



The Leopard 51 Power Cat can cruise in trawler mode or fast cruise, reaching 19kts comfortably during our sea trial in Sydney.  
Image Kevin Green

# f a s t FLAGSHIP

With 100 vessels launched since 2015, the Leopard 51PC is a well-proven model, already popular with Australian owners. Along with her smaller sibling the Leopard 43PC these boats represent the very best in South African boat building quality knowledge and experience.

**T**he L51PC is built to best marine practices, and so offers her owners a safe, luxurious and durable platform for their on water adventures. At the beating heart of the vessel are her twin Yanmar 8LV 370hp V8 diesels, coupled to conventional shaft drive fixed four blade propellers.

The L51PC is offered in either owner's version three cabin layout, or for those wishing to place the vessel in the Whitsunday Islands charter fleet for a fixed return, a four cabin – four bathroom configuration.

## LOADS OF LIVING SPACE

Three levels of living space plus cockpits fore and aft means you could invite your local footie team for a barbecue, and still have room for the opposition as well.

Towering over proceedings is the huge flybridge that extends right aft of the L51PC footprint. Ascending here via the wide and gently inclined stairway from safely inside the aft cockpit brings me to a covered area with lounge that seats eight, along with wet bar. It includes an electric barbecue with hood, and there's an optional ice-maker and fridge.

Offset to port at the front is the steering console, overlooking the forward flybridge sunbathing platform, which also shades the forepart of the saloon and forward cockpit. Sturdy railings all round, including on the wet bar are a welcome safety feature, while the tall



**TOP:** The elongated hulls have been optimised for motor power and are relatively slim with steeper deadrise than the sailing models. *Image Kevin Green*

**ABOVE LEFT:** The steering console is protected well by the large fibreglass bimini but a small windshield would be useful. *Image Kevin Green*

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Clear instrumentation throughout the Raymarine installation that included autopilot, plotter and Yanmar engine data. *Image Kevin Green*

fibreglass hard-top bimini protects from the elements. Clears can be added to this area for further protection from adverse weather. At the console a double bench with reversible back allows for comfort at either the helm station or the generous settee and table. The helm console is dominated by Raymarine instrumentation, which includes the Axiom9 plotter, autopilot and VHF radio.

Electronic engine controls offer high and low power and troll settings. To the right of the hydraulic steering wheel is the Yanmar engine management system, including visual and audible alarms. A notable and desirable safety feature is the automatic Seafire engine fire suppression system.

## VERSATILE SALOON

Apartment like living is revealed when you enter the saloon thanks to the 25ft beam creating a vast airy space in which to relax, cook and entertain.

The galley adjoins the aft deck via large sliding door and windows, so is ideal for serving the outside diners. The lower helm station is positioned at the front of the saloon, with the generous lounge offset to the right.

Versatility is the key feature of these boats and is demonstrated well on the L51PC with the U-shaped saloon table which can be lowered to become a day bed. The interior joiner work is of the modern European nautical style, with clean straight lines and light colour selections.

The optional electronic controls at the lower internal helm station allow the owner to run the boat in total comfort during adverse weather. An optional Raymarine smartphone app will allow remote operation of the Navionics.

The L-shaped configuration of the galley offers plenty of bench space for food preparation, with easy access to the three burner gas cooktop with electric oven, and the deep double sinks. Generously sized twin Vitrefrigo refrigeration drawers on the starboard side and plentiful



storage space all around, make this galley comparable to a modern home kitchen.

A Fusion system supplies the zonal audio entertainment throughout the cavernous interior, cockpits and flybridge.

