



Dyna Craft 51

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Words - David Lockwood

This big motoryacht is a mix of European styling, Taiwanese build quality, and brilliant engineering just made for luxury owner-driving, reports David Lockwood

The great thing about boating is that it attracts people from all walks of life, but those with a lot of sea miles behind them always command the greatest respect. Therefore it says something that Ross Scoble, the former Commodore of the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club at Newport, and his wife Jenny, who is just as deeply into pleasure boating, decided on a Dyna Craft after years of sailing and then searching for a motorboat.

Having sailed in Sydney to Hobart races, firstly in 1987, and completed Lord Howe Island races before, the Scobles (mid-60s) found themselves growing weary tugging at lines. Moreover, on their 48ft yacht, a Buizen with which others have completed circumnavigations, they were motoring 40 per cent of the time, motorsailing 40 per cent of the time, and sailing the remainder.

The footloose cruising couple were most content completing coastal trips rather than long ocean passages and the long drag of shorthanded coastal races. While they thought jumping ship to a powerboat wasn't the thing for a commodore to do, they have found the distinction between power and sail is eroding.

FOR THE LONG HAUL

This was Dyna Craft's fifth 51-footer and the second in Sydney. Formerly, Dyna Craft have had pretty choppy representation in Australia and the badge was mostly attributed to displacement cruisers, but these days the yard, which has ISO9001 accreditation and a builds to ABYC standards, produces European-looking performance motoryachts with interiors devised by a dedicated Italian design company. The Taiwanese are still respected for their stainless-steel work, timber joinery and fibreglass mouldings, of course.

The 51 came about after east coast agent Frank Bragias sought to make the Dyna 48 a more user-friendly boat for Australian conditions. To this end, he added 60cm of extra cockpit and 30cm to the saloon. The flybridge was extended and fitted with an oversized wetbar and more supportive helm chairs. The boat also has a bowsprit, a full Raymarine electronics kit, digital television, and docking camera.

But more importantly the owners ordered a bigger, 2000lt fuel tank (1514lt is standard) for long-range cruising with the TAM75P Volvo 480hp diesel motors. Freshwater is 450lt, which will last a couple of ex-sailors a week. Ross hasn't ruled out retrofitting a desalinator if the couple find that find a need for more water.

Terry Yen, the owner/builder and naval architect at Dyna, designed the deep-vee hull with tunnels. Solid GRP is used below the waterline with foam-cored sections above and balsa-cored cabin tops to further reduce weight. Transverse and longitudinal stringers are glassed to the handlaid hull, which is made with vinylester resin to help guard against osmosis.

The low-profile motoryacht stands just five metres off the waterline, which may interest some owners living in canal homes beyond low-slung bridges. The rakish lines also help keep the centre of gravity down. With some reverse sheer in the bow, the boat runs very level at speed and it exhibited a truly wonderful, seaworthy motion, cruising into the moderate sea and swell advancing on Botany Heads.

HIGH STANDARDS

Engine room access is via the hatch into the lazarette, which contained the boat's 11.5kW generator. In the lazarette engineering space you will find two banks of batteries, the battery charger and three air-con units. There's even an emergency tiller. All the hoses are double clipped and every skin fitting is dog-tagged. Water outlets flow to two drains at the transom, with the generator exhaust fed into that engine exhaust boat, so no skin fittings or soot amidships.

From the lazarette, a door leads forward into the engine room; the saloon floor is also removable for more serious maintenance. It's not a watertight aft bulkhead, unlike the forward bulkhead, but once inside a quite remarkable space opens up, with the motors a long way forward and room to get around all the engineering. Apparently, the owner likens the engine room to a bloke's shed, where one can tool around without feeling claustrophobic.

High-capacity Racor fuel filters with inspection bowls are aft, the 45lt hot-water service is to port, and the Aquamet 2.5in shafts spin four-bladers through ZF 2:1 gearboxes. The shaft angles seem flat and there are dripless glands, too.

The raw-water strainers for the air con units, generator and motors are all heavy-duty bronze numbers. I spotted internal blowers and plenty of lead-backed sound insulation, while the Volvos rest on heavy-duty steel capped bearers.

I like the fact the aluminium fuel tanks, mounted outboard of the engines, have their own sumps so you can drain them if needs be. The water tank is stainless steel, so there's no plastic taint. Cold water is available in the bridge and engine room.

