

boat review : Voyager VI 100 Discovery powercat

fun dis



covery



by BARRY TYLER
pics by DAVID PAULL –
DYNAMIC PRODUCTIONS

IT IS INTRIGUING HOW PEOPLE VIEW THEIR BOATS; TO SOME IT IS A FISHING BOAT, TO OTHERS IT IS A FAMILY BOAT, TO STILL OTHERS IT IS A DEVOUT LONG-RANGE CRUISER, AND TO PEOPLE LIKE THE OWNER OF THIS VOYAGER V1100 DISCOVERY IT SURELY IS THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW MEANS OF GETTING AWAY FROM THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF (SYDNEY) CITY LIFE AND SIMPLY - HAVING FUN ON THE WATER!

The mandate was simple, dress it up so I can have fun and enjoy my boat.



WOULD CERTAINLY STOP WELL short of describing this boat as a 'Party Boat' or the 'Love Boat', but the reality was this owner likes nothing more than grabbing a few friends of a weekend and heading off to some secluded bay, dropping the 'pick' and enjoying a quiet bevvie or two. This Voyager was that sort of boat for the owner has certainly spec'd it higher perhaps than most would have; with the net result he has a stable platform with plenty of space, which provides live-aboard comfort as well as adequate sleeping provision when required.

This owner's previous boat was a 32ft Catalina 320 sailboat and as he so eloquently put it, "To be honest I really was over taking all day to get anywhere, I

now wanted to get there quickly and then relax for an hour or three," he explained. "I looked at fast monohull cruisers then I sort of gravitated to the catamaran concept. I did a lot of research on buying this boat, a lot of internet work and I talked to a lot of knowledgeable people. Believe it or not it took me five years of fact-finding and soul-searching and by a process of elimination I had finally narrowed the choice down – sort of!

"Originally I thought the (Voyager) V930 might suit, then I looked at the V1040 and that still wasn't 100% what I wanted so I then contacted Derek (Appleton, Voyager MD) and he suggested their new V1100 model would offer the additional space I was after. My

next mission in life was to look around for a charter operator who had one in their fleet, so I could gauge first hand how it performed – in every aspect.

"No-one of course had a V1100 model (it wasn't released at that stage), but I located a smaller V1040 model which would give me a reasonable idea of what I could expect. After my week away I decided I liked the economy of the catamaran concept, I liked the handling and performance, my partner and I liked the stability factor and despite it being a little smaller in volume than the V1100 I could see the potential of the additional space of the slightly larger model," he enthused.

Fortunately Voyager Catamarans were, in spite of the GFC, still developing



A high level of specification and presentation, considering it was an 'open' flybridge. (above)
Seating for six, should you require it. (left)

models and this walk-through style of boat, their first foray into the flybridge VI 100 configuration appeared on paper to address the owner's not insignificant expectations. Neatly bisecting the earlier VI040 and VI250 models in their range, Voyager offer the VI 100 Discovery in three versions, the standard, the leisure and the deluxe or luxury package. All of course are turn key and ready to go; it all depends on what you want in your particular boat and certainly in this owner's case he wanted the leisure version.

“All of course are turn key and ready to go; it all depends on what you want in your particular boat”

Appealing moreso to the 'family' situation, that was the 'starting point' for he then added 'must-have' items such as radar and air-conditioning, in preparation for his planned trip to the Whitsunday Islands. To the list he also added the engine upgrade from twin 160hp to twin 190hp, the swim platform extension, the solar panel energy package, a set of underwater lights ("everyone needs them on their boat, don't they?"), an extra 16" TV/DVD in the owners cabin; and from a creature comfort perspective the Southern Stainless 'Cookout' barbeque and the folding cockpit seats. All that was what this owner considered to be the bare necessities – of a 'real' boat!

Discover living

The Discovery could be neatly divided into two distinct areas, the living side of the equation that included the flybridge, the saloon and of course the accommodation area – and the outside cockpit. If you were a keen fisherman you would claim this area was purpose-designed with you in mind, but in the owner's case where he preferred his fishing at the local fish shop – it was purpose-designed for sitting and relaxing and chewing the fat so to speak, with his guests.



