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L40



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L43



| story **JOHN DEVERS**

Unlike the lion family, leopards stake their place in the wild as solitary animals. Perhaps it's with this reality as context for my recent encounter with four brand new Leopard catamarans in one place, that I drew a deep breath before acknowledging the full impact of seeing these beautiful creatures moored together in the metaphorical flesh. Virtual tours and nice photos on a screen are certainly no substitute for stepping aboard, seeing, touching and discovering this seriously impressive line-up of cruising vessels.

L50



L51



I've followed the evolution of Robertson and Caine's Leopard cruising cat range for around 10 years, last writing about the Leopard 48 just on two years ago. But my recent encounter with the brand on a sparkling Sydney winter's day for a sneak preview ahead of the recent Sydney International Boat Show, had me exclaiming out loud 'Whoa, these boats are absolute stunners!' First impressions of the 40 and 50 sailcats and the 43 and 51 powercats lined up side by side, being carefully prepared for display at the Darling Harbour show, were the unmistakable Leopard family lines across the range. Also standing out was the quality finish of both GRP surfaces and all the stainless work, contrasting stylishly with the warmth of the Flexiteak deck surfaces ... A sight to truly dazzle and beckon you aboard to discover more.

There's no doubt that this new generation in the Leopard line-up is the sum of more than 20 years of design development and refinement, informed by a generation of worthy predecessors.

Design in both its passive and expressed forms is the most important element in every boating experience. Design impacts from the very first moment you step aboard to how the boat will keep you safe and comfortable in the most extreme conditions. Every feature on the four boats I inspected evoked responses like: "That's smart, that makes sense, that's nicely resolved." A perfect example is the 12v

and 240v control system common across the range. It is beautifully simple, functional and intuitive to operate. While each boat was stunning in its own right, the differences demonstrated splendid evidence of how the manufacturer has set out to meet the expectations of an increasingly diverse market from the traditional sailing fraternity to the growing power boat cruising market. To get a clear fix on common features and differences across the range, I first needed to remind myself of what models these boats are replacing:

- The popular 40 Sailcat is a refreshed model with a host of new features including Code Zero and bowsprit, forward facing galley, semi walk-around master and port aft berth, along with all the great features that have made this boat a long-established hit for sailing couples wanting to focus on stress free cruising
- Leopard's 50 sailcat replaces the 48. This stunner made its debut at the Miami Boat Show in February this year and Le Grand Motte France in April, quickly racking up 30 orders and an ever-lengthening waiting list
- The 43 and 51 powercats stamp their authority on a rapidly growing market with a strong appetite for cruising comfortably under power with the 51 replacing its 47 predecessor and the 43 replacing the 39.



Convenient access to the anchor locker and water tanks as well as a measure of sun protection from the forward awning offer an excellent combination of comfort and practical no-nonsense functionality. The rear cockpit area has an inviting scale and looks the goods with refreshed soft furnishings contrasting elegantly with the warmth of the Flexiteak deck on this particular model.

The 250kg rated push-button electric davit system continues to be a winner for owners making both launch and shipping of the tender completely stress free. Sailing performance is the 40's strong suit with its skipper friendly helm and control station together with the new Code Zero and bowsprit set-up, providing for a comfortable 12kts under sail, with higher speeds being achievable for more enthusiastic sailors who want to push hull speed limits. There is no doubt that the latest tweaks and refinements add measurable value to what has always been a standout in the Leopard line-up. No other yacht in this class of sailing catamarans boasts the speed, agility, or blue water performance of this handsome cruiser.



All Leopard models are perfectly set up for cruising in the tropics and sub-tropics. This is especially so with the new-look 40. From its forward-facing galley, revised saloon layout and drop-down table providing the perfect place for sleeping in comfort when the occasion demands, generously proportioned hard covers and light filled cabins, the new look 40 ticks all the boxes for warm water cruising. Intelligent new features like the re-positioned aft bulkheads allowing for semi-walk around berths with access steps in both

aft cabins will be a real winner with many couples considering the 40. Concealed strip lighting under shelves and berths, along with more overall space than the previous model adds measurably to the levels of comfort and convenience. Easy access to the uncluttered forward deck area is enhanced with well resolved design features like the protected windlass set-up across the deck, something that a lot of cruising cats bizarrely don't have.

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Whether hobby skipper or boat owner, we all benefit from the advantages of GPS navigation when on the water. But power outages are by no means the only pitfalls when it comes to operating plotters, tablets etc.



LEOPARD50



This stunning new model in the Leopard line-up replaces one of the best-selling Leopard catamarans of all time, the award-winning Leopard 48. Take the virtual tour of the 50 on Leopard's website and you'll be excused for thinking you are inspecting a luxury apartment ashore. This is a vessel of serious proportions, luxury finishes and multiple living areas, making it ideal for large families and generous entertainment activity.

