Voyager V1040 Flybridge

Introducing one of the most exciting new cruisers built in recent years in Australia. Forget all the awards, forget the hype and publicity surrounding the big players in the cruiser market, this cruiser has consigned them all to the history books. Last month we arranged to run the Voyager for the first of what we hope will be several trials, as we explore the potential and capability of this beautifully built, GRP power catamaran.

Report & Pics
by Peter Webster

It takes a fair bit to get us excited about a new boat these days, but this Voyager 1040 has done just that. It breaks new ground in not one, but three different areas (design; engineering and machinery) and it does so with such competency and professionalism, that before we get too far into the report, we openly extend our congratulations to the co-designer and builder, Derek Appleton, his naval architect Paul Stanyon and GRP production veteran, Rex McGrath.

Readers will recall that we were seriously impressed by Derek's first venture into high performance catamaran design when we tested his Voyager 930 in F&B #70. At the time, we noted that it was one of the fastest cruisers we have ever tested, so when Derek told us he was hard at work on the plugs and moulds for a larger 1040 flybridge model, we assumed it would follow along the same lines as the smokin' Voyager 930.

But nothing he said prepared us for the Voyager 1040. Where the Voyager 930 follows along the highly successful lines of Australia's many planing catamaran cruisers from Noosacat, Dominator, Leisure Cat (etc) the Voyager 1040 has stepped boldly forward into this century with a hybrid planing hull that allows this craft to achieve 20-23 knot performance with two little 2.1 litre, 144hp Steyr Turbo diesels.

Left: Nicely done, isn't it ? Voyager has chosen a nice compromise between a comfortable, easy care finish and the ultra frenetic lacquered surfaces and plastic flowers used by some.

Unreal. Here we have a beautifully built, 10.4m cruiser with sumptuous accommodation for at least 6 people in three separate cabins, and the ability to cruise up or down the coast at 17-18 knots across the ground for *just 24 litres per hour* – thus confirming the Voyager 1040 is easily the most economical production GRP cruisers of this calibre, ever built in Australia.

It's one of the first genuine long-range cruisers, too.

With full tanks, the crew onboard and all the groceries, amber fluid and fishing tackle stowed away, the Voyager 1040 will run at least 400 nautical miles up or down the coast, with a fuel consumption of around 23-24 L/ph sitting gently on 17-18 knots.

To put this in perspective, most of the twin engine big game cruisers being sold in Australia of this length need at least 2 x 400hp turbo diesel engines and will burn between 100-125 L/ph, usually giving these boats a total range of a meagre 150-250nm.

Design

The underwater sections, lines and offsets, weights and balances were created by naval architect Paul Stanyon, and he's done a great job.

Most of the upper deck and flybridge arrangement came from Derek Appleton and his customers, who pooled their thinking and resources to come up with a layout that is just about perfect for this size of craft.

Typically, the boat has two forward cabins either side of the tunnel, well forward of the amidships.

To go into either forward stateroom requires the crew to step down into the hull on the port and starboard side of the centre tunnel. Then, you stand in the hull (heaps of headroom and space) before climbing back up into the double berths – and this happens on both sides of the centreline.

On the portside though, there is another double stateroom that runs back underneath the dinette in the saloon.

So there is accommodation here for at least 6 people in 3 big comfortable double size berths. Headroom is very good. Elliptical port lights are used in the topsides plus big hatches in the centre of each cabin, and each has a very thoughtful drop down airflow hatch on the back wall of the cabin. In all, Voyager has created three of the most light, airy and comfortable cabins it's been our pleasure to inspect.

On the starboard side, abaft the forward cabin, is the head.

This services all of the boat, and contains the toilet in the shower stall as is the usual practice in boats of this size. It's a good size, quite roomy, and big enough for Australian blokes to shower with ease.

Back up the stairs onto the saloon level, the whole "room" has a really nice "penthouse" feel to it with wide sweeping windows giving a panoramic vista all around the boat.

Because it's a cat, and a good one at that with near horizontal prop shafts, it runs as flat as a tack at cruising speeds,

Below: This is the Auto-San Class 'C' (pump-out) toilet facility as distinct from Class 'A' which converts raw sewage back to a clean liquid that can be pumped overboard or used in a marina. It is vital that cruiser owners learn to distinguish the difference between the different types - and approvals - on the market.

