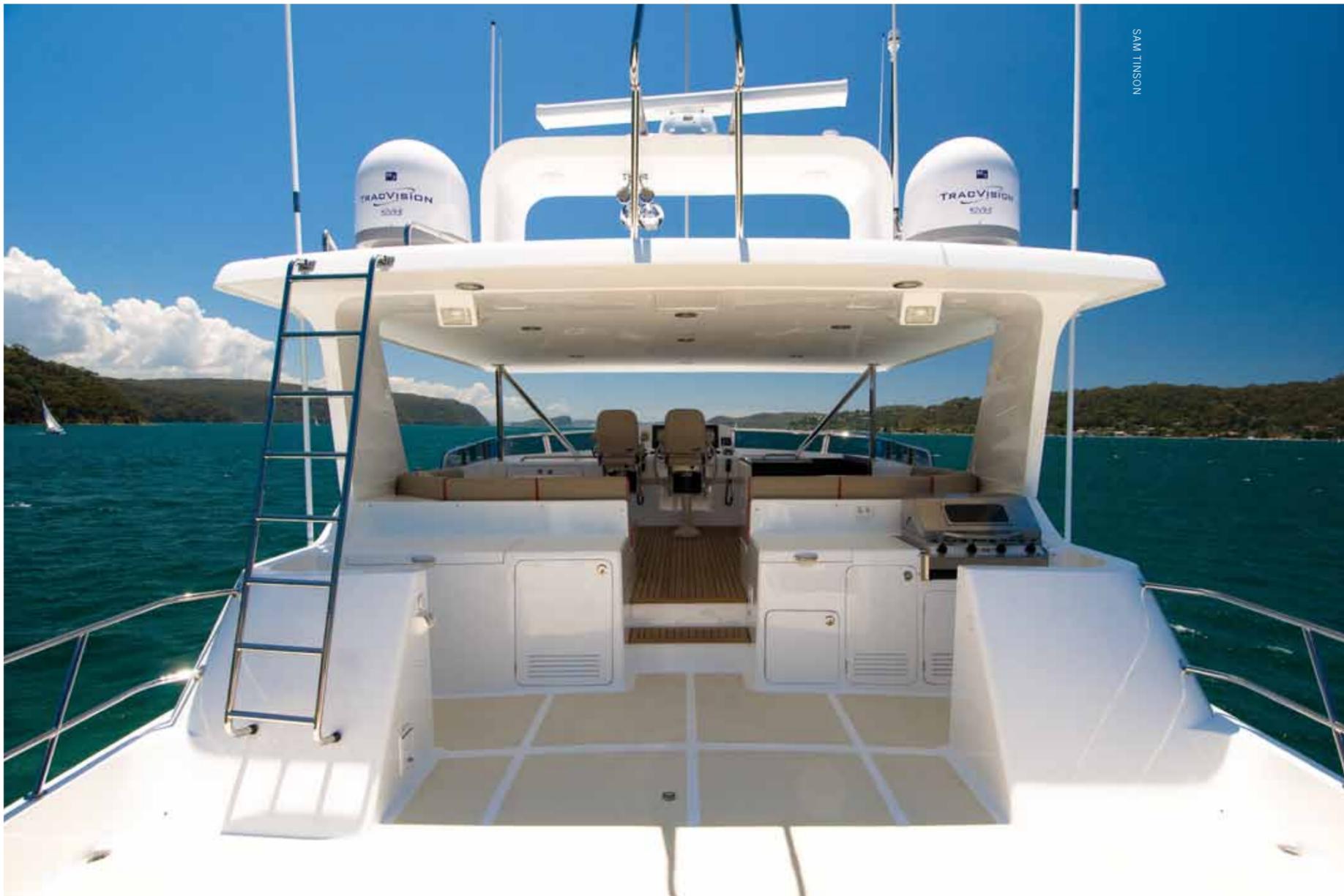


PURPOSE-BUILT FOR OFFSHORE ADVENTURE, THE OUTER REEF 70 IS A TOUGH TRAWLER WITH BLUEWATER IN ITS VEINS. IT WON'T BE CONTENT WITH MERELY SITTING ON AN ANCHORAGE, WRITES **MATTHEW HENRY**.

