



CATANA 59'

LUXURY AND PLEASURE, an 18-metre invitation to travel

The company with the Samurai sword effigy will soon be celebrating its 30th anniversary! During this period, it has made a lasting impression on the world development of ocean cruising multihulls. The appearance of the 59' marks a real change in direction, technologically and conceptually; let's look at it together.

Text and photos: Philippe Echelle





CATANA, SINCE 1984

When Jean-Pierre Prades and Thierry Goyard created the double-edged company in 1984, they chose an Australian architect, an unknown in Europe and a specialist in fast cruising catamarans and racing trimarans: Lock Crowther. The southern hemisphere's pioneer, who passed away prematurely in 1993 (victim of a heart attack on one of his productions, the 48-foot DEGUELLO), profoundly influenced the philosophy of the Var-based builder, which, 20 years later, was to become one of the world leaders, after it had set up at Canet-en-Roussillon. The first model in this long saga was the 40'. In its DNA, it had all the underlying characteristics of the Crowther experience: compact nacelles, flared bows, bulbous forward sections – emblematic features which would widely influence the future designer of the modern Catanas, Christophe Barreau. The ocean cruising virus seems to be indissociable from the Cogolin or Canet production; the young architect sailed up to Spitsbergen in the C40' DIABOLO, before visiting Patagonia with his one-off 45-footer (again a Catana!). The torch was taken up by Bruno Nicoletti, in BRUMAS PATAGONIAS I and II, a 44 and a 471, with which he sailed round the world twice via the southern latitudes, first singlehanded, then with his brother! In addition to the

tracks of these extreme multihull sailors, hundreds of family crews were crossing the Atlantic, or sailing round the world aboard these agile catamarans. The Canet factory was occupied in 1998; it allowed construction of boats of exceptional sizes for the time: 58', 65' and up to 92' for the incredible, unique ORION. In 2000, the founders sold the company to Yves Gallot Lavallée (he raced in the 1982 Rhum on the Newick Creative GIGI, before making his fortune in information technology); he left it in a difficult situation in 2003, when Olivier Poncin took over the helm. The range was developed: the 52' disappeared fairly quickly, the enduring 47' continued on its way, the 50' was a real commercial success, but the construction, by contact lamination, was no longer compatible with the demands of an industrial tool of this level. The appearance of the 65' didn't avoid the necessity to replace the ageing 580. A new vision was essential.

AN INCREASE IN TECHNICAL STRENGTH

From 2007 onwards, several strategic decisions were taken: bringing all the wood-working back in-house, and going over to all-digital processing which allowed a precision in the assemblies which was unthinkable previously, adoption of infusion techniques over the whole of

the range and generalisation of foam-carbon sandwich bulkheads. The black fibre was also used as reinforcement in heavily-stressed areas and certain parts of the coach-roof, as well as in the rigid biminis. This change was a success. It gave new life to the superb 50' Evolution 2, the 55' (more than 3 tonnes were saved on these platforms), and the 42', built in the La Rochelle factory, and prepared the way for the 59', a conceptual turning point.

THE 59', OR DRIVING CHANGE

In another radical decision, the piloting of the project for this 'new direction' model was entrusted to the internal R&D department, assisted by consultant architects, specialists in their fields. Christophe Barreau had been the in-house designer for 20 years, but exclusive collaborations are not everlasting, which doesn't mean however that the 42, 47 and 50 have been abandoned. Olivier Poncin has been building boats for more than 25 years (Dufour, Nautitech, Kirié, Dynamique...). He has been presiding over Catana's fate for 8 years, has immersed himself in the internal culture, got to know the company's customers and has taken the pulse of the market trends. He is creative and keen on development, wants to reform the brand, and knows that he has the structures suitable for

this transition, as well as the human resources capable of accompanying this change. Catana is now well-rooted in the Roussillon area (15 years); a very ambitious production unit for the time, and the company's reputation and dynamics have allowed skills and the spirit of innovation to be fixed. Thus Pascal Pouplier (ex-project manager of the Power Legend 44' and the 92' ORION) took responsibility for construction at just 32 years old! The R&D department, managed by Olivier Vidal, had been co-producing the Catanas for a long time; the desire for this ambitious challenge was in everyone's heads!

AN AVANT-GARDE DESIGN

With chines back in the good books on the Imoca 60-footers and certain Wallys, dynamic lines took over from the bionic curves of previous generations; they again influenced creation in multihulls. The Catana 59' illustrates this trend with its bold lines. Its silhouette has a strong personality, due to a hardly noticeable deck camber which shows off the slightly inverted bows. The considerable freeboard is pleasing to the eye; a central rib breaks up the vertical sides and underlines the longitudinal Perspex panel, a light source for the gangway, in which the portlights are fitted. There are no openings in the side decks, thus impro-

1 : At full speed during our test, the 59 provided exceptional comfort at sea.