A spacious cockpit, in the context of an 11m cruiser. (top)
Your own little outdoor galley. (above)



Clever design saw a set of moulded steps take up no more room than a ladder. (above left)

Ten out of 10 for this galley; compact yet with every feature you would ever require. (above right)



The extended (full width) swim platform was a playground in itself and with the good solid dive ladder this area would be a hit with the swimmers and divers. Not everyone's cup of tea but in this case our owner had fitted a Heron-Air rubber mat over the floor, so the area can be hosed out quickly and easily. Not as nice as teak sure, but in his mind it is one hell of a lot easier to maintain and keep clean.

The owner-innovation didn't finish there, for he had Voyager go to great lengths to build him a set of side seats that were tailor-made for stretching out on and reading a book. Again if your penchant was fishing the central transom beam module could very easily have been a live-well of 'ginormous' proportions, but in this instance the void provided good storage provision, under what was a now impressive and certainly

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user-friendly mini-galley comprised of a sink, washing board and a servery courtesy of the lid which conveniently folded back to just the right level.

Refrigeration was a biggie for our owner and his requests would have been appeased somewhat by what Voyager had provided, for in addition to the saloon refrigerator freezer; there were two more versions out in the cockpit. To starboard of the saloon door; against the cabin bulkhead, there was a generous 140-litre refrigerator come freezer (depends where you set the dial) and on the portside an ice-box which could very easily be turned into a refrigerator also.

area was the impressive stainless steel and canvas flybridge overhang; so typical of the expertly crafted and presented stainless steel workmanship all around this boat.

Up above

'Tastefully presented' was perhaps the best way to describe the flybridge level of our Voyager VI 100 Discovery. Access was a breeze courtesy of the moulded staircase rather than an upright ladder; and safe courtesy of the hand rail and grab rails in precisely the right place, and the pulpit-style stainless steel surround at the top of these stairs. Presented in gelcoat a couple of shades off brilliant

was enough room to include a bar fridge or icemaker here also.

The U-shaped lounge recessed into the front bulkhead, side coamings and helm station, was a rather pleasant place for guests to wile away the miles, for it was elevated nicely, so as to have good 360° views. The area was carpeted, there was a stereo remote and even a hinged lift-up acrylic polycarbonate (Lexan) hatch cover over the staircase entry, (strong enough to walk on) to prevent people taking the quick way to the cockpit level. In a nice touch, this lounge position was angled slightly backwards so as to offer maximum comfort and support; and I



Straight from the 'great ideas' bin, I was most impressed to find at the freezer end of the starboard side bench seat base, an unobtrusive (Sani-loo) lever which directed your waste water either into the holding tank or direct overboard. Not only could you see at a glance what mode it was in, the very real benefit was you didn't have to go crawling around in the bilge of the boat to check or change it over. Simple, brilliant and of course an absolute god-send when you are boating in 'Green' zones! The final touch for this sunbathing, relaxing and socialising cockpit

white so as to lessen the glare, this was an area that was entirely functional and practical both in terms of appointments and of décor.

Surrounded by sensible-height coamings the sturdy hardtop (with clears all round) ensured you were well protected from the elements, yet one still had that feeling of the wind in your face, our owner craved for. Guests were greeted by a small servery module to the left at the top of stairs, complete with sink, bench and nice stainless steel fiddle; and although one wasn't fitted in this instance, there

Spacious, good visibility, light and bright and well presented – surely an impressive saloon.



A comfortable dining setting for five; the décor contrasts were most appealing. (top)

A queen size berth for the owner. (above)

was especially pleased to see they had even thought of the obvious and moulded a drainage gutter around the base, to get rid of any rain-water that might find its way onto the seats.