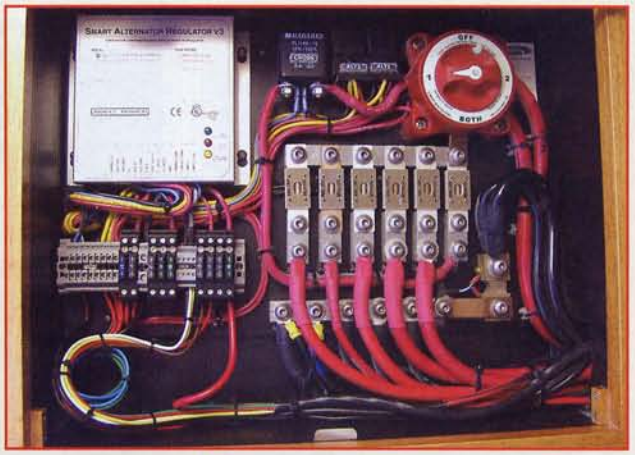
so the view from downstairs is absolutely perfect – there is no bow rise to speak of, at all. This is also significant for older folk who may prefer not to have a flybridge. *Not having* a flybridge on this boat will be a future customer option, because there's no need for it (as such) at all.

The vision from the lower helm is so good; the decision to go ahead with the flybridge really comes down to a choice of lifestyle or personal taste. This is completely at odds with the modern trend in sports convertibles where vision from the lower station is a joke – not to say quite dangerous at times because of the appalling running angle of many new sports convertibles making their presence felt on the waterways these days.

Behind the helm is the galley, and as you can see in the photographs it's nicely laid out in a traditional way – better still, it's located where it should be for use whilst the boat is under way ie, aft as far as possible, and against the bulkhead between the saloon and the cockpit.

On the port side of the saloon is a huge dinette that will seat 4 or 5 adults quite easily, and abaft that is the navigator's nook cum entertainment centre. This will be very useful in this era of the Internet, especially if the skipper wants to instal a PC based navigation system. This is very, very good design and right 'on the pace' with current developments in satellite communication, the internet and pc based nav systems.

Stepping out into the cockpit, there is a very elegant moulded fibreglass stairwell to the flybridge, with a moulded frig/freezer to port next to it. On the starboard side, there's a similar moulding, but this time it's for the garbage or refuse bag and the freezer.



One of the most pleasing aspects of the Voyager 1040 is the exceptionally high standard of fit-out. Voyager has chosen the best of everything, and it's been installed by top professionals. The electrical systems are from Outback Marine.

For cruising, the hull form is ideal. The Voyager can sit on the hard 'on the level', so the crew can keep the bottoms nice and clean very easily - without having to slip the boat every couple of months.

The prop is well protected within the hull form. Note too, the nearly flat shaft angle, and the boat's very handy shallow draft. Perfect for coastal cruising.

Once again the Steyr diesel impresses with a combination of low noise, smooth running and outstanding fuel economy. Whilst larger engines can be used, there seems little need for more than 144 hp used here.

Yep, you read that correctly - this is one of the first boats we've ever seen in Australia (apart from our own *Dusty Rover*) that includes a genuine garbage facility for all the cans and drinks and bottles one gathers on a boat of this kind during just a day's outing, let alone cruises of a longer duration.

Across the transom the big moulding is divided up very cunningly into many different storage areas and although the cockpit is not long, it is very wide and well sheltered with the fibreglass hardtop coming back about three quarters of the way across the cockpit.