## OWNER'S PRIVATE SUITE

Stepping down into the starboard hull brings me to the full length owner's suite. Closed-off by a sliding door, there's a double berth aft office table and vanity amidships, and large bathroom forward. Nice touches in the owner's berth include adjustable reading lights, a

**ABOVE L-R:** The saloon has vast volume from the vertical bulkheads and lots of floor space for aft galley, nav station forward and versatile lounge. *Image Leopard Catamarans*

The flybridge had comfy lounging space forward with dinette and wet bar adjoining; and of course some nice mood lights for party time. *Image Leopard*

The aft cockpit is sheltered and the outside diners are right beside the galley for convenience. *Image Leopard Catamarans*

## TWO WORLD LEADING ANCHOR DESIGNS



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**TOP:** The guest fore cabin has a space around its foot and ample shelf space plus that all important skylights for ventilation. *Image Leopard Catamarans*

**ABOVE:** Bathrooms are moulded for easy cleaning and all three were spacious on the review boat. *Image Leopard Catamarans*

spacious hanging locker and most importantly, plenty of headroom. The aft facing opening portlights are another good feature which offer natural light and ventilation.

A moveable stool with storage, at the vanity bench ensures the floor space is kept clear. Quality features abound, such as sturdy fittings and a high standard of joinery throughout. The owner's bathroom is spacious with shower cubicle featuring quality tapware, enclosed by an acrylic door, a handbasin set into a wide countertop and the electric saltwater head.

An optional domestic sized Washer Dryer is located forward of the shower cubicle. Overhead lighting and overhead opening hatches, and generous storage and open shelving complete the picture.

## GUEST SUITES

Stepping down the to portside hull, the layout has two ensuite bathrooms amidships, catering for each of the

fore and aft double cabins. The forward cabin contains an inner second bunk in the forepeak, ideal for a child or extra storage of bulky items, while aft is a substantial double cabin. As with the owner's private suite, these cabins feature opening deck hatches, and natural light and ventilation. Other features include ample lockers, bookshelves all around, and storage under the forward berth. Ventilation is good throughout with Lewmar hatches topside, electric fans and opening portlights. Both three cabin and four cabin versions have space in the fore peaks to take additional single berths or heads.

## AFT COCKPIT

On deck, the entire aft cockpit is sheltered by the flybridge and the elongated hulls create bathing platforms on both quarters. Underfoot, composite teak-like decking gripped my deck shoes making for a feeling of safety underfoot. Leopard's trademark electric davits allow for easy retrieval and launching of the dinghy. For outside dining in the aft cockpit there's the U-shaped bench with fibreglass table plus another bench to starboard. The aft settee backrest converts to create an aft facing lounge chair. There is voluminous storage under all of the seating in this area.

The saloon/aft cockpit sliding glass door retracts to create a wide opening which allows conversation, food and drinks food to be passed from and to the adjoining galley.

## FORWARD COCKPIT

Forward in the saloon is a sturdy clear door leading to the bow cockpit, which is a signature Leopard feature, intended to fully utilise all deck space safely. Here the waist deep cockpit has large scuppers, a fold down table and seating to enjoy the view underway safely. It offers another gathering point for guests whilst at anchor, and gives quick access from the saloon to the foredeck and surrounding lockers.

## FOREDECK

The foredeck offers a vast solid GRP deck between the hulls, and small seats at each bow. There are generous lockers which contain the water tanks, optional genset, with plenty of space for fenders and docklines.

The vertical Lewmar 1500W windlass with HD galvanized chain and bridle and remote electronic controls is fully enclosed under a flush locker, making anchoring a breeze. The rode runs below the deck safely out of harm's way.

There is also a secondary bow roller. Deck fixtures are substantial all around including sensible amidships cleats and cabin top grab rails. Other good features include corner seats integrated into the forward stanchions and flush mounted Lewmar deck hatches which eliminate nasty toe injuries, and leave the side and foredecks clear for sunbathing and relaxing.