The skipper was treated appropriately with a specification I would suggest, designed very much with the forthcoming Whitsunday trip firmly in mind. Compact so it didn't impinge too much on valuable flybridge space, the skipper and a friend had at their disposal adjustable helm chairs, a tilt helm, Morse (cable) remote controls, Seastar hydraulic steering, VDO C.A.N. Bus engine instruments and a Raymarine electronics package with ST6002 Auto pilot, the integrated C120W Plotter/GPS/sounder and the 24NM radar.

When the day is done

When the days work is over and the sun has set, Voyager had designed it so the saloon was the next best place to enjoy the moment. A traditional catamaran saloon layout, I did like the way everything was kept as far off to the

sides as was practical, so as to offer the illusion of space. The rather unique U-shaped galley to starboard as you entered the saloon, would certainly cater for a reasonable crowd away for a week or two, for it offered features such as a large amount of bench space, deep double sinks, a bench-top cavity for either food storage or a rubbish bin, a generously voluminous sink and for the chef, a two-burner Smev gas stove with gas oven and grille below, and a Sharp microwave above.

“The innovation continued with the wood vents in the front bulkhead wall of the saloon, that offered natural light and ventilation for each for’ard cabin”

The module alongside the galley, which I will claim was part of the galley, offered cupboard and drawer storage on the galley face, a refrigerator on the outside and around the front the BEP AC/DC Switch panels and Navionics software system. Opposite the galley was the dining setting, nicely elevated so as to provide 360° visibility for diners. For added accommodation should unexpected mates drop by, this table dropped down to form another double berth, rather ingeniously courtesy of the table legs which dropped down into shafts secreted within the accommodation below decks.

The innovation continued with the wood vents in the front bulkhead wall of the saloon, that offered natural light and ventilation for each for’ard cabin; with the hatch set into the middle front window that offering good cross drafts (important considering there was only air-conditioning in the cabins below decks); and with the raised void overhead at the front of the saloon, which visually enhanced the size of this room. The latter served a double purpose too in



With the lower insert fitted, the second cabin provided good twin-single accommodation. (far left)

A rather special aft cabin, despite the intrusion of the well presented mouldings above. (left)

that the rising hot air could be dispersed from there, thanks to the two mini extractor fans set into the highest point in this roof void.

The décor set the (relaxing) mood for this room with the Divinci teak look-alike vinyl flooring, the leather lounge, the vinyl panels, the off-white gelcoat surfaces, the woodwork, even the 'entertainment' remote panel above the mullions, each complementing and balancing the other exceptionally well. The woodwork especially was of the same very high standard, as that of the stainless steel work.

Accommodation for six

In this particular version Voyager had provided sleeping accommodation for six, in three cabins; my thoughts were, that's one hell of a lot of accommodation for a

36ft (11m) boat! Especially so in fact, considering there was room for two more, up in the saloon as well. There are a number of different variations of berth layout available also; there is this 'family layout' instance with the glassed-in central bulkhead which was 300mm off centre, leaving room for the queen master on one side and a king-single berth on the other side of the great divide.

The other options were an athwartships island berth with the central bulkhead further over again, or two doubles each side of a central divide, or; Voyager have even done one version without a central bulkhead at all – just one great big king-size fore and aft berth. What a passion pit that would be! In a rather innovative twist to that particular layout, a hinged central partition (a GRP

panel) was able to be folded down so as to create a demonstrably large berth two metre long by 2.4m wide berth, or left up to re-form the 'charter' guise of two double berths. Clever!

Being his own choice our owner rightly opted to have one side devoted entirely to the skipper, with of course a 'fore and aft' queen-size berth. Décor was as above in the saloon, a nice balanced blend of wood, carpet, vinyl wall and roof panels – just plain good 'thinking' when it came to room features and layout for yet again it was practical and tasteful, without being gushy or over the top! Aft of the stairs down from the front of the saloon, was the one bathroom on the boat and while size precluded there being a separate shower and head, none the less everything you required of a bathroom,

was there – and presented very well with a nice blend of wood and in this case, gelcoat finish.