BLUEWATER BATTLE



NEW WAVE
The balanced, contemporary look of the Outer Reef 70 sets it apart from other trawlers.



SAM TINSON

A fresh nor'easter has whipped up a short, sharp windswell off Barrenjoey Head and the Outer Reef 70 is punching through the waves like a heavyweight boxer, landing blow after blow on the approaching slabs of blue ocean. Water is splashing over the bow and misty spray is pelting against the bridgedeck windows, peeled off in sheets by the wipers. For a motor yacht built for high seas adventure, you couldn't ask for a better day for a boat test.

This is the second Outer Reef motor yacht to land in Australian waters from the Taiwanese builder, following on from the brand's Aussie debut with the Outer Reef 63 in early 2009. If you've spent any time on the 63, its bigger brother will have a very familiar feel. The look and layout are almost identical, however the 70 is much more noticeably a 'big' yacht – in just about every dimension there's an added sense of breathing space not found in the 63.

The specs sheet might suggest the space gains come courtesy of an extra seven feet of hull length and a bit more beam, but one of the most significant space savers is the lack of an aft fishing cockpit (standard on the 63). Its absence gives the 70 an expanded saloon and a much bigger aft deck with twin staircases leading down to a swim platform.

Our bluewater cruise has us heading well off Sydney's Palm Beach and into another set of oncoming ocean swells. It's the kind of bumpy ride that could easily unsettle many so-called passage-making trawlers – and plenty of stomachs too. But the Outer Reef 70's Trac stabilisers are in full flight and the boat is running flat with hardly a hint of roll, pushed on by the two 500-horsepower diesels chugging away in the engine room. It doesn't seem to matter what size swells march over the horizon, the Outer Reef 70 just palms them off with a big rugby-style 'don't argue'.

The sun is shining and in spite of the swirling morass of wind-swept whitewater outside, we're high and dry on the bridgedeck. The radio's tuned to the cricket, Captain Ross Miller is relaxing at the helm as the rest of us pick away at a sushi platter fresh from the fridge from the comfort of the plush leather sofa. This is the nerve centre of the boat and it's also a great perch for long hours of offshore cruising, with a luxurious white leather

Stidd helm seat and an exquisite Outer Reef helm wheel with inlaid timber for the skipper. For the guests, an L-shaped lounge with supple white leather seating and a glossy table takes in the view over the bow, which rises and falls with the undulating seas.

According to local Outer Reef agent Andrew Coffey, it's the sort of go-anywhere ability we're currently witnessing, combined with fuel-efficient cruising, that's seeing Outer Reef trawlers winning fans across the world. Even in Europe, a market typically ambivalent to the trawler concept (and currently in the grip of the GFC) Outer Reef has been making headway.

And yet there are still plenty of boat buyers who are quick to dismiss trawlers as nothing more than floating caravans built for 'grey nomads' of a nautical persuasion. When boat talk turns to trawlers you can bet some naysayers will trot out the usual objections: throwback styling; brown wooden veneer and dusty lampshades; stuffy saloons and even stuffier owners.

But just like the Outer Reef 63, the 70 captures the romance of the classic trawler without invoking all the tired stereotypes. While it's an unmistakably traditional motor yacht with signature trawler touches like wrap-around side decks, Portuguese bridge and imitation timber slatting on the hull, all this classic appeal is tempered by a healthy measure of contemporary finesse. In short, you don't need grey hair and back problems to be ready to park one of these beauties in your berth.



HIGH LIFE
The flybridge helmstation provides spectacular views heading out of Pittwater. Right: the big 70 makes short work of heavy swell off Barrenjoey Head.





INSIDE THE DECOR IS FRESH AND BRIGHT, WITH NONE OF THE NAUTICAL TRINKETS THAT CAN CLUTTER UP TRAWLER INTERIORS.

From the outside, the boat cuts a balanced, well-proportioned figure and on the inside the décor is fresh and bright, with none of the usual nautical trinkets that can clutter up trawler interiors. There's hardly a piece of high-gloss polished timber anywhere to be seen; instead satin teak gives the boat a modern look and feel. In the main saloon the teak floor has that silky matte feel that makes you want to slip off your shoes and walk around in your bare feet.

