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Outer Reef 63

PACKS A LOT OF POWER IN ITS PUNCH

BY CHRIS CASWELL

SOMETIMES WORDS CAN BE EMPTY. Saying that a man is tough doesn't mean a thing, until he has to prove himself. The same goes for putting a label on a boat like "expedition yacht" or "long-range cruiser;" it doesn't mean anything until the boat is put to the test.

Outer Reef hasn't tried to slap a macho label on its new Outer Reef 63-foot raised pilothouse motoryacht. This is because they already know it's tough.

Outer Reef arrived on the scene a few years ago with one simple goal: build a classic pilothouse trawler suitable for extended cruising in luxury, comfort and safety. Again, those are just words, but Outer Reef has built its reputation on delivering exactly that product.

The 63-footer is a stretch version of the company's already successful 58-foot pilothouse trawler. The stretch was simple: They added a 5-foot cockpit to the motoryacht stern.

For starters I like the looks of the 63 better than the 58's. Somehow the extra length balances out the yacht and makes it sit lower visually, although in reality they are both the same height.

Second, that cockpit adds an

immense amount of flexibility to the yacht. It's a good place for boarding a tender or stepping onto a floating dock. It's also perfect for swimming off the transom platform. And it allows safe entry to the engine room through the watertight transom door. Cruisers will appreciate an invisible bonus: the vast amount of storage space created under the cockpit sole. It's a smart addition.

When it comes to building a boat tough, Outer Reef has chosen to follow two sets of standards that are accepted worldwide. First, it builds to the American Bureau of Shipping guidelines, which are extremely rigorous.

An Inside Look

Going one step further, it meets the design and construction requirements of the European Union Category A, Ocean. That's as high as the EU ratings go: Category A is for yachts expecting to encounter winds exceeding Beaufort Force 8 and seas exceeding 18 to 20 feet on long offshore voyages.

With the addition of the cockpit, the previous after deck becomes a "California deck" under the protection of the overhanging bridge deck. Here, a console over the engine room stairs separates two settees, and a pair of wing doors protects the area from spray and wind. A full enclosure could turn this into an all-weather living area, while still leaving the cockpit open for handling the yacht.

The salon is the one area where Outer Reef shows its flexibility when it comes to arrangement; in the case of our test boat there is an L-shaped settee with an expandable dining table to port and a pair of leather club chairs on the other side. This configuration allows comfortable dining for six and great views through the large side windows while under way, and the loose seats can be arranged to allow everyone to enjoy the 42-inch flat-screen Sharp TV on the forward bulkhead.

The interior finish is teak on this yacht, detailed with recessed valances for the reed blinds and burl wood inlaid into the mullions under Cantaluppi sconces. A choice of wood is also available; however, Outer Reef did an excellent job with its use of teak.

Take two steps up to the galley, overlooking the salon, where the cook and guests can carry on a conversation during meal preparations. The galley is equipped with all the amenities that you'd expect: GE Profile appliances including a five-burner cooktop, microwave/convection oven, dishwasher, trash compactor, and a two-door refrigerator and freezer. In the test boat Outer Reef used black granite on all the counter space, but a choice of finishes is available. Opposite the galley is a pantry with roller drawers.

The pilothouse fills the forward end of the house with an area to delight the cruising skipper. Watertight doors on each side lead to the Portuguese bridge, and the teak sole extending forward from



An L-shaped settee to port allows guests to look through the forward windows and have the same view as the skipper in his Stidd pedestal seat. The galley overlooks the salon where the cook and guests can carry on a conversation during meal preparation.

the galley is perfect for entry in wet weather. An L-shaped settee to port allows guests to look through the forward windows and have the same view as the skipper in his Stidd pedestal seat.

The dash is trimmed in teak, with plenty of space to accommodate the two Raymarine E-120 monitors, the twin Caterpillar digital monitors, plus a plethora of other electronics. Just to the right of the skipper is a console for everything from a mug of hot coffee to binoculars, with a full-sized chart table to port, and storage underneath.

Electronics installers are going to be very happy, indeed, with the big crawl space under the helm console, allow-



TESTER'S OPINION:

"Built to face rugged conditions, luxuriously finished and well outfitted, the Outer Reef 63 should be on your short list of must-sees in this size range."

ing them complete access. In the stairwell next to the door leading to this area is the main AC and DC switch panel.

Continue down the stairwell and you'll find yourself in a foyer that hides a full-sized Bosch washer and dryer, along with a dedicated locker for soap and other supplies.

The master stateroom is amidships, spanning the full beam under the galley and pilothouse in the area of least motion. Twin portholes are concealed behind sliding Shoji screens above the athwartships king-size berth with a padded headboard. A pair of nightstands flanks the berth, which also has drawers underneath. A teak overhead treat-

Outer Reef

63

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	63 ft., 1 in.
LWL	57 ft., 11 in.
Beam	16 ft., 9 in.
Draft	4 ft., 10 in.
Fuel	1,000 gals.
Water	300 gals.
Engine Options	Caterpillar C-12 700 hp, Deere
Engines Tested	Caterpillar C-9 503 hp

PERFORMANCE SPECS

RPM/Knots/DB(A)

700/5.1/60

900/7/60

1200/8.1/62

1500/10.1/64

1800/11.3/64

2100/12.5/66

2400/14.2/68

2530/15.4/68

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Twin Caterpillar C-9 Acert (503 mhp) diesel engines w/ZF transmissions and electronic instruments for dual stations, Northern Lights generator 16 kw (60 hz) w/sound shields, bow thruster-Side Power SM155Tci 10.7 hp (24v) electric w/dual station controls and two (2) AGM 8d-255 ah batteries, Morse hydraulic engine controls for dual stations and much more.

