



## The NEEL 47 Makes Her Own Rules

**T**he new NEEL 47 is the fourth design created by this innovative French company in the last 10 years and like its sisterships, it breaks with all trimaran traditions.

The first boat Eric and Barbara Bruneel built was the NEEL 45. It was a breakthrough multihull design because they designed the living spaces to be on top of the main hull and the outriggers or amas instead of just inside the hulls. This expanded the accommodations to the full width of the boat, 23 feet. This meant the cockpit and saloon were as large as you would find on a 45-foot catamaran and the cabins were as spacious.

Plus, under the saloon,



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motion can be jerky and sudden. So, the NEEL innovation married the sailing performance of a trimaran with the living accommodations of a cruising catamaran. Brilliant.

#### NEEL 47

there was a garage or utility and storage space where all of the weight in the boat could be centralized. This is a key element of the design. Weight distribution has a dramatic effect on performance. By putting the engine, batteries, fuel and water tanks, and other systems such as a genset, watermaker, and the marine electronics centrally right over the center of buoyance, you make the boat much more stable, stiffer and more weatherly. And, you give the boat a softer, smoother ride in offshore sailing conditions.

The brand new NEEL 47 was introduced to the world at the Salon de Multicoques in La Grande Motte, France in April 2019. The new design was met with rave reviews from the marine press and by the cruising community. As Eric Bruneel explained at the press conference for the launch, the 47 is a little different from the 45, 51 and 65. It does not have the full-width saloon and cockpit you find on the earlier boats but instead has the saloon stop just before reaching the amas. Then, the sleeping cabins in the amas are accessed via their own companionways. This was a design Bruneel wanted specifically for himself and his wife for cruising with family and friends. The master cabin is part of the saloon while the guest cabins

This expanded living area, which the modern cruising market demands, made the other benefits of sailing trimarans available to sailors who would otherwise choose a catamaran. Those benefits are several. Trimarans are in general faster than cruising cats of a comparable size and able to sail closer to the wind with tacking angles similar to modern monohulls. It was no surprise when a few years ago a NEEL 45 won line honors in the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) and beat the next catamaran in its class by two days.

But trimarans are also more comfortable at sea since the boat's motion as it moves through the waves is dampened by the amas so pitching is reduced significantly. If you have sailed a cruising cat in an oceanic seaway, you'll know that the





are autonomous allowing everyone to have their spaces and privacy. But while the design is highly personal, it appears by the immediate success of the 47 that this is a concept that appeals to a lot of sailors.

The 47 has a traditional double-headsail sloop rig with a large, square-topped mainsail, a self-tacking staysail and a 110-percent genoa on the headstay. The spinnaker or Code 0 can be flown from the bowsprit, which doubles as the anchor roller.

The foredeck is fairly narrow but joined to the amas by nets so you have the full width of the boat for handling sails and docking. Access fore and aft along the side decks is via walkways right next to the main cabin so you are always within reach of a handhold and a place to brace yourself in bouncy conditions. You really only have to go to the foredeck to deploy a downwind sail since all lines, sheets and halyards, except the spinnaker sheets, lead directly to the raised helm on the starboard side of the cockpit.

The cockpit is spacious and very wide. There are bench seats aft and an L-shaped dinette on the port side. The sliding glass doors to the saloon slide right out of the way opening a passageway that is 10 feet across, essentially joining the cockpit and the saloon into one large living space that the Bruneels have labeled the "cockloot."

There is a second L-shaped dinette right inside the saloon the will seat four so with the sliding doors open, you can have up to 8 people dining together at the two tables. As

you enter the saloon, the dinette is to port and there's a bulkhead down the middle of the space to starboard. Behind this is the master stateroom which is entered via door at the forward end of the cabin.

The huge galley is in the forward port side of the saloon and has ample counter space, plenty of storage and fridge space and an amazing view of the world around you through the wrap around saloon windows. Across from the galley is the nav station with plenty of space to install instruments and radios and enough desk area to fold out a paper chart.

The master stateroom has a large sliding door that when open includes the stateroom into the open flowing space of the saloon. When closed it becomes a private cabin. There is a huge window in the hull above the berth and another interior window at the forward end that allows you to lie in bed and look at the scenery





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ahead of you. Or this can be closed off with a curtain. The overall ambience in the saloon, the galley, the chart table and in the master stateroom is of a close connection with the outside through huge windows and of light and ventilation.

The primary head on the boat is in the bow of the main hull forward and down three steps from the saloon. It has an enclosed shower stall, an enclosed head and a modern Euro-style sink.

The guest cabins in the amas are simple and functional with double berths and storage areas beneath them. The companionways are four steps down and an optional head can be placed behind them. The forepeaks of the amas are large enough to squeeze in two more single berths that are accessed through deck hatches, which means the 47 offers up to eight berths in total.

The NEEL 47 carries 80 gallons of diesel fuel and 158 gallons

of water. There is plenty of room in the garage for a genset, watermaker, water heater, a large battery bank and other systems, so, it is set up for extended self-sufficient cruising.

If you are looking for a boat that does everything well and provides the sailing performance that you need with great accommodations, the new NEEL 47 trimaran deserves a much closer look. [www.neel-trimarans.com](http://www.neel-trimarans.com)



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## NEEL 47

The new NEEL 47 was introduced at the Salon de Multicoques in France in April 2019 to rave reviews from the press and from multihull enthusiasts. The new 47 is a unique cruising boat that does many things very well. The design concept, according to the builder Eric Bruneel, was very personal to him; this is the boat he wanted for himself and his wife Barbara to cruise by themselves and with family and friends. As it turned out, the design concept fits many like-minded couples. With three hulls to work with, Bruneel decided to make the cabins in the amas autonomous, so each has its own companionway, double berth and head. The bows of the amas have single berths that you access via the deck hatches. The main hull has an inside nav station and galley forward where you have great visibility and plenty of natural light. The owner's cabin occupies the starboard side of the saloon and has big windows that give great views and plenty of ventilation. The dinette is aft to port and links naturally with the cockpit table through the sliding cockpit door; NEEL calls this cockpit-saloon area the "cockloot". You can seat eight in this dual table set up.

Most trimarans have the living spaces confined to the inside of the main hull, which is fairly narrow and thus cramped. With the saloon in the NEEL at deck level, the living space is expanded enormously. Plus, the area of the main hull below the saloon becomes the "garage" or storage area and a place to mount onboard systems.

As a rule, trimarans sail better than most cruising catamarans; they sail upwind like a monohull and then can break away on a plane when power reaching. The 47 is capable of speeds in the high teens in the right conditions and will also be fast and fun to sail in light airs, which means you will sail more and motor less. With all lines, halyards and sheets running to the raised helm station, a single watchkeeper can manage the boat without having to leave the cockpit. The boat will be at US boat shows in 2020 so check it out. You'll be impressed.

<https://www.neel-trimarans.com/>