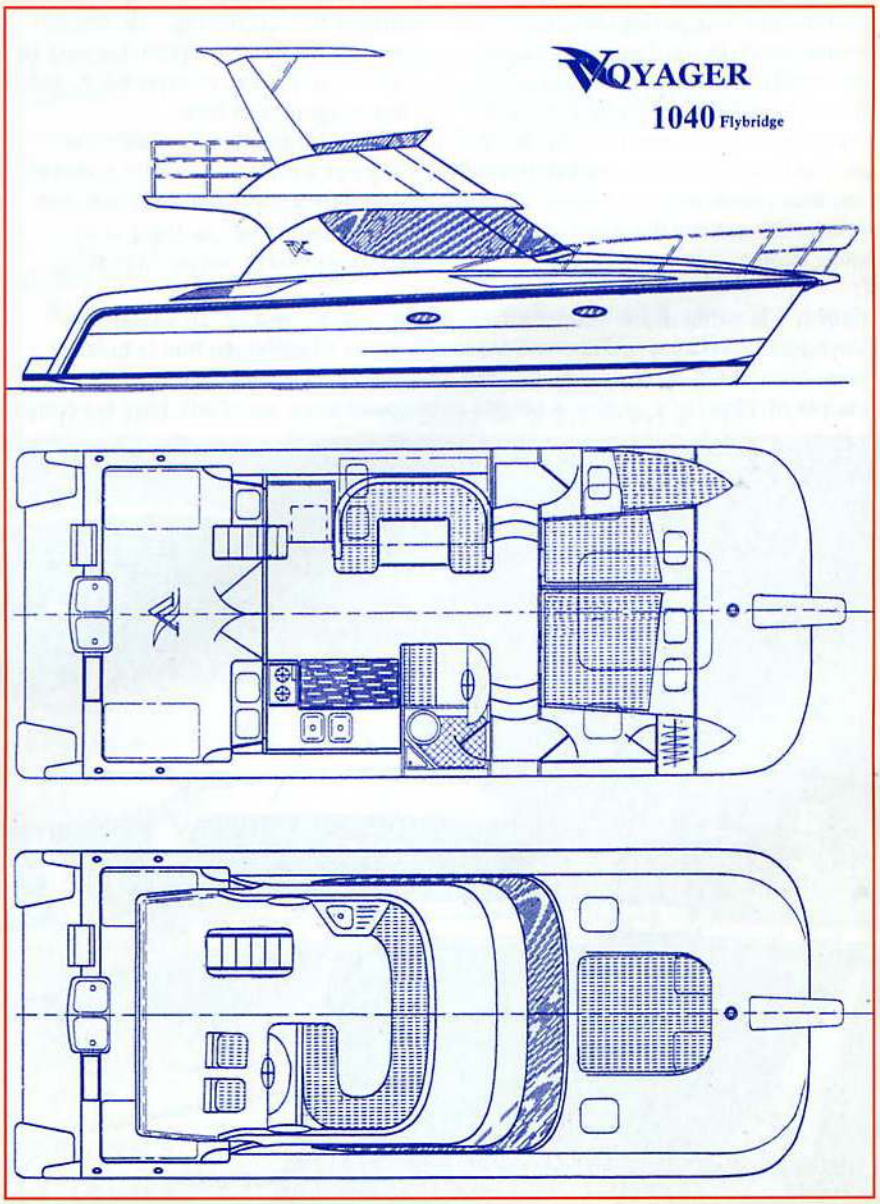
Derek is going to rig the boat with the very necessary insect screens when the boat returns from the Sydney Boat Show. These will be easy to install, thanks to the way the mouldings have been developed here.

The big swimming/landing platform is very well done and extremely useful – although we'd probably end up recommending a big rubber or hard foam buffer strip across the full width of the platform as distinct from the stainless steel capping piece that is already there.

But this is merely fine-tuning for personal preferences. It would depend a little bit on the sort of dinghy or tender arrangement the owner wanted, too, but we suspect most people would want to keep the dinghy aft rather than forward in this boat. The vision forward here from the lower helm and the general cabin area is so good, it seems most unwise or unlikely that you would want to block that wonderful view with a dinghy (even a small one) on the foredeck.

We'd be thinking along the lines of a couple of elegant stainless steel davits rigged across the back on the two side flanges, but there are certainly a number of options to work dinghies or tenders around the transom. And this, in the final analysis, would impact on just how you set up the landing platform.

Upstairs in the flybridge, the Voyager 1040 is very contemporary. It has a drinks cupboard (upgradable to take a 12 volt bar fridge) plus nicely curved lounges arcing back around to



the actual flybridge console itself. This features two comfortable Reelax type skipper's chairs.

The console itself is probably a bit small but this is a very subjective issue these days because so many boatowners are just installing one central screen that performs two or three different functions, so the need for acres of white fibreglass to put in all the instruments, is slowly but surely disappearing, as technology moves us inexorably in multi-function, centre mounted LCD screens.

I thought the design of the console was quite good without being striking, and apart from wanting a lower foot rail or footrest, it all worked very well.

The boat has been designed for a hardtop and this will be available by the time the second and third boats are coming down the line.