DECKED OUT

The big swim platform, designed to take a tender, has room for chairs or a sunlounge. There's an oversized swim ladder and bollards standing proud of the decks with chafe guards for easy ditching of mooring lines. The deck features double-moulded hatches, handheld hot/cold shower, saltwater deckwash, shorepower and dockside phone connections.

With the extra space over the 48, the 51's cockpit has room for table and chairs. There is a built-in aft lounge for four, under which there are two moulded iceboxes. Oddly, the cockpit has storage bins flanking the sides that are a step up from the cockpit sole, thereby reducing its footprint.

The storage bins also act as steps up to the sidedecks and, with a high bowrail as well as toerails and grabrails, this is one crew-friendly boat to get around. The non-skid foredeck is headed by a big bowsprit holding a supplied stainless-steel anchor, retrieved on a heavy-duty concealed Muir winch, and there are concealed and rail-mounted fender baskets.

But the best feature is the sunpad that effectively turns the foredeck into an alternate lifestyle area. There are drinkholders and recessed stainless-steel rails, but better attachments such as tracks are needed to secure the mattress.

BRIDGE TOO FAR

Moulded steps lead to the bridge, which sports a locally-made bimini which was tailored to suit the height of the owners. It was a tad short for me. Besides upgraded helm seats offering more support, the helm had room for a Raymarine E80 with docking camera and TV input, plus Clarion remote, keyless Volvo ignition, autopilot and bowthruster, windlass and anchor winch, trim sight gauges and timber wheel with EDC controls.

The moulded amenities centre was comparatively well equipped, with sink, griddle, controls for the sound system, clip-in sisal carpet, intercom, fridge, and a huge circular aft lounge that can seat eight people around a fixed dinette.

ITALIAN LAYOUT

There are three accommodation plans for the Dyna 51: twin cabins with the galley up; two cabins with the galley down (as per this boat); and three cabins with the galley up and no separate dinette. Thus far, the two-cabin-with-galley-down layout has been most popular. Either way, the saloon remains essentially the same.

A substantial stainless-steel framed sliding door ushers you inside, where the AC/DC panel with numbered wiring and supplied schematic plans are nearby in a cabinet. There's a portside leather lounge for four people set around a fixed oval table. Opposite is a cabinet with wet bar, icemaker, and sound system with DVD/CD, alongside a two-seater leather lounge.

There is a choice of joinery: teak (with high-gloss finish as seen here), cherry, camphor or maple. Buyers have free rein with the soft furnishings. As seen here, the boat had a stately ambience almost reminiscent of an art deco apartment in Double Bay. It derived this from an abundance of glistening teak, cream headliners, butterscotch-swirl leather upholstery, camel carpet and black-ice coloured granite work counters.

The agent got teak-matched powerpoints and there are various TV/laptop connectors dotted about the saloon, along with trick halogen down and strip lighting. Interestingly, a step leads up to the lower helm to port and the starboard dinette for four, which has a heavy-duty stainless-steel pedestal and views extending back through the cockpit at least.

The lower helm includes a two-person leather seat, with footrest, from which views stretch forward through low-profile windscreen panes with wipers and washers. The burl dash had a flush-mounted E120, full spread of engine gauges and alarms, marine radio, intercom, windlass and searchlight, and the EDC controls nearby. A bowthruster helps with parking and the boat drives quite snappily off its sports wheel.

You descend four quite vertical stairs backed by handrails to the galley - which is on the same level as two cabins with two heads. There are pluses and minuses with this layout: some won't like the galley being isolated from the living areas, but others will like the privacy it affords. Besides, there is a barbie and fridge on the bridge for day entertaining.

With twin opening portlights and an extractor fan, the galley is well ventilated. It has U-shaped granite counters and a teak-and-holy floor with a removable carpet cover, plus access subfloor to the plumbing.

The intercom will come in handy when you want to dial up meals, and the gourmet can get creative with the three-burner hob (no potholders or fiddles) and convection microwave. There is a concealed garbage bin, twin sinks, visible water-tank gauge and dishwasher. I would ditch the latter and boost refrigeration and create a long-term freezer outdoors. The supplied Norcold fridge with freezer tray is on the small side.

SLEEPING QUARTERS

There is only one guest cabin; it's to starboard and includes two single berths split by a bedside table, surrounded by teak walls, and topped with foam mattresses with classy bedspreads. The cabin has an intercom, air-con unit, cedar-lined hanging locker and needs only a television.