Its versatility begins with the option to choose the classic hard-top exterior configuration, the Leopard 50P (P for Performance), or for the first time on a Leopard Catamaran of this size, an optional flybridge (Leopard 50L). The Leopard 50L is the ideal layout for anyone looking for more outdoor living space as it includes a additional lounge area, table, sunbed and optional

exterior speakers and shade awning. This adds a whole new living area with 360° views, and it's not a small space. Access is via floating stairs leading up from the aft cockpit. An important distinction compared to similar flybridge configurations is that while under sail, passengers can move about the flybridge with ample headroom, never having to worry about interference from the boom. The flybridge is also situated to maintain excellent contact with the fully protected helm station, an important feature shared across the entire Leopard range. Here on the 50, there are electric controls for everything. The sail plan makes perfect sense and the roller furling lines come conveniently through to the helm station.

Sailors looking for the familiar, continuous hardtop can opt for the Leopard 50P. This version does not

have the flybridge and can deliver increased performance particularly when fitted with a square-top mainsail and other available performance-orientated rigging and sail options.

With both versions, the entire exterior styling of the Leopard 50 has also been revamped to give the hull a more sophisticated look. In addition to the exterior options, the interior offers multiple layout configurations with four or five cabins, and an extensive options list.

The submersible tender and swim platform is brilliantly engineered. Whether used for tender stowage or swim and dive activity, the platform can be lowered and raised at the press of a button.

Abundant natural lighting during the day from the overhead skylights and new generation energy efficient LED night lighting from recessed locations throughout and pop-up bollards on the flying bridge mark this as a vessel without compromise. Refrigeration in multiple locations adds great flexibility to cruising and entertaining options.

Feedback from Leopard customers , together with a rapidly swelling order book mean the 50 is certain to satisfy a lot of very happy new owners and more than its fair share of awards in the process.



MARGY AND RUSS ARE PROUD OWNERS OF THE FIRST LEOPARD SAILCAT 50 IN AUSTRALIA.

We've talked to other Leopard owners and there's certainly a common theme of safety, spacious layout, plenty of light everywhere, and great living areas inside and out.

"We had been sailing on a charter boat in the Whitsundays, never having had anything to do with sailing. We had hired a Leopard 46 and we absolutely loved the layout and spaciousness ... in fact, everything about the boat. It was enough to convince us that we could do this as a longer-term adventure. We had caravanned all around the country and now it was time to see it from another perspective. The Kimberley, New Caledonia and Tasmania are particular targets in our cruising sights. Safety was a big consideration. While I have had quite a lot to do with the ocean over the years, Margy hadn't. I really wanted her to feel safe and comfortable, and likewise when we have our friends aboard.

Having taken delivery of our new boat following on from the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show, we sailed down from the Gold Coast, coming into Coffs Harbour for a few days. As we live in that part of the world, it was a great opportunity to meet up with our friends and have them join us on the boat. We then sailed overnight and the next day to Pittwater where we arrived 36 hours later. We spent four days with an experienced delivery skipper where we literally learnt not just all the ropes, but everything about the boat and its systems.

This was backed up with another brilliant day sailing all over Sydney Harbour trying out our Code Zero and learning to manoeuvre the boat in a range of different conditions. From our mooring in Rozelle Bay, the next few days gave us more opportunities to try out the Code D which is more of a down-wind sail. It's absolutely enormous!

A real bonus on the 50 is the sheer space. The flying bridge is brilliant and gives us an amazing amount of additional outdoor living area as well as great access to the helm station. All the berths have big windows, so the amount of light everywhere and the views that go with that are fantastic.

Our plan is to get up to the Whitsundays for the tail end of the winter months. Then many destinations beckon while we are fit and able. Our family will join us as and when they can, but for the time being we are enjoying getting fully acquainted with the boat. We're wanting to get out and enjoy life. *Sunrise* is the boat's name, but we expect to be seeing more than our share of sunsets as well!"

LEOPARD43 POWERCAT



A stunner in looks and a dream to operate, there were no details unattended to in the creation of the new Leopard 43 powercat. With its highly evolved hull design, this beauty delivers in spades. There can't be any boats of these proportions that are as easy to manoeuvre and as comfortable to skipper as the 43. The dividend of course is knowing you will arrive at your destination at the end of each day in a relaxed state to kick back and take in the sunset, along with your favourite tippie.

Stylish fashion plates on the 43, together with new generation recessed LED lighting, refreshed styling, elegant soft furnishings and the warmth of Flexiteak flooring on both aft and forward decks make this model an absolute head-turner. Gleaming white surfaces and sparkling polished stainless throughout create a feeling of up to the minute luxury afloat. The stepped hull design adds interior volume above the waterline allowing for roomier accommodation without sacrificing performance.

