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OUTER REEF 80
BERTRAM 700
AMERICAN TUG 41
STERLING 41

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SUCIA ISLAND
QUIET HIDEAWAY IN THE SAN JUANS

1,000s OF NEW & USED BOATS FOR SALE INSIDE

ANACORTES TO THE SEA OF CORTEZ IN A 25-FOOT GRADY-WHITE p. 86

Grady-White Tackles Sea of Cortez p. 90

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SOMETIMES, TO SEE THE DETAILS of a yacht, you need to step back for a different perspective, as with the Outer Reef 80.

Usually on sea trials, I meet the subject yacht at a marina, jump on and start going through the vessel and talking over features with the captain or sales reps who usually ride along. Then we head out and put the yacht through its paces, and I get some wheel time to judge the ride, feel, maneuverability, and so on. This all happened with the Outer Reef 80, but I was also lucky from another aspect.

I arranged to see Illusion IV, a recently commissioned Outer Reef 80, cruise close by from a shoreside location as it made its way to the marina, and see the boat in all its glory. This is one good-looking yacht; well proportioned and sleek, with large but not obtrusive salon windows, a large hardtop with integrated radar arch and a good-sized aft deck. The extended rub/spray rail helps to accentuate the lower portholes. Evident also were the longitudinal drainage scuppers, side-to boarding gates and upturned flared bow. Seeing the detailed, trawler-like profile of the Outer Reef 80 gave me a better sense of what I would find when I boarded. And I wasn’t disappointed.

DISTINCTIVELY DESIGNED

This is a classic-looking yacht, inside and out. Satin-varnished finishes adorn the interior teak woodwork and veneer panels. The salon is huge despite the use of exterior side decks. Illusion IV is fitted out with an L-shaped sofa and separate chair flanking a cocktail table to port. Two additional chairs complete with built-in ottomans surround the built-in entertainment center with a recessed TV to starboard. Wood window blinds tie into the surrounding décor, making this area inviting for casual relaxing or as a central gathering point.

Just forward on the salon level is a semi-formal dining area that seats six. Carpentry and fabric selections include earthy tans and other beige-based colors that add definition to the room and carry forward to the lower helm.

Two steps up from the salon is the port-side galley, complete with everything you would expect on a house-sized yacht. Along with standard appliances, Illusion IV has a Kitchen-Aid stove/oven unit with an upper microwave, full-sized fridge/freezer with teak veneer panels on the front, and a deep sink for cleaning pots and pans. Granite counters and backsplashes add to the functionality of the galley. Chances are you’ll be doing some level of cooking, as this galley is so inviting. If you don’t know how to cook, learn!

To go forward to the lower helm and accommodation areas, you pass through a narrow passageway. Here you’ll find a full storage cabinet for china and crystal on roll-out drawers (a super way to secure these fine items). A six-drawer U-Line wine chiller is optional, built into the wall with a glass door for viewing your vintage collection. Storage space abounds with drawers and cabinets utilizing any spare space, but stylishly incorporated into the interior motif.

TESTER’S OPINION: “This is a classic-looking yacht, inside and out. The Outer Reef 80 is well proportioned and sleek, and the ABT Trac stabilizers provide a comfortable and steady ride in a beam sea.”

MULTIPLE VANTAGE POINTS

The lower helm may be one of the most popular places to enjoy a cruise. A full helm dash, large enough to house four large VEI video screens (for charts, radar, cameras and more), a Northstar 6100i plotter, VHF radio and other electronic gadgets, allows for a full complement of just about any setup you can dream of. The flat area of the dash contains the Furuno keyboards, thruster controls, Glendinning electronic engine controls and a battery of rocker switches and knobs. Dual Caterpillar engine control displays are placed directly in front of the wheel, keeping them in plain sight. Visibility from the lower station is excellent, thanks to the five large forward house windows. Or, you can use the several optional fore, aft or side cameras that can guide you into a slip without breaking a sweat. If you need to step out, there are port and starboard
Experience the Outer Reef 80, where superior craftsmanship and finery is no illusion.