Our review boat *Aroona* is certainly not about to play host to a retired couple looking for a comfy perch to while away the hours with a good book. It's custom-built for a life of adventure, and the Aussie owner plans to make good use of that cruising ability by putting the boat out for charter in Cairns. The boat will spend her days making trips out to the Barrier Reef for fishing expeditions, shark dives and minke whale watching.

"This boat's not just about luxury," explains her captain, Ross Miller. "It's about luxury with adventure."

Miller is looking forward to taking out groups of 16 guests for daytrips and up to seven guests on overnights. The skipper says he'll take a crew of three onboard for the overnight trips – *Aroona* has berths for two crew, accessible through a transom door with bunks, a kitchenette, TV and laundrette. It's a really tight fit in the crew quarters – in fact there's considerably more headroom in the engine room. It is, however, a better deal than Ross will be subjecting himself to – he's made a cabin for himself out of one of the storage spaces next to the flybridge helmstation.

"It's not the biggest, but a lot of people in my job deal with worse," he says. With the promise of *Aroona's* spectacular cruising schedule, no crewmembers will be spending much time in their bunks anyway.

Located just forward of the crew area, the engine room

houses two Northern Lights gensets, side-power 15.5-horsepower electric bow thrusters and twin CAT C9 Acert diesels driving a ZF transmission. Fuel efficiency is key with trawler yachts and the Outer Reef 70 doesn't disappoint. At 9.5 knots we clocked fuel consumption on the CAT diesels at 22 litres per side, per hour. Throttle back to 8 knots and the twin diesel donks sip just 10 litres per side per hour – at this sort of speed cruising range is nearly 3,500km.

Looking around the engine room, it's clear that this yacht has been built tough. The owner needed it beefed up to Queensland survey standards, so it's got almost every conceivable safety system the industry can offer. Most rooms are fitted with their own fire extinguisher, the engine room can be filled with fire-retardant gas at the push of a button and the heavy duty bilge pumps will keep her afloat if there's any hull damage. Add to this all the lifejackets and emergency gear and the extra features have added more than just safety – it adds up to nine tonnes of extra weight.

Ross worked closely with Outer Reef as the owner's representative during the build. He was once a ship's captain in the commercial world and his last vessel was a 300-tonne ship, so despite the extra weight he describes docking a mere 50-tonner as "so easy it's a joke." The boat comes with a plug-in remote control which makes docking this boat easier than programming a DVD.

It's only been a few weeks since the boat landed in Australia so there's not been time for all the tweaking that is usually required of a fresh build. But as we bump through the ocean swells, no cabinets are rattling or doors flying



STYLE GUIDE
Satin teak flooring and a splash of colour give this trawler a cool and contemporary feel.