PETER AND BEV ARE ENJOYING LOTSA FUN ON THEIR 43 POWERCAT

Since selling their printing business and taking delivery of their Leopard 43 Powercat after this year's Sanctuary Cove Boat Show, Peter and Bev Martin have made sure that every day aboard the boat they named Lotsa Fun is just that! Here's their story:

We looked at what was on the market and believe it or not, what sold us on the Leopard was the front door. We're from far north Queensland and we've had power cats before and we were over dealing with insufficient sun control and poor ventilation. The Leopard with its big overhang at the front and with the front and rear doors open gives you exceptional live aboard comfort.

Most of the time we are anchored up and to have that easy access to the front deck area is brilliant. Everyone that comes on board comments on it. We think of this boat as our holiday beach cottage. Its functional, its filled with natural light. You can walk in with wet feet. It's easy to clean and easy maintenance and it's got that short pants, T-shirt and bare feet feeling to it.

We've lived in Port Douglas for the past 27 years and we believe it's getting hotter. We're going to head south for summer, so around October and then come back in April. We'll be on the boat for five or six months at a time. We'll see the Hawkesbury, Sydney ... wherever we want, whenever we want.

Apart from the fantastic layout and design, the performance of the boat has been way better than expected. Handling in a whole range of conditions, boat speed, fuel burn, everything has been really impressive. On the 1,000-mile trip up from the Gold Coast, in typically more bad weather than good, we averaged 4.05 litres per nautical mile and around 17kts running the engines at their sweet spot of between 2,850 and 2,950rpm. That's at around 50% boost on their turbos, so you could tell they were happy engines.

We had a 38 Ventura before and it was OK in a following sea, but this boat takes it to a whole new level. 20 or 30° off the aft quarter in a big swell and it behaves beautifully. I was a bit nervous about the buoyancy in the front with such a fine entry, but it never caused me any concern. It was unbelievable. When you are surfing like that at 17kts, surging to around 20kts, I'm so impressed with its sea keeping qualities. It's been just a joy. The sleeping position down aft and down low is also much better than what we've experienced in the past. I'm a very light sleeper and we're finding that without the slapping, I'm sleeping like a baby.

And the after sales support has been exemplary. They've been very good, very solid and very thorough. We couldn't have asked for more. *Lotsa Fun* really is our beach cottage afloat and we're enjoying every minute!

With narrower hulls and less wetted surface below the waterline, the 43 can stare down a maximum speed exceeding 22kts


An average 18kts is easily accomplished over extended passages and it does this while maintaining exceptional fuel efficiency.

The large flybridge includes optional Flexiteak decks and optional grill on wet bar and direct access to the forward sunbathing platform. Inside, the galley is forward facing, as are the settee and table. Look at the dimensions of the table post and you'll be reminded that nothing on this boat is underdone. The general layout, with sliding glass doors between the


settee and aft cockpit seating area, a large window forward and access door to the bow, allow for all around panoramic views creating a feeling of endless indoor-outdoor living space.

The 43 will have strong appeal to couples and their families wanting performance, style, comfort and space. It takes interior volume to 30% more than its predecessor and pushes the 51 on speed despite being 8ft shorter in overall length. Its generous flybridge area also begins to challenge its bigger sibling.





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The conditions were perfect to slip the lines on this powerful beauty at Sydney's Super Yacht Marina at Rozelle Bay and head out through the marina entrance for an exhilarating run down the harbour. In no time at all, it wasn't hard to understand the growing appeal of this comfortable power cruiser.

With the ability to clock up an eye-watering 200nm in a single daylight passage in absolute comfort, this is a boat that's not just for the power fraternity but also likely to win over its fair share of traditional

yachties seduced by speed and a straight line to their destination.

Once clear of the 8kt limit sign on Goat Island, it was power on for an impressive demonstration of what has been achieved by combining the extensive hull development program by designers Simonis Voogd, with power delivered via the boat's two 370hp Yanmar shaft drive engines. Surprisingly, the resulting sound was more like a contented feline purr than wild animal roar.



JOHANN AND ANNELIZE CATER FOR A YOUNG FAMILY WITH THEIR LEOPARD 51 POWERCAT

"We're really happy with this boat. We absolutely love it and if you asked me if I would buy it again ... absolutely, for sure. And I must take my hat off to the Leopard Australia guys. They've been fantastic," says Johann.

I spoke with Johann after fuelling up in Sydney for the first leg of their trip north with a couple of friends to the Gold Coast and on to the Whitsundays. The family will join them at Hamilton Island. Here's what he had to say:

"We always had the dream of owning a boat. We did it firstly by putting our toe in the water via a boat share arrangement. That gave us a great introduction, but we quickly realised this was something we wanted to do more of. Then came the task of looking at what to buy. It became apparent that a power cat of a decent size was the best choice for us. The Leopard 51 seemed to give us the best combination of space, safety, performance and the features we were looking for, bearing in mind that our four children needed to be comfortably accommodated. We certainly looked at all the possibilities. Leopard was by far the best value for money. It was easily two thirds of the price of the nearest competitor and with all the extra options, it was more like 60%!