Interestingly, Derek is not going to put the usual oxygen tent or clears around the flybridge because he takes the intelligent view that the whole idea of the flybridge is to get up there and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air when the conditions are nice – and if they are not, then (obviously) you move downstairs and run the boat from the lower station.

As I pointed out to him though, this is a wonderful feature of the Voyager that very few other 35 footers can do.

Up on the foredeck the boat features a couple of interesting seats around the bow rail, and whilst it's a delightful place for adults to sit, it goes without saying that you'd only have kids up there under careful supervision.

The anchor set up is terrific – there is so much room in the two separate anchor wells, that with a bit of thought, I reckon it's just about the perfect spot to lose a couple of errant grandchildren if they stepped out of line on the cruise! Seriously, if an adult stood in the anchor well, his/her shoulder would only just be level with the deck.

Hull Design

Now this is a fascinating exercise. It's not a displacement hull, nor is it a planing hull. There are those who have called them "displaning". However, Derek hates the description because he thinks it is a negative expression, and I tend to agree with him.

Nevertheless, this is neither one thing nor another – and very proud of it too. It is a sort of planing hull, but it's long and 'fine', so there is an enormous energy saving in pushing these hulls through the water compared to even a traditional planing catamaran of the Noosacat kind.

As well, there is another facet of this hull shape that you can see in the accompanying photographs (P-54) of the hull on the hard.

If you look at them carefully you'll notice how the hull works back to a fine, almost canoe stern from about two thirds of the way along, thus changing the wave break-out pattern and apparently, the principle reason why the boat is able to break free of its own bow wave.

But also note the distinctive hull "flats" that Stanyon has incorporated above the props - to resist squatting, increase bouyancy in the stern sections and doubtless, to provide additional planing surfaces.

Now without getting too esoteric here, suffice to say we've all known for a long time, that long skinny shapes are much easier to drive through the water than short fat ones – and we have to look no further than a bloke paddling a kayak or canoe - to see this principle in action.

And so it is here. The architect has created long, fine hulls with a superbly calculated balance between the length of the hull, the buoyancy it offers in terms of holding up the weight of the boat to the design level, and then ensuring (through its fineness and double taper stern and bow sections)

Below: The writer at the helm, cruising offshore at around 17 -18 knots. The Voyager has an easy, gentle motion - and a lower wheelhouse that is quiet (I repeat: QUIET) and relaxing for crew and guests. Ditto the cockpit - add in a couple of 'director's' chairs, a couple of hi-speed lures, and GBR, here we come!

that it is very easy to push through the water.

The Voyager 1040 is designed to have a "lightship displacement" (that means all machinery, but no liquids and empty) of 6.2 tonnes, but this one, being the first cab off the rank, came in at a (loaded, cruising trim) 8.1 tonnes, mainly due to the fact that the hulls were used as the plug for the moulds.

Making the moulds this way is really clever, but invariably results in a slightly heavier model for the first one assembled.

Derek is very confident that the second and third boats will come in more closely to the target 7.2 tonnes.

Construction

As you can see, the Voyager 1040 is built on quite traditional lines with solid GRP through the hull sections, no timber is used in terms of bearers and stringers, and quite a deal of foam sandwich used in the flat deck areas.

We were impressed by the mouldings – it was hard to believe the jump in quality of the tooling from Derek's Voyager 930 (which is quite acceptable we might add, but nothing like this) and it's very much due to the superb craftsmanship of the plug and mould maker Rex McGrath, who joined Derek for this project.

Rex, a veteran GRP tooling specialist who has worked on many of Australia's best GRP craft, led a small band of craftsmen to give the Voyager 1040 a standard of finish the equal of any GRP manufacturer in Australia - or overseas, for that matter.

Finish

We were very impressed at the level Derek Appleton has pitched the finish in the Voyager 1040.

This is a very hard call for boat builders today. There is always the temptation to chase the Riviera-type of finish with their soft leathers, piano-like lacquered finishes on timber work and so on. All of which are superb in the right environment, but if you're going to go cruising in the real world, and take a boat like this up around the Top End of Australia or down to Tasmania and *actually cruise the boat as it's designed to do*, then finishes like those often found in the top end of the cruiser market can be quite inappropriate.

