

AQUILA'S NEW FAVOURITE

Judging by overwhelming global sales including into Asia, the new Aquila 54 has hit the sweet spot for a powercat, with large outdoor and interior spaces including a vast beach club, cockpit bar and full-beam master suite complemented by the brand's renowned performance.

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PHOTOS **AQUILA**



The Aquila 54 Yacht shares similar lines to the flagship 70; the aft platform can carry a 14ft tender, which is deployed by a crane that slides out of the cockpit roof

Since 2012 and its first power catamaran, Aquila has come a long way quickly, with the ongoing 44 Yacht and 36 Sport models establishing themselves among the world's best-selling power catamarans. This success is due in part to Lex Raas (*Leader, Issue 61*) and the brand's clever partnership between US-based MarineMax, the world's biggest boat dealer, and builder Sino Eagle.

However, with the simultaneous launch of the 54 Yacht and flagship 70 Luxury, Aquila took a big leap by releasing its two biggest models at the same time, both again designed to prove as attractive to monohull owners as catamaran fans.

While the 70 Luxury (*Review, Issue 59*) is a semi-custom offering

The large steps on the wide sugarscoops double as aft-facing seats, while the central aft platform can be lowered to create a full-beam beach club overlooking the water

with furniture and fittings from exclusive brands, the 54 was designed to be a production yacht, albeit with a range of finishes and options from an enclosed or open flybridge and galley up or down to a wide choice of cabin layouts including a full-beam master.

Yet despite being a huge step up from the brand's previous flagship, the 48, the new 54 Yacht has generated quite remarkable sales according to figures shared privately by Aquila, although the company chooses not to publicise the numbers due to being a listed company.

However, of the several dozen sold, we know at least one has been ordered for Asia, with regional dealer Simpson Marine expecting a delivery to Thailand in the first half of 2022.



The outdoor galley (left) is a key feature on the open aft deck of the flybridge; the foredeck (right) can be accessed by the side decks or central stairs from the flybridge

BIG STEPS UP

From the first glance, the Aquila 54 is eye-catching. At over 54ft in length with a 25ft-plus beam, the size is impressive, especially with the addition of the flybridge and hardtop that reaches a height of 24ft 4in.

Surprisingly, the 54 Yacht clearly distances itself from the design of the 44 Yacht by displaying lines more reminiscent of the 36 Sport or even the 32 Sport, with thin stems and a very slender and sophisticated line. She also boasts vast glazed surfaces, both on the hull and on the main deck.

The symmetrical stern includes two sugarscoops and a larger, central high-low platform. The latter can accommodate a 14ft tender, which is cleverly deployed by a retractable crane that slips in and out of the cockpit roof and can be operated remotely.

Behind the back of the aft bench seat is a useful compartment to store mooring lines or other items, while other features include an

integrated, retractable swim ladder and a large storage box on each side to stow water toys.

Wide, deep steps – which double as aft-facing bench seats – lead to the cockpit, which includes a long bench seat and large table. To port, a door opens upwards to reveal a staircase leading to a crew cabin with two single beds, bathroom, desk and porthole, although the room could be used by guests if the boat is owner operated.

The 17in-wide side decks lead to the solid foredeck, which has two double sun loungers with folding backrests, while forward are two sofas. The bow is well secured by quite high pulpits, while two deck hatches access a huge storage locker for fenders or mooring lines.

The flybridge is a real attraction. Our trial model featured the enclosed version with an L-shaped bench seat and adjustable table aft of the helm station, with sliding doors both aft and to the starboard side deck that leads to the foredeck. The aft deck has an outdoor galley and space for chairs, tables and sun loungers.

The cockpit bar has become an Aquila signature feature and gives a focal point to the indoor-outdoor design; note the lift-up door to port that accesses a twin cabin for crew or guests





Overlooked by the galley, the saloon has a three-sided sofa to starboard around an adjustable table, a forward-mounted TV and a long sofa to starboard

FIRST-CLASS COMFORT

Back downstairs is one of Aquila's signature features, the cockpit bar, with two bar stools facing a fold-out countertop and the aft galley courtesy of a lifting window. Inside, the large, U-shaped galley benefits from great light and is packed with storage spaces, while the saloon has a C-shaped sofa and folding table to port plus a sofa to starboard.

The version we trialled was the three-cabin layout with the full-beam owner's suite, which has a king-size bed (2.04m x 1.95m), bathroom with two sinks, separate toilet, separate shower, vanity/office area and a real walk-in closet. Again, there's plenty of storage space and lots of natural light, and although the extra-large shower is a huge plus, having it as the access to the washing machine was unusual.

Each guest cabin occupies a good chunk of each hull and has a queen-size bed (1.98m x 1.63m), bathroom, small desk and, once again, lots of storage space.

The boat is also a technological winner. In addition to the numerous TV screens, cleverly hidden in the furniture or in the ceiling, the interior is packed with USB sockets and wireless charging stations for smartphones, and the lighting is almost all LED and indirect.