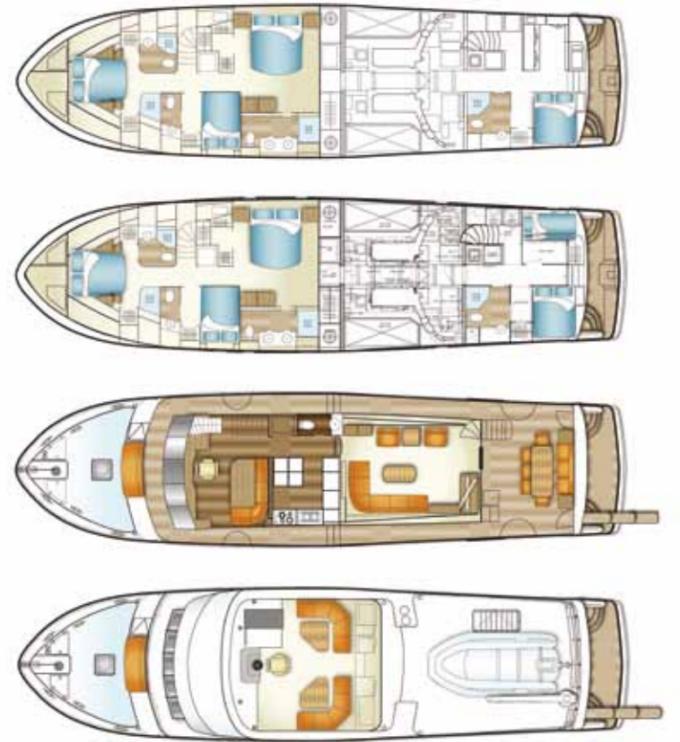




MASTER CLASS
Warm timber and diffused light create a cosy ambience in the owner's suite. Below, the galley is just the right size - big enough to cook in and tight enough to provide support if the sea gets rough.

SAM TINSON

BUILDER	Outer Reef Yachts
DESIGNER	Outer Reef Yachts
YEAR OF BUILD	2010
LOA	21.77 m
LWL	19.36 m
BEAM	5.64 m
DRAFT	1.52 m
DISPLACEMENT	55,000 kgs (as tested in 2B survey) 50,500 kgs (standard)
HULL	Hand laid-up GRP hull, with PVC core sandwich construction
ENGINE	2 x Caterpillar C-9 ACERT rated at 503hp (other options available)
WATERMAKERS	284 LPH Max Q
GENERATORS	26 kw & 16kw Northern Lights
AIRCONDITIONING	Cruisair chilled water
ELECTRONICS	Furuno by Barrenjoey Marine Electrics
BOW/STERN THRUSTERS	ABT Hydraulic 25hp bow and stern thrusters
STABILISERS	TRAC
FUEL CAPACITY	8700 litres, 9841 litres max
RANGE	2000+ nm @ 10 knots, 2500+ nm @ 9 knots, 3500+ nm @ 8 knots, 4000+ nm @ 7.5 knots
FRESHWATER CAPACITY	1514 litres
BLACKWATER CAPACITY	757 litres
BOW THRUSTERS	American Bow Thruster 100 hp
BERTHS	7
CREW BERTHS	2+1
PRICE	POA



open. The build quality of the Outer Reef is hard to fault; it give the impression of homely comfort with the kind of sensible functionality you'd want to surround yourself with on any long-range expedition.

Walking through the yacht, there's a great sensation of expanded living space - particularly compared with the 63. On the lower deck, the accommodation is noticeably more spacious with the amidships guest cabin getting a double bed and its own ensuite, while the forward VIP cabin would be the envy of many who own smaller yachts. In the full-beam master suite, there's space in abundance with a walk-in wardrobe, lots of drawers and cupboards, a neat little desk and a big bathroom with a head and shower, each with their own through-hull window for pleasant natural light.

On the main deck the galley has everything you would need for a long trip with a dishwasher, microwave, induction cooktop with oven, and a double-door fridge. The expansive black granite benchtops and loads of cupboard storage mean you can spread out and won't feel cramped if you've got the job of cooking up dinner.

Up top, the flybridge is truly expansive with plenty of space for a tender without interfering with the living area, which boasts a large lounge, built-in barbecue and a comprehensive helmstation offering total control of the yacht.



As we turn for the run back down Pittwater towards Sydney, we return to the calm, flat water of the protected waterways and are free to move around again. There are plenty of good options - either up to the high flybridge for some wind in your hair, a comfy set in the shelter of the aft deck couches or just hanging over the rails on the sidedecks watching the world go by. But after the rush of blue water cruising, it's hard not to feel the allure of settling in for a longer offshore coastal passage, or maybe even an oceanic jaunt across the Tasman to New Zealand.

"On the way back from the Sanctuary Cove boat show, [Outer Reef employee] Justin and I were driving the Outer Reef 63 and we were faced with 30 knots on the nose and eight-metre swells," recalls local agent Andrew Coffey. "We had a potential buyer onboard with us and we thought, 'there goes the sale'. But he was loving it, we all had a glass of wine and nobody spilled a drop."

The story makes our day's brief run up the coast seem like child's play. But it's good to know there's still plenty of adventure to be had on the open seas, and with food in the galley and fuel in the tank, Outer Reef trawlers are ready for action. All you need to do is pick your destination. ○

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