Portside was for the guests with the forward room as explained, a twin single cabin. In actual fact it was presented as a single berth cabin, albeit a king-single berth but with a little bit of innovation in the form of carpeted protruding lips or edges beside the berth and on the hull side, the insert and purpose-built cushion stored under the berth, transformed part of the walkway into a second berth. A little lower than the fixed berth, what I did like about this particular layout was the fact there was still room to get out of the upper of the two berths, without walking all over the poor punter below.

The aft sort of alcove-style cabin was a revelation in my mind, either a neat fun

little 'cave' for the kids, or, the best berth in the boat if you are trying to sleep whilst underway. No there wasn't a door, yes there were integral 'intrusions' from the mouldings above, and yes you had to change in the companionway, but the trade-off was the best berth in the boat that to me was an absolute magnet that attracted people to it – that was definitely where I would choose to be, of a night!

Innovative approach to mechanicals

Built of solid GRP to the waterline and a GRP and core composite above and weighing in at a respectable 7800kg, Voyager offer this VI 100 model in standard form with a pair of 160hp Steyr diesel engines. Being a fan of always opting for more horsepower for Justin

systems had undeniably been approached a little 'differently'. Certainly not in a bad way and maybe it was this owner's sailing influence that was shining through, but the first point I noted was there was no Genset. In its place were large AGM storage batteries, solar panels, a 50-Amp Xantrax charger and the Steyr engine charging systems (two 14-Volt/90-Amp alternators) which delivered power to the Zantrax 1800W Pure Sine inverter.

Air Conditioning was approached a little differently also, with a 12V 14,000btu Seabreeze system employed. Of note though, this system was distributed only to the three cabins below decks, so as to enhance the night's sleep. Without a genset it might appear a little like an ash-tray on a motorbike but Voyager have innovatively provided this 12V system complete with its own Xantrax 50-Amp charger and 600Ah battery bank (3 x 200Ah AGM). The beauty was it runs (quietly) all night, without charging, and of course if there was a problem then this battery bank could also be linked back to the two 200Ah house batteries, for an all-up 1000Ah storage capacity. Sensibly though, it was not linked back into the two 75Ah engine batteries!

The other break with tradition was with the water capacity of 500 litres. That is fine for 'round the bays' sojourns but if I was going further I think I would prefer to carry a little more water, or indeed install a watermaker in one of the engine bays. I hasten to add here, that in all the instances I have just mentioned, these particular configurations were not mandatory for as in the other instances around the Voyager – you can have exactly what you want – they are acquiescent to individual owner preferences and changes!

Performance

Having set aside just one day for my trip to Sydney for this test, wouldn't you know it Murphy's law kicked in and dictated we would have wind and rain that day; good for the sea state but bad for taking images for this article. Our running shots for the boat would be taken within the confines of a secluded bay but the actual sea trial would be 'steaming' in a sea state that was akin to outside the heads, only the swells were swapped for a short sharp Sydney



The aft bathroom was communal.

(Just in case), I was pleased to see the owner subscribed to my theory also for he had upgraded to a pair of MO 196K35 190hp 3.2 litre, 6-cylinder turbocharged and intercooled Steyr diesel engines which ran through ZF 2.4:1 straight-shaft gearboxes and conventional shaft drive, to the two 18"D x 21" 4-blade bronze propellers by Marine Castings.

The rest of the mechanical infantry was certainly chosen without prejudice; perhaps bold might be a better descriptive though for some of the

VOYAGER FULL PAGE
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The raised roof level was a novel way of enhancing the apparent size and volume of the saloon.

Harbour slop which when combined with the multitude of Ferry wakes, made for an interesting sea trial.

The Voyager certainly didn't suffer from any lack of power for we managed a top speed of 22kts and our fuel usage/range figures suggested a good cruise speed was around 17kts. Underway, it was surprising how quiet the ride was and equally surprising the lack of inertia bumps or banging from the tunnel; especially considering the tunnel height at the rear was just 0.5m! In short, while we were not in mountainous seas by any means, the Voyager showed enough in these conditions to obviate the fact this was a user-friendly boat without any noticeable inherent bad habits.