2 : Architectural fashion is no longer for curves, but for more 'rugged' designs! The 59' illustrates this trend, with its bold lines.

3 : A boat built for the high seas and long voyages...

4 : Inverted bows, high freeboard, curved daggerboards, angular design: no doubt, the Catana 59 is impressive!

5 : The steering position is well protected by the height of the freeboard and the bridgedeck. Even in rough seas, you will stay dry!





ving privacy in the cabins, safety when manoeuvring, and...watertightness in tropical squalls! The justification for this geometry is the wish to obtain a high bridgedeck, so the platform is well clear of the impacts of the waves and the central tunnel is clear. The secondary benefit is a dry deck and steering positions which are well out of reach of the spray. The design of the coachroof, after having been the subject of numerous working drawings and proposals from the consultant architects, was decided in-house, and seems to be a success. It contributes to the feeling of easy power emanating from the boat. The curved, constant profile appendages are not foils; they generate a bit of vertical thrust (around 500kg at 15 knots) and above all present the advantage of better stowage in the curves of the hull than straight daggerboards.

CAREFUL CONSTRUCTION

The 59' adopts an up-market process which remains perfectly realistic for cruising use. It is built in a single mould, including the bridgedeck and interior half-hulls. A selected gelcoat is applied first, before the first layer of multidirectional glass, laminated with vinyl ester resin, which will protect the hull below the waterline from hydrolysis. The bottom of the hull is monolithic, to rationalise chocking and preserve the integrity of this sensitive area. The 80kg/m³ foams come next. A Kevlar tissue is applied as an internal skin in potential impact zones, then the whole assembly is carefully infused. The exterior half-hulls are built using the same process; they are joined by lamination. The airex/carbon sandwich bulkheads, manufactured on a surface plate, are joined to the platform by manual lamination of bands of fixing tissues; this step determines the rigidity and

guarantees good ageing. The deck closes this 'box'; bonding and lamination make this one-piece structure very strong.

A CONTEMPORARY INTERIOR STYLE

Hervé Couedel (a graduate of the prestigious Parisian Boule school) and Pierre Hugon (cabinetmaker) have been working together for years on some exceptional boats from CNB (amongst others): BORDEAUX 60', ZURBAGAN G. Vaton 2006, SIMERON T. Castro (2004 design awards), ONLY NOW G. Frers (2002 design awards),... They also carried out the complete refit of FRIDAY STAR'S accommodation. Their creativity is not limited to yachting, as the associates are also entrusted with the decoration of fine residences and have designed a range of furniture. The 59's atmosphere reflects this maturity; it is however quite bold. The designers have reinterpreted classic catamaran accommodation design without restraint, and modelled, according to their 'profession of faith': "living areas which serve people;" "the feelings generated by the shapes" whose aim is to "provide peace and well-being in the users." In concrete terms, these Feng Shui values result in a sober but determined overall style, which puts the emphasis on the depth of field, the meticulous functionality of the volumes dedicated to individual comfort (heads, berths) as well as the

organisation of the convivial areas (multi-position tables, convertible dining-lounge area...). Here nothing is flashy; the 59's personality expresses itself through the choice of noble materials and the purity of its lines. Carbon, leather and alcantara are used in abundance, without calling on tropical wood species, frowned on for ecological reasons. The in-depth study of the lighting (natural and electric) creates a warm, intimate, flexible atmosphere, and reinforces the feeling of well-being. Certain luxurious choices (satin stainless steel taps, thin sliced corian, door handles and locks, wall lights...), through their perfection, provide real pleasure in use. The draining shower floors in black resin illustrate this spirit; there is no need to dry anything; 5 minutes after your shower, everything is clean and dry! After spending 3 days aboard, I also noted the exceptional thermal insulation and soundproofing.

SEA TEST

Between the phenomena of the Cevennes (the Noah's ark myth probably originates from one of these autumn Mediterranean storms!) and a full, end-of-October north-westerly gale, we were able to take advantage of two days, to get to know the C 59'. This multihull needs port installations suited to its size (bow thrusters?), but once at sea, its 'Range Rover Sport' geometry predestines it to luxury ocean cruising. With this boat, Catana is looking for, and finds, a new balance between performance which has contributed to its brand image, a design and philoso-



6 : The saloon/cockpit area is grandiose. It can be converted according to your wishes, with the table in the cockpit...

7 : ...or with the table inside... But other configurations can obviously be envisaged!

8 : The interior design is a real success, as is the finishing: bravo!