Here, Derek has managed to achieve a very comfortable "semi-luxurious" look whilst the materials chosen are quite durable. The finish, through the floors and walls' linings are all easy care, easy clean and will stand up to the daily use of the crew thrashing around in the boat for possibly weeks on end.

Voyager V1040 Flybridge

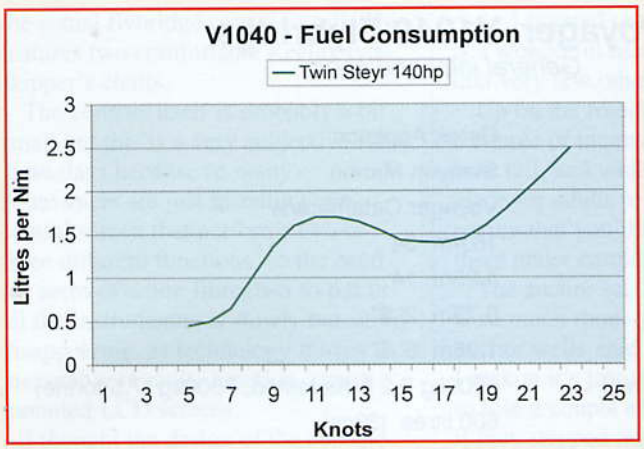
General info, and specs.

Vessel Designer	Derek Appleton
Navel Architect	Stanyon Marine
Builder	Voyager Catamarans
LOA	10.4m 34'
Beam	4.25m 14'
Draft	0.75m 2' 6"
Headroom	1.95m 6' 5"
Displacement (light ship)	6200kg 6.2 t. As tested, 7500kg (7.5 tonne)
Fuel capacity (total)	600 litres 130gal
Water capacity (total)	650 litres 140gal
Construction	Solid hand rolled fibreglass hull, moulded deck and flybridge with foam sandwich and cored construction.
Interior	Moulded fibreglass, vinyl linings, leather upholstery and African Ash cabinetry.
Engines	2 x 144hp Steyr shaft drive diesels
Propellers	19" Four blade (fully protected)
Steering	Marcon hydraulic, with rudder tie bar
Batteries	2 x 210ah AGM & 1 x 90ah AGM
Alternators	2 x 90amp engine
Solar	2 x 120watt Kyogera
Inverter / Charger	1100watt / 45amp
Power management	Outback Marine
Electronics - Ent.	Clarion, LG, Samsung
- Nav	Navman Plotter, Sounder, Pilot, Navbus
- VHF	ICOM M402 with F/B Command mic
Hot Water	Saxon 50 litre heat exchanger + 1800w elec.
Refrigeration	130 litre Vitrifrigo 12v fridge, plus 70 litre Freezer & 70 litre Ice Box
Cooking	Smev 2 burner Cooktop and gas Oven, 850 watt Microwave, Cookout s/s BBQ
Stainless Steel	Boat Fit
Windows & Doors	Alfab
Windless	Muir electric with chain counter
Pumps	Johnson
Head	TMC electric (Luxury size)
Waste treatment system	AutoSan (treat and hold)
Antifouling	Coppershield & Prop Speed
Price Range	$400-$500K

Performance

It will no doubt annoy the hell out of plenty of Mustang and Riviera owners to learn that this boat will cruise all day at 18 knots across the ground for just 24 litres an hour. That is an absolutely sensational, unbeatable figure.

Well, that's not quite true because the owners of the Scimitars, Leopards, (*et al*) would also point out with a knowing chuckle, that they too can



This is how the curves should look for a GRP cruiser in 2004. As can be clearly seen, Voyager 1040 architect Paul Stanyon has done a superb job achieving real performance with unreal economy and quietness.

V1040 Performance (Twin Steyr 144hp)

Light Ship conditions

Engine RPM	Speed Kns	Lts./hr	Lts./nm	Range Nm.
1100	6	3	0.5	1200
1600	8	8	1.0	600
2400	14	22	1.6	375
2800	**17**	**24**	**1.4**	**430**
3200	20	36	1.8	330
3600	23	55	2.5	240

(Figures incl fuel consumption, for a total of the 2 x Steyr 144hp)

achieve similarly pleasing levels of fuel efficiency and cruising performance.

But where the other craft of this genre are, let me say, more traditionally inclined with cat sort of styling, the Voyager 1040 steps right into the main ring in the big tent, with design and styling that is as contemporary as anything produced by the market leaders such as Riviera, Mustang etc.

