

# LAUNCHED

LOA: 69'0"

Beam: 29'6"

Draft: 3'0"

Displ. (light): 68,000 lbs.

Power: (2) 150-kW E-motors;

20-kWh Lithium-ion batteries;

(1) 145-kW Hyundai diesel

Price (base): \$2,600,000 (approx.)





## Silent 60

THIS ELECTRIC POWER CAT HARNESSSES THE SUN TO PROVIDE A QUIET, ECO-FRIENDLY CRUISING EXPERIENCE

I was talking with a colleague, my back turned to the helm, when Silent Yachts Capt. Kyle Miller pulled the new 60 away from the dock in Fort Lauderdale. It wasn't until I turned around and saw the shoreline receding that I realized our sea trial had begun. This solar/electric power catamaran from Silent-Yachts truly is that quiet. The only sounds I could hear were the faint hum of the air conditioning and later, when we were out on deck, the rush of water against the hulls.

The Silent 60 is powered by a bank of lithium-ion batteries, which draw their energy primarily from the large array of solar panels on the yacht's roof. As long as the sun is shining, the Silent 60 continuously is recharging itself. "It's the only boat that fills its own fuel tank," Capt. Miller said.

Cruise speed is a leisurely 6 to 8 knots. Since there are times when you need to pick up the pace to get to port before nightfall or a storm, however, the Silent 60 also can run in "Sport Mode," with the single 145 kW Hyundai diesel generator switched on to help replenish the batteries more quickly. This gives the boat a top speed of about 12 knots. However, this is not a hybrid vessel. Everything on board is battery-powered, from the E-motors and drivetrain to the navigation instruments, lights, air conditioning and appliances. And all this equipment can be controlled from the helm via the CZone digital switching system.

This innovative vessel is the brainchild of Austrian couple Michael and Heike Köhler, lifelong sailors who have put more than 75,000 nautical miles under their keel. In 2004, with the goal of combining the silent-running capability of a sailboat with the luxury of a power cat, the Köhlers began testing alternative marine propulsion technologies. In 2009, they launched

the Solarwave 56 prototype, billed as "the world's premier fully solar-powered catamaran." For the next five years, they cruised her all over the world. That experience led to the development of the first Silent-Yachts production model, the Silent 64, which launched in 2016. Since then, the brand has expanded to include models from 55 to 120 feet.

The Silent 60 made its debut in Europe in the fall of 2021. My sea trial took place this spring, on Hull #3, the first Silent 60 to come to U.S. waters. After a few weeks in Fort Lauderdale, its owner planned to take the yacht to New England for the summer.

Silent-Yachts takes a global approach to boat manufacturing. Its headquarters are in Austria. The yachts are constructed in Italy, Turkey and Thailand. The design team also is multi-national. One of its latest additions is designer Juliana Miguel, based in Fano, Italy. Miguel has taken the company's mission to continuously evolve its yachts to heart. The next Silent 60 hulls to launch will reflect her design enhancements to the boat's ergonomics, storage and interior decor. She also has expanded the hull windows throughout. "There is not one surface that I did not change," she said during our tour.

The main deck offers an enormous amount of living space. Both a 1-deck and 2-deck are furnished with low-profile pieces, leaving nearly 360 degrees of unobstructed views (except for the starboard aft corner, which contains a full-height fridge). The galley is aft, where it serves the whole deck with ease. In a nice touch, each of the wide walkaround side decks has an alcove with settee where you can relax and enjoy passing seascapes.

Our sea-trial boat featured the "Port Exit" layout, which has a door forward between the salon and foredeck. Silent-Yachts also



offers a “Front Master” version that locates the master stateroom forward and a few steps down. On our test Silent 60, all four ensuite staterooms were in the hulls, including a master, VIP and two guest staterooms.

Although the master cabin on our test boat was nicely equipped, the new version will have a larger berth and expanded cabinetry. The Silent-Yachts design team also has shown considerable flexibility when it comes to letting owners personalize their vessels. Miguel showed me a rendering of a custom wine cooler she designed for one owner’s master suite.

The Silent 60 also has a small crew quarters in the port hull, forward. In our boat, access to it was through an awkwardly placed hatch in the walkaround. In future boats, that hatch will be relocated and enlarged.

We spent most of our “Silent Sunset Sail” on the flybridge, where the solar panel array made a futuristic frame for views of the Intracoastal Waterway. Interestingly, the hardtop, which also holds solar panels, can be retracted, turning the solar array into a solid, more efficient plane. It also reduces the yacht’s bridge clearance height to about 19 feet. “This boat can do the

Erie Canal,” Capt. Miller said.

We did not experience “Sprint Speed,” but cruising at 6 knots on the calm ICW, the boat responded nicely to the helm and turned adroitly for a power cat. It consumed a total of 20 kilowatts per hour of energy.

Range is a difficult figure to provide for an electric boat that recharges itself. The company reports that the Silent 60 is capable of running continuously without the generator for 100 miles per day at about 4.5 knots, depending on sea conditions. Silent-Yachts plans to introduce a more efficient new drivetrain soon that should increase this to 5 or 5.5 knots.

Optional propulsion packages are available for the Silent 60, ranging up to twin 340-kW E-motors and 286-kWh worth of batteries, which increases top end speed to a range between 13 and 20 knots. That is still quite a bit slower than a traditional diesel-powered catamaran. But the trade-off for owners will be the joy of silent running, along with knowing they are doing something positive for the planet. —*Louisa Beckett*

*Previous page: The “Front Master” version of the Silent 60. Top: Rendering of the future interior by Juliana Miguel.*