9 : The incredible interior volume and the designers' work allow remarkably comfortable cabins to be offered.

phy likely to appeal to a clientele with high purchasing power, coming from other areas of leisure sailing, and the independent management of the boat, shorthanded. The version with the self-tacking jib, which was put at our disposal, meets this specification well. The superb carbon mast, built by Eric Duchemin, does not rotate, to respect the in-house tradition. The rig has been designed to develop a configuration with a much more powerful overlapping genoa, which goes hand in hand with the carbon cross (forward crossbeam and compression strut). The engine room is a model of accessibility and visibility; a first technical area houses the generators, the water-maker, the filters, the steering and autopilot transmissions, and a second houses the engines and ancillaries (water heater, exhaust, ventilation, seacocks, prop shaft and stern gland). This rational set up assists maintenance, a very important point for use without a skipper. During the two days, we had rough weather conditions, with a north-westerly wind which varied from 10 to 24 knots, and raised a confused sea. Frequent rain contributed to the reinforcement of the 'cocoon' feeling in this cat, in these conditions. At between 10 and 14 knots, from close hauled to a reach,

I appreciated the 59's balance; the curved daggerboards are as simple to use as the traditional profiles; they slide in their housing with no apparent friction, and remarkably, can be manipulated under way! Their influence in preventing leeway is obvious, but what is more surprising is that they stabilize the boat's trim in rough seas, and visibly reduce pitching (test conditions: maximum load, with full fuel and water tanks, 10 people aboard). The high freeboard and bridgedeck make the boat very reassuring; the deck remains dry in a beam wind with 2-metre waves! The advantage of this characteristic will be felt fully offshore, where it will allow a rarely-achieved level of comfort. The 59' doesn't work the autopilot hard, as it is very light and neutral on the helm (rigid + textile transmissions) if you are careful with the positioning of the main traveller. Long-term shorthanded sailing is possible; reefing, under way with jib and freed mainsail, is very easy. The deck plan, with control lines grouped at consoles (either side of the aft crossbeam, and opposite the steering wheels) is readable, biomechanically coherent and safe; the tensions involved obviously require electric winches.

CONCLUSION

The Catana 59's internal and external ergonomics are its strong points! The attention paid to movement is obvious; the boulevard-sized side decks safely link the cockpit terrace to the impressive area of the foredeck; the trampolines fixed in the lips of the deck joint assembly, with no difference in level, and the flush-fitting forward deck hatches, add to this fluidity. The completely



flat coachroof top allows easy access to the boom, lazy jacks and mainsail headboard. This accessibility, a weak point on certain big boats, is here an important factor in its easy handling. The almost completely opening sliding door reveals an amazing volume on the same level, a semi-open loggia concept, which can quickly be converted, and will adapt to all latitudes, thanks to the canvas 'walls' which close the cockpit in a flash. The overall build quality has reached another level. This version with a self-tacking jib will appeal to voyagers; cruisers looking for

extra power will choose the overlapping sail plan and the 230m² spinnaker. Development of this platform to 70' would open amazing prospects for the new range, which should also include a 53'.



- ◆ Remarkable interior design and comfort
- ◆ Build and equipment quality
- ◆ Contemporary silhouette



- ◆ Folding helmsman's seat
- ◆ Spreader and bowsprit exposed to chafing at anchor
- ◆ Windage

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Architects: Catana R&D department and consultants
 Builder: Catana
 Length: 17.90m
 Beam: 9.49m
 Draft: 1.56/3.75m
 Mast height: 24.06m
 Equipped weight: t
 Windward sail area: 192m²
 Downwind sail area: 237m²
 Engines: 2 x 110hp/2 x 150hp as an option
 Transmission: propshafts/folding, four bladed propellers
 Price, private owner's 3 cabin version: 1,579,792euros exc. VAT
 Main options, exc. VAT:
 • Square-headed mainsail in spectra hydranet: 30,230 euros
 • Gennaker in spectra hydranet, bowsprit and fittings: 28,000 euros
 • Spinnaker, 227m²: 9,370 euros
 • Carbon mast (Eric Duchemin): 95,880 euros
 • Kevlar cap shrouds: 6,220 euros
 • Carbon forward crossbeam: 65,800 euros
 • Full electronics package: 29,700 euros
 • 240l/h watermaker: 18,840 euros
 • 7kVA generator: 21,124 euros

THE COMPETITORS

Model	SOUBISE 56	SWISS 55	MATTIA 56
Builder	Soubise Yacht	Swiss Catamaran	Mattia
Windward sail area in m ²	215	165	200
Weight in t	19	16.5	14
Price in euros, exc. VAT	1,350,000	1,250,000	1,050,000