

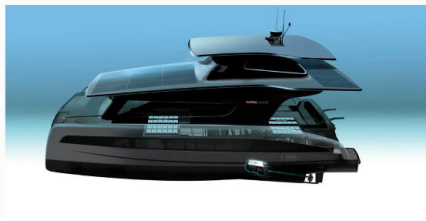
Volkswagen Unveils 50-Foot Solar-Powered Catamaran In Partnership With Silent-Yachts



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Boats & Planes

I cover innovation and trends in luxury aviation and yachting.



Silent 50 is a solar-powered catamaran created in partnership with Volkswagen, Silent-Yachts and ... [1] SILENT-YACHTS

What happens when a world-famous automaker, a German solar yacht manufacturer and a progressive Spanish car brand come together? Electric magic, it seems. The brainchild of Volkswagen, Silent-Yachts and Cupra, Silent 50 is a solar-electric catamaran that the intrepid trio hopes will revolutionise yachting by creating a more environmentally-friendly experience.

The Volkswagen Group has made huge strides in the world of electric motoring in recent years, including revolutionary launches across brands including Volkswagen, Audi and Porsche. In fact, despite the pandemic, 2020 was a particularly successful year for the electric side of the business. According to Volkswagen Passenger Cars, in 2020, the brand delivered more electric vehicles worldwide than ever before, handing over more than 212,000 electric cars in total (+158 percent versus 2019), including nearly 134,000 battery electric vehicles (+197 percent versus 2019).

All things considered, a move into the nautical arena seems like a logical next step, as does its decision to partner with fellow German company Silent-Yachts, a leader in the realm of solar yachting which is behind the world's first fully solar-sustainable oceangoing production catamaran yachts.

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"I'm happy to cooperate with our partners on this exciting new project," says Michael Köhler, founder and CEO of Silent-Yachts. "Volkswagen Group is one of the most advanced players on the electric cars market and I am sure together we can make something really special on the water."

Each member of the trio brings something unique to the project. Volkswagen provides its state-of-the-art modular electric drive matrix (MED), which will help with e-mobility and reduce emissions. Barcelona-based Cupra contributes in terms of design, bringing a touch of the contemporary sportiness the firm is known for. Meanwhile, Silent-Yachts supplies the solar electric power system, which feeds the boat's electric propulsion and energy needs.

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Together, they promise a catamaran that "will grant more comfort, independence, reliability and safety with less maintenance and costs than any conventional fuel-dependent propulsion and energy-supply."



Silent-Yachts' flagship catamaran Silent 80 earned it the nickname 'the Tesla of the seas' SILENT-YACHTS

While this is far from Silent-Yachts' first foray into this field – previous vessels such as the flagship 80-foot Silent 80 won the company the nickname of "the Tesla of the seas" – the collaboration with Volkswagen and VW-owned Cupra is special.

For the Silent 50, being the first solar-electric catamaran with MEB propulsion comes with a variety of benefits, including the ability to cruise all night non-stop, according to Michael Jost, head of group strategy product and CSO of Volkswagen, who reveals they will install up to six batteries per yacht, enabling 500 kW of power.

A price is yet to be announced but the first Silent 50 model is set to be ready to set sail in 2022. Four years after launch, Silent-Yachts is hoping to produce at least 50 units a year for environmentally-aware yachting enthusiasts.

As for why this project is so important to Volkswagen, Jost says: "For us, compliance with the Paris Climate Agreement is of central importance – as a company, we therefore want to promote climate-neutral mobility at all levels. Moreover, with this cooperation we are demonstrating that our MEB platform is also suitable for and open to other mobility companies. With MEB-based silent yachts, we can also bring CO2 emissions to zero on water. This is a good step for climate protection worldwide."