The interior style is modern and tasteful, with light-colour wood, understated fabrics and meticulous finishing, while a certain degree of customisation is available upon order.

SOLID CRUISER

Built partly in infusion, the 54 offers very good stiffness, a characteristic reinforced by the thickness of the nacelle. The two hulls benefit from real research work. Unlike some powercats that are simply adaptations of sailing models, the Aquila 54 was designed from the start as a motorboat.

Like the 70, the hulls feature bow bulbs, a design inherited from



The cockpit (left) has a long bench seat and table that faces the bar and large galley (right), which opens up to the outside through a flip-up window



The full-beam master suite (left) is forward of the saloon and benefits from windows on three sides; the starboard guest cabin (right) in the three-cabin layout

commercial vessels that allow the boat to maintain a better pitch. Under way, this element also brings more comfort, especially in chop, as the bulb attacks the wave before the rest of the bow.

The bow itself is sharp as a sword and has an angle of only 15 degrees. The hull features two solid inverted chines that will repel spray and improve course keeping. In addition, the air cushion effect generated by the tunnel and excellent weight distribution give the boat a very nice attitude under way and, above all, excellent comfort for all aboard.

Aquila offers three different propulsion options from twin 380hp Volvo Pentas to 550hp Cummins engines, although the 480hp Volvo Penta D8s on our test model represented an excellent compromise to move the 30 tonnes this boat displaces when laden.

From the flybridge helm, which offers great visibility and two screens, the Aquila 54 is very easy to manoeuvre due to the twin engines, ensuring easy departure from the marina. The helm is smooth and the vessel surprisingly very responsive.

Remaining perfectly flat, the Aquila takes off quickly and cruises at about 16 knots at 2,800rpm, which is relatively economical. With these engines, the top speed is about 22 knots, going up to 25 with the 550hp Cummins. The boat turns while completely flat without oversteer, as with some competitors, although on the performance side, it's the two-hull stability that naturally provides the most comfort.

Range is one of the model's strong points, since at a speed of eight knots, you can cover around 1,000 miles. If that's not enough, two additional 360-litre fuel tanks can be added.

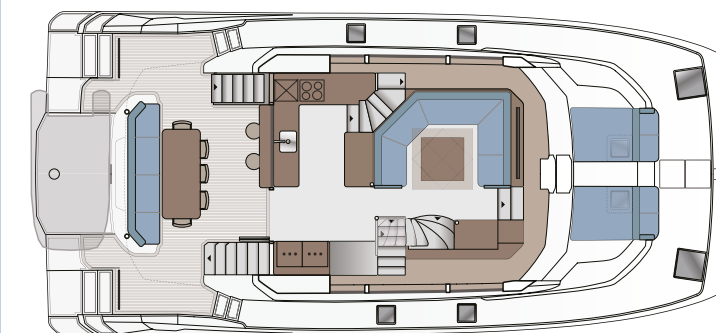
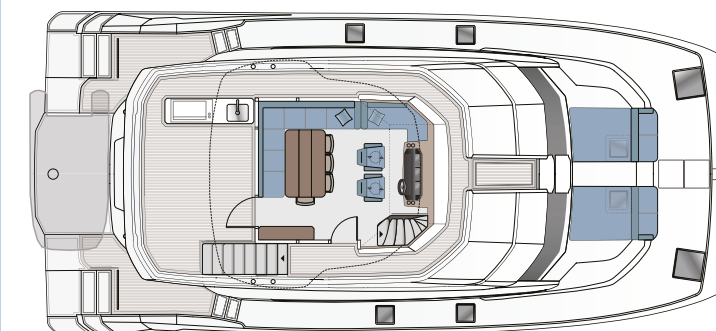
Along with the flagship 70, the CE A-certified 54 opens the doors to real offshore cruising for Aquila, which confirms its dominant position as the leading powercat-only builder as it moves seamlessly into larger yachts. %

www.aquilaboats.com
www.simpsonmarine.com



The enclosed 'skylounge' version of the flybridge includes an interior with an L-shaped sofa, table and a twin-seat helm flanked by a sofa and chair

DECKS & SPECS



Note: Bottom GA shows three-cabin layout

Length overall 16.50m (54ft 2in)	Water capacity 1,000 litres (238 US gallons)
Waterline length 15.10m (49ft 6in)	Holding tank 340 litres (90 US gallons)
Maximum beam 7.68m (25ft 2in)	Engine options 2 x 380hp Volvo Penta D6
Draft 1.37m (4ft 5in)	2 x 480hp Volvo Penta D8
Light displacement 23,300kg	2 x 550hp Cummins
Full load displacement 30,000kg	Guest cabins 3/4/5 for 6/8/10 guests
Fuel capacity 2,200/2,920 litres (581/771 US gallons)	CE Certification A: 12, B: 12, C: 20, D: 30