A critically important requirement was for the boat to be capable in all conditions. Because we are planning to take the boat around the top to Perth next year, we wanted proven blue water capability in the most robust conditions. We had looked at reviews and footage of these boats crossing oceans to be delivered to customers in North America and Australia and there's no doubt they are seriously impressive performers when the going gets tough.

On my first outing in perfect harbour conditions, we got it up to 28kts, 4kts faster than the claimed maximum speed. I looked at Wayne from Leopard Australia and he just laughed. I've done a couple of fuel burns since and it's bang on the claimed specs. Ever since that first day out, the boat has been an absolute joy. And importantly for us, Leopard Australia agents, Wayne and David have been outstanding. We went through the list of features and they said, 'This is what you should get standard and this is what you should get in Australia.' I trusted their advice and it has paid off handsomely. I'd give them 100% for their advice and support. The lighting is great on the Leopard 51 and the ice maker produces ice like you wouldn't believe.

We're having a customised tender lift installed at the Gold Coast before pushing on to Abel Point Marina in the Whitsundays where the boat will stay for a couple of months. The family will join us there and we're completely confident that *Stargazer* will be the perfect platform for all the things to see and do on the water in that beautiful part of the world".



The extensive noise attenuation throughout the vessel has been well thought through and it shows. We were under the bridge and doing tight turns in front of the Opera House in what seemed like a blink.

And make no mistake, this is not a small boat. It will comfortably accommodate large gatherings on board and there are multiple choices for sitting out with plenty of protection from the elements.

Its sleek design includes a large forward cockpit, additional lounge areas, an expansive flybridge and a completely redesigned interior upgraded with stylish contemporary appliances.

Drawing upon the success of previous Leopard Powercats, this economically efficient catamaran uses less fuel than earlier power models. The 51 also incorporates a brilliant ergonomic layout that makes getting about the boat both comfortable and easy in all conditions. It also shares the same submersible tender and swim platform as the 50 Sailcat where everything can be lowered and raised at the press of a button.

It certainly wasn't hard to imagine any number of lifestyle scenarios with this beauty occupying centre stage, from master entertainer for family and friends to the perfect luxury platform for those wanting to escape to a world of fun and relaxation on the water.





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LEOPARD45



PAUL AND ROSE LOVE THEIR LEOPARD 45

"I fell in love with the layout of our 45 Leopard sailcat," says Rose Hoes. "Everything flows in a practical way." Husband Paul says "After a lot of research, we knew that Leopard was the brand for us. We had seen the 48 a year or so earlier and finally settled on the 45, believing it was just right for our family circumstances."

Paul and Rose take up their story ...

"We couldn't be happier with our choice. We came from a background in power boats and the adjustment to sailing has been a sheer joy for us. Every box has been ticked. After a great charter experience in the Whitsunday's, we knew it would be easy to sign on to the cruising lifestyle. We loved the look, the layout and the comfort of the Leopard range and there's no doubt the 45 suits us perfectly. The boat comfortably accommodates our family of three adults and their partners and grandchildren for weekend sailing, along with more extended 15-hour passages to Busselton. We feel blessed that they all enjoy sailing and all the fun times that go with being on the water. We love the outlook through the front window from the forward-facing galley. There's nothing nicer than sailing along looking out at what's ahead.

While a little daunting at first, Leopard Australia principal David Flynn spent time with us in the early stage to make sure we felt comfortable handling the boat in a range of conditions. Now we feel entirely

confident operating it as a couple. We are in and out of the marina most weekends and after 10 months, there's not a scratch on the boat.

We also believe we've got the boat sailing well, helped by everything being set up to make life aboard easy and practical. Sailing arrangements, accommodation, galley operation ... it's all as it should be. Equipment, wiring, hoses, everything is installed and labelled well. Documentation is also very good.

As an electrician, I really appreciate the thought that's gone into making everything simple, logical and practical.

The big roof is a great feature, accommodating optional 900 watts of solar panels with more room if we ever need it. We've now added a washing machine and watermaker and some air conditioning is a current project.

March next year will see us head north to the Kimberley, spending around three months there before heading on to Darwin. We will then stay there for a bit before coming around the top to the east coast and heading south and joining up with the Go East Rally to New Caledonia. Or we might head to Tasmania in the following summer months. One thing's for sure, our Leopard 45 *Arabella* is the key that is unlocking all our lifestyle plans on the water, not just now, but for the foreseeable future.'

