

NEW BOATS

SILENT 62

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS POWER-CAT BUILDER MAKES WAVES EVEN AT THE SMALLER END OF THEIR RANGE.

Following in the footsteps of Silent's 64 and 120, the Italian builder's newly designed SY62 is chock full of innovative features and clever uses of space. The modular construction and semi-custom interiors will interest a range of owners—so long as they're ready to make the jump to electric.

Silent Yachts burst onto the scene in 2009, pushing fully electric propulsion. With hypothetically limitless range from solar panels and lithium batteries, the tradeoff is that owners might need to alter their cruising style for more moderate speeds and power consumption on board. Still, it's hard to argue when they're heading out on holiday and skipping the fuel dock—and the bill.

Passagemaker's Jeff Moser and I got a first look at the Silent 62 at the Cannes Yachting Festival this past September, and we not only had a chance to poke around but also talk to the delivery captain who'd brought the boat through two days and a storm on the way to the show. She had lots of great insight into how it handled.

Her first note was to let us know that the joystick steering on our model was going to be replaced with actual steering wheels on subsequent models. "Once you get used to it it's easy, but initially you do have to get used to the rhythm of the joystick," she said. "I picked it up quickly. They're trying to make it as intuitive as possible." However, in order to have owners and their guests feeling comfortable right away, she says Silent has opted to go with a more standard setup as the base version on future models.



LOA: 61'11"
Beam: 29'6"
Draft: 4'1"
Disp: 102,845 lb.
Fuel: 528 gal.
Water: 581 gal.
Power: 2/50 kW or
2/40 kW electric

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Still, crew will probably be fairly common on these boats and the crew cabin (forward to port) is reasonably outfitted. Access to the foredeck, with a comfortably recessed seating area, is via a forward cabin door or well-protected sidedecks with high, substantial railings but no overhead grab rails. There is also an option for a forward owner's suite, in which case you lose the front access to the foredeck. For those looking for a bit more from their boat, a Wingit kite can be launched from the foredeck as well. Silent says it can add four to five knots of boat speed, and you don't have to learn to sail to get those benefits—the system is simple to use and can manage itself on autopilot. (And as an editor at *SAIL* Magazine, any power boat that can fly a sail and cruise without an engine is fine by me!)

The flybridge is reached via external access. The space aloft on our test boat was spacious with plenty of different lounging areas, a built-in bar and incredible 360-degree views. The main seating area is slightly recessed with three steps up to reach the large sunpads aft. From the upper helm, there's almost no visibility of the lower decks and corners of the boat, but that's where a wireless Dockmate joystick comes in.

One thing that sets the SY62 apart is the option to replace the

flybridge and upper helm station ("3-Deck Open") with either a "2-Deck" version or a "3-Deck Enclosed" version, the latter of which features an owner's suite. This is a massive, luxurious space with a designated work desk, private deck and the bed facing a large window where you can fall asleep to the starry blush of the Milky Way on the horizon. We heard that at least one member of Silent Yacht's leadership team opted for this version on his own SY62—an endorsement that's tough to beat.

Heading below to the salon, you'll find a spacious living area with upscale finishing details. The helm is to starboard and a large dining table is to port. On our model, the galley spanned the entire aft section of the interior and that space was used to pack in all the provisioning storage that long-range cruising might require, including four massive refrigerator/freezer drawers in addition to the full-sized stand-up refrigerator. A galley down is also an option.

If you opt for the owner's cabin in one of the hulls, the star of the show is a massive closet area with all of the storage space and full-length mirrors you could ask for. In contrast, in the three-cabins-in-one-hull version, the staterooms are quite compact. Though the

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tradeoff for this layout is somewhat close quarters, it certainly allows you to invite more people to the party—and with so much space on the flybridge, salon, cockpit and forward seating area, there's no reason to keep the guest list short.

Likely to keep the space from feeling closed off, the heads featured a lot of large clear panels where there might typically be walls, particularly in the shower. It's not a setup for the modest. Jeff and I had a good chuckle over one cabin where the sleeping arrangements were split down the middle to fit two side-by-side single beds but had a shower with two completely clear sides, begging the question: If you're bunking up with someone you wouldn't share a bed with, do you really

want to see them in the shower? Fortunately, there are other layout options if you prefer not to accidentally star in an impromptu peep show.

Underway in a choppy sea, the motion was a little bit rocky and worse on the flybridge, but we were making 10 knots in an inlet that had many other boats undergoing sea trials at the same time, so we were contending with an uncommon amount of wake. Still, the boat felt secure and stable, and the smartly placed handrails and recessed areas paid dividends.

The SY62 is designed for two to three hours of cruising per day and then anchoring to enjoy your destination. That makes for plenty of charging time. However, if you're conservative with power usage, you could theoretically be doing longer-range cruising. 7 knots is ideal with a 2,800-mile range, but with the throttle down, the boat maxes out at 12 knots. The SY62 does actually have a 140 kWp (p=peak) diesel generator, but the company calls it a "range extender." It can recharge the batteries in three hours and offers a backup boost if the weather is less than ideal—or dark.

The 16.8 kWp solar panel array makes use of pretty much every available horizontal surface, and they charge two banks of batteries for redundancy, each comprising 17 800-volt batteries or 34 in total. They're arranged in two long rows below the salon floor and are fairly easy to access. The two motors use 180 kW each for continuous usage or 340 kWp power.

With so many options, it's likely that no two SY62s will look exactly alike, but they will share the same DNA of a clever design, eco-conscious operation and lux finishing touches that Silent has spent 15 years honing. Though electric propulsion is still earning its place in the market, the SY62 certainly goes a long way to prove what's possible.—*Lydia Mullan*