The communal head/guest ensuite boasts a vacuflush loo and handheld shower, but no shower stall or curtain over the timber door.

You can't miss the queen-sized island bed in the master cabin in the bow, with its mirrored bedhead with art deco lighting, timber surrounds, storage under the mattress, hanging lockers and drawers. There's room to dress at the foot of the bed, an intercom and air-con panel, and TV prewiring.

The owner's ensuite has a separate shower stall, a vacuflush loo, tank gauge for the blackwater and a Y-valve for when you want to dump the tank overboard, an extractor fan and Dyna towels.

OFFSHORE CRUSADER

While the subtle reverse sheer suggests the boat might run nose down, it travels perfectly level, thanks in part to the tunnels. Its ride reminded me of a big-ticket Euro boat. In boisterous seas with a substantial swell, with no backs on some waves, the Dyna was exceptionally smooth riding. It was also dry and very efficient.

The bowthruster and docking camera help with close-quarters manoeuvring. Away from the dock, with three-quarters of a tank of fuel and full trim tabs, the boat planed at 9.5kt and 1450rpm. At 1750rpm with half tabs it did 11.4kt. Sweet coastal cruising was registered in the range between 17.5kt at 2000rpm and 20kt at 2200rpm without any trim tabs.

Maximum continuous cruise at 200rpm less than full revs was 23.3kt and 2600rpm gave 27.7kt, though the agent has seen 29.7kt on the GPS before. With a 2000lt of fuel, I would be thinking a comfortable 250nm range - say, Sydney to Coffs Harbour, Coffs to the Gold Coast - in this 17,000kg dry hull weighing closer to 22,000kg by the time you are ready to decamp.

The owners are looking at cruising to Port Davey in Tasmania next year and will then head north to Whitsundays or fiddle around Rockhampton. The advantage of a motorboat is, say the ex-sailors, that they can explore the back channels and places like Stradbroke and Moreton Bay.

The east coast Dyna agent has hit on a winner here and ordered another two more 51s for clients who are lifetime boaties looking to jump aboard a luxury self-drive motoryacht. The Dyna 51 mightn't have quite the polish of the European or English motoryachts, but with the change you can buy an apartment on the Gold Coast or beyond. Smooth riding and smart buying.

HIGHS

- Good value for a Euro-styled motoryacht
- Seriously impressive engineering
- Owner/driver friendly and easy to dock
- Wonderful ride at sea: dry and smooth
- Long cruising range
- Big bridge with amenities and seating
- Extended cockpit
- Twin helm stations for all-weather cruising
- Nice finish and great owner's cabin and ensuite

LOWS

- Low-profile Euro lines won't appeal to everyone
- Quite an introspective interior
- Low headroom and no picture windows in the saloon
- Galley set apart from entertaining space
- Small refrigeration unit
- Needs tracks on sunlounge to hold mattress in place
- Short seat cushions in some instances
- No watertight aft bulkhead to engine room

DYNA CRAFT 51
PRICE AS TESTED: Approx \$1.06m w/ Volvo 75P EDC 480hp diesel engines and options
OPTIONS FITTED
Long-range fuel tank, full Raymarine cruising package, docking camera, marine radios, LCD TV/DVD and digital aerial, covers, clears, bridge carpet and more
PRICED FROM: Approx \$1.02m
GENERAL
Material: GRP fibreglass w/ cored decks, superstructure and hull sides
Type: Hard chine planing hull w/ tunnels
Length Overall: 15.75m

Beam: 4.45m	
Draft: 1.27m (max)	
Deadrise: n/a	
Weight: Around 17,000kg (dry w/standard engine)	
CAPACITIES	
Berths: Four + one	
Fuel Capacity: 2000lt	
Water Capacity: 454lt	
ENGINE	
Make/Model: Volvo 75P EDC	
Type: Six-cylinder electronic diesel engine w/ twin turbocharging and aftercooling	
Rated hp: 480hp @ 2300rpm	
Displacement: 7.3lt	
Weight: 860kg	
Gearboxes (Make/ratio): ZF 2:1	
Props: Four-blade bronze	
SUPPLIED BY: Dyna Craft Australia, Tom Ugly's Bridge Marina, 5 Princes Highway, Sylvania, NSW, 2224, tel (02) 9522 8888 or 0412 400 200	

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