Very interestingly, out on this evaluation exercise Voyager themselves had to undertake some engine tests of his own – under power on one engine, and two engines. I wouldn't normally run a test on one engine myself, but it did in this instance prove one very pertinent point – that you can run on just one engine and at an acceptable speed of 8.7kts at 2000rpm, increase your range significantly from 483nm on two engines, to 687nm on just the one. Running on two engines, your cruise range at 17.4kts was 355nm.

Conclusion

What I liked about this boat was the fact that they didn't try to do too much with it, standard accommodation for five adults, workable saloon, appropriate cooking and refrigeration and heaps of storage. It was simply a good wholesome fun boat that with five to six people aboard was not over-crowded or incompetent. In short, it did what Voyager claimed it would do!

Woodwork, stainless steel work was all exemplary, as was the accuracy of the various mouldings and the general gelcoat finish on them. The owner did his homework and he got exactly what he wanted, a reality not lost on me because with all the changes – it surely confirmed the fact Voyager go out of their way to appease each respective owner. It appears no two Voyagers are ever the same! Value for money – even with nearly \$110K worth of extras included clearly this Voyager VI 100 Discovery, arguably the equivalent of a 45ft monohull, would have few peers!

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SPECIFICATIONS

Design Name	Voyager VI 100 Discovery	
Builder	Voyager Catamarans	
Designer	Derek Appleton	
Year Launched	2010	
LOA	11.8m	
LWL	10.4m	
Beam	4.2m	
Draft	0.8m	
Tunnel Height	0.5m	
Displacement	7800kg	
Max Speed	22kts	
Cruise Speed	16-19kts	
Fuel Cap	1000 litres	
Water Cap	500 litres	
Construction	Solid GRP to waterline, Composite & Core sandwich above waterline	
Engines Make	2 x 190hp Steyr 3.2lt, 6-Cyl Diesel	
Gear Boxes	ZF 2.4:1 straight shaft	
Drive Train	Conventional Shaft drive	
Propellers	18"D x 21" 4-blade Bronze by Marine Castings	
Inverter	Zantrax 1800W Pure Sine	
Charger	2 x Zantrax 50-Amp Smart Charger	
Air Conditioning	Seabreeze 12v, 14000btu to 3 cabins	
Lighting	Frilight, Amelec, Hella LED & Halogen	
Anchor Winch	Muir VRC1250 - rope chain combo	
Anchors	Manson 35lb Plough	
Steering	Seastar Hydraulic/Marine Controls	
Engine Controls	Morse Cable	
Paint (Topsides)	FGI Gelcoat	
Paint (Antifouling)	International Micron	
Hatches	Lewmar	
Portlights	AMI	
Windscreens	Alfab	
Heads	TMC Electric	
Timber	European Beech, by Marine Detail Joinery, Gold Coast	
Upholstery	Oceanic Milan Leather – East Coast Trimming	
Helm Chair	Reelax	
Stainless Steel by	Zac Stainless, Yatala	
Batteries	House	2 x 200Ah AGM
	Engine	2 x 75Ah AGM
	Air Conditioning	3 x 200Ah AGM
Tender Package	2.6m Zodiac Inflatable Torqeedo Travel 1003 Electric Outboard (3hp equivalent)	
Electronics		
Autopilot	Raymarine ST6002	
Plotter/GPS	Raymarine C120w - 12" Colour	
Depth Sounder	Raymarine DSM 30, 600w	
Radar	Raymarine 24NM	
VHF	Northstar with remote 'command' handset Entertainment System Palsonic 19" LCD TV/DVD and Clarion AM/FM/CD	
Software System	Navionics Platinum - Wide	
Engine Instruments	VDO / C.A.N. Bus	
Switch Panel	BEP Marine	
Base Price	AUD \$530,600	
Price as Tested	AUD \$639,800	