Incidentally, the boat can achieve higher speeds with more horsepower (see graph). The issue very quickly becomes: *How fast do you want to go, or to put it another way, how far do you want to go on the given size of the fuel tank?*

This is one of the great dilemmas in cruising powerboats.

Here, Appleton and Stanyon have created a craft that will do fully 22-23 knots and more importantly, 17-18 knots across the ground, which many considered to be the optimum cruising speed for craft of this size going around the Australian coastline.

Not only have they achieved this speed so easily, they've done it with a pair of impish, 144hp Steyr diesels – these are just 2.13 litre diesels.

Never mind, here is a big 10.4m liveaboard cruiser capable of going right around Australia running on a couple of these 2.1 litre diesels with genuine fuel efficiency.

There's no technological miracle here either. This is just the application of intelligent design, excellent boat building and bringing together a whole range of technological features that in the end amount to a craft that

- Weighs between 7 and 8 tonnes
- Has a very fine, 'slippery' hull shape and
- A couple of small diesels that in themselves only weigh 258kg each.
- To put that in perspective, a regular Yamaha 200hp 4-stroke outboard weighs 269kg.
- And because the Steyr 144's use so little fuel, the boat doesn't have to carry as much fuel to achieve the astonishing range figures for which it is capable – *and thus the wheel turns.*

This is what happens when you take a clean slate and start from scratch. You throw away the rule book – and all the traditions that say you must install two thumping great V-8 or even V-12 diesel engines, that in themselves weigh several tonnes in boats of this calibre. Then you need thousands of litres of fuel to drive them, and of course, the boats have to be much more heavily built, with stronger engine bearers (etc!) Before you know it, you're looking at boats of this kind normally weighing between 10 and 12 tonnes.

Performance And Handling

The Voyager 1040 is very gentle to drive with a lovely cruising gait and virtually a flat running angle. On the test day, we had a classic winter's day on the Gold Coast and it was so calm you could have paddled a canoe from the Seaway across to Auckland, so we can scarcely say we have "tested" the Voyager to the extent we normally like.

Nevertheless, someone had to take it out (!!) so we cruised down the bay and out through the Seaway, sitting on 18.5 knots. There really was a strong case to turn left at the Seaway walls, and head for Hamilton Island.

The sun was shining, the sea was sparkling, the ride was smooth and the

engines quiet – this is a delightful cruiser. It was easy to imagine how a family could complete the ultimate 'sea-change', using this boat to escape.

Alternatively, for a couple wanting to make the trip where they have a boat that's safe, compact, fast and sanely economical to run; a voyage where their friends and rellos join them at different ports around Australia, it's hard to imagine a better craft to do it. This is one of the finest power cruising boats available in Australia, with the potential to go literally anywhere around this great country of ours.

Later, we'd like to come back to the boat and do a run offshore in pretty bad conditions, but I want to do that to satisfy my own curiosity as much as anything else.

Conclusion

The Voyager 1040 is one of the most interesting craft we've tested in many years.

Because the conditions were so calm and the boat so new, we've asked Derek if he wouldn't mind us having another run in the boat offshore at a later date when he returns from the Sydney Boat Show. From just a personal viewpoint, I'd like to really work this boat in sloppy sou-easterly conditions and further investigate the difference between this type of hull and the more traditional, so-called planing hull of the Noosacat kind.

It's not that we're expecting any miracles or faults, so much as I'm personally curious to learn more about the differences in these more finely drawn hulls than the traditional flatter ones we've used for so long.

The gait on this boat is absolutely delightful with a soft, quiet 'squishy" ride you'd normally expect from a displacement hull, but not one that's tramping along at 18.5 knots. We had enough slop in the Seaway entrance to get a feel of what it's going to do in bigger waves, but until we can get some real sea time in the Voyager, we'll have to leave our final notes until then. *(Besides, it's the best excuse I've got for another run in the Voyager 1040 . . .)*

Even so, I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending this craft to people with a mind to cruise and explore Australian waterways, let alone people with more conservative ambitions; cruising folk who just want a safe cruising craft to undertake some gentle coastal cruising. This boat's easily capable of all that and much more.

***For further information, call Derek Appleton, Voyager Catamarans, PO Box 1109 Capalaba Qld 4157, phone* (07) 3206 1732 *or email* info@voyagercats.com.au**

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