OPTIONAL FEATURES

See Outer Reef brochure for full list of optional items.

CONSTRUCTION

Hand-laid FRP hull w/PVC foam sandwich construction above waterline. Vinylester barrier lamination for osmosis protection. Hand-laid FRP deck/house and flybridge w/PVC foam sandwich construction, full-length longitudinal engine stringers and athwartship stringers, windows w/tempered glass around deckhouse, rub raids w/stainless steel capping, bilge area finished smooth and coated w/epoxy paint, built-in swim platform w/stainless steel swim ladder and rails and spare parts: push pull patches, overhead lights and switches.

COMPANY PROFILE

Years in business	8
Boat lines	Outer Reef

BUILDER

OUTER REEF YACHTS

DEALERS

Outer Reef Yachts, Seattle, WA; (206) 957-4664; www.outerreefyachts.com
American Global Yacht Group, Ft. Lauderdale, FL; (954) 767-8305; www.agyg.com

ment includes halogen lights, while reading sconces are on the bulkhead. Best of all, two large hanging lockers should easily absorb all the clothing for a leisurely cruise.

The master head runs along the starboard side of the cabin, with a space-saving pocket door for privacy. The head features an oversized shower with a seat, and a very clever nonslip sole of teak tiles.

Just forward to port is a guest or crew cabin with upper and lower berths, a hanging locker and use of the day head across the passageway. All the way forward, the VIP stateroom has a high island berth with steps on each side for access. The height allows ample drawers under the berth as well as a pair of hanging lockers. This cabin has a private entry into the day head, which features an oversized shower like the master.

Up top, the flying bridge on our test boat was finished with a stylish fiberglass hardtop and an electronics arch combination, which can be weather-proofed with soft or hard enclosures. I liked the look of the hardtop, which had clearly been designed as part of the yacht rather than as an afterthought.

The upper helm is a simplified version of the pilothouse with just a single Raymarine screen in a fiberglass console. It also provides space for a chart table to port and a helm console to starboard.

The entertainment area of the bridge has an L-shaped settee with a high-low table for cocktails or dining, and the starboard side is dedicated to an outdoor galley with a GE Monogram grill, under-counter refrigerator and ice-maker, and a sink.

Because it spans the full beam, the boat deck easily handles the 12-foot Novurania tender fitted to our test boat, and the Brower 1,200-pound crane could easily lift larger tenders or personal watercraft. The primary access to the bridge is via a stairway from the pilothouse just inside the cabin door. I say primary because there is a ladder from the boat deck to the California deck, but it's so vertical I doubt it would get that much use.

Access to the engine room is excellent, through a large watertight door from the cockpit. There is a secondary door or an emergency escape route from the

master stateroom through another watertight door concealed behind a teak door.

Once inside, there is good access to the twin Caterpillar C-9 diesels of 503 hp each, as well as the Northern Lights 16 kw generator in a sound shield. For safety in a seaway the engines are surrounded by sturdy stainless steel rails. Stabilizers are standard equipment, along with an American bow thruster and the Maxwell anchor windlass. Additionally there is an oil change system, a 75-foot Glendinning 50-amp Cablemaster, dual 50-amp isolation transformers for shore power, and a Trace 2.5 kw inverter for sitting at anchor without needing the generator.

The extra 5 feet of cockpit translates into a large second lazarette, which I suspect cruisers will quickly fill with spares, provisions, dive gear and all the other necessities for cruising.

Getting the Outer Reef 63 away from the dock was a cinch, using the bow thruster and the plug-in remote engine controls that allow the skipper to maneuver from just about anywhere on the yacht. Once under way, the 63 was delightful. It tracked straight and turned without fuss, and appeared happy even in beam seas.

I was surprised by its quietness, too. Even at full throttle, which is about 15 knots, we barely reached 68 decibels in the pilothouse, which is just enough to let you know the engines are running but not enough to overpower normal conversation.

I liked the fact that, at just 2000 rpm, we were eating up the miles at about 12 knots, which is as fast as you'll want to go in many sea conditions. Keeping the revs down also means these diesels will be happy for thousands of hours.

Looking at the Outer Reef 63 as a whole, it became patently clear that it has been carefully and thoughtfully designed for the cruising couple who will be running the yacht themselves. Wide sidedecks so you can move fore and aft easily when docking, extra boarding gates in the bulwarks, secure rails around the foredeck for anchoring these are the hallmarks of a shorthanded cruising yacht.

Built to face rugged conditions, luxuriously finished and well outfitted, the Outer Reef 63 should be on your list of must-sees in this size range. ♥