction** | | solid grp hulls, moulded foam sandwich and cored decks and flybridge |
| **loa** | | 11m |
| **boa** | | 4.25m |
| **draft** | | 0.75m |
| **displacement** | light | 6.6t |
| | heavy | 7t |
| **max speed** | | 23kts |
| **cruising speed** | | 16-20kts |
| **fuel capacity** | | 600L |
| **range** | | 400nm |
| **water capacity** | | 600L |
| **black water** | | 100L |
| **engine** | | 2 x Yanmar 150hp |
| **gearboxes** | | ZF Hurth 2.43:1 |
| **propellers** | | Marine Casting 4-blade 19x20.5in |
| **price as reviewed** | | NZ$559,000 |
| **packages from** | | A$435,000 for the sedan |