**TOP:** A smooth nacelle and with enough height that should be adequate even when loaded with six tons of gear. *Image Kevin Green*

## DEDICATED HULL DESIGN

The Simonis-Voogd design is an upgrade to their previous designs, so continues with the tall hulls, optimised to reduce drag, especially at the fine bows where there is high bridgedeck clearance to reduce wave friction. The build includes crash bulkheads plus a thick layup with foam core and monolithic fibreglass in key places. The shaft drive layout dictates that the engines are beneath each aft bunk. These engines are accessed by an electrically powered hydraulic ram that lifts the bed base. The spade rudders are far aft, to maximize control and the rudder shafts can be accessed for emergency steering. Since these power cats are displacement craft, reducing drag while supporting a load is a challenge, and unlike monohull powerboats they are too narrow to respond to trim tabs. Simonis's solution was to trim the hull by keeping weight inboard and reduce drag and downforce further by creating tunnels for the shafts and propellers. Above the waterline a pronounced hard chine gives more beam for the topsides, and runs from the bow to stern, allowing for greater space in the accommodation areas. The topsides are highlighted by fixed rectangular portlights. As mentioned, main engine access is via the aft cabin bed bases, but there is also a hatch for front access here as well (to belts and the impeller) while all filters are handily at the front. Soundproofing looked good and proved quiet during our run. 240 volt power – for running large white goods can come from an optional 9kw Northern Lights generator located in the foredeck hatch. For ship's DC Stored power – two house 210amp hour AGM batteries are mounted in a dedicated locker in the aft deck with space for an additional two more batteries.

## ON THE WATER

Easing 20 tons of high windage power cat off the dock with a stiff breeze can be stressful – for me and many other amateur level skippers – but dealer David Flynn did it with aplomb. "The owner is thinking of having an after-market tunnel thruster fitted," David said, as I took the helm in clear water. However, competent catamaran skippers would be more than satisfied with these widely spaced propellers offering responsive handling in close



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The tall flybridge and spacious aft deck gives the Leopard plenty of usable space.  
Image Kevin Green

quarters maneuvering of this large vessel, especially combined with the low power Troll mode engaged on the sensitive electric throttles. Once in clear water, advancing the throttles quickly extended up my views of Sydney Harbour, as the

Yanmars quietly powered up, so it was hard to believe we were doing nearly 20kts. (If the hull had been totally clean we'd have been doing even more). Beside me at the console, my SLR camera hadn't moved, so smooth had been our takeoff.

The only real indication of speed was the windage over helm station, so I'd be inclined to fit a visor, as found on many power cats. At this top speed our consumption showed about 82 litres per hour which would take us about 310nm with 10% reserve, but slowing down to a more economical 15kts

would add another 100nm to the range. Searching for some bumps on a smooth sea had me chasing my wake which caused little consternation or spray on the decks of the L51PC, so I headed for the wharves at Cockatoo Island for some slow handling. With the 15kt wind on my side I easily went astern towards the dock – using small nudges on the throttles (in Troll mode).

Then with opposite throttles fore and aft we easily spun around on our length. Then accelerated quickly, with no pronounced rise in the bows, as we headed for home.

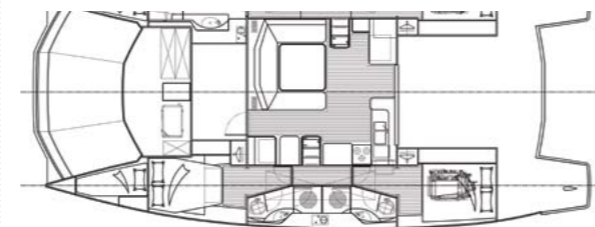
My conclusion – the Leopard 51PC is a strong contender in the competitive power catamaran market, but you should see her for yourself at the Sydney Boat Show.

[www.leopardcatamarans.com](http://www.leopardcatamarans.com)



The aft beds are electrically lifted to reveal the shaft driven Yanmar V8 370hp – the only engine option but more than adequate on the 51PC. Image Kevin Green

#### LEOPARD 51PC SPECIFICATIONS



LOA	15.54m (51ft)
Beam	7.64m
Draft	0.98m
Displacement	18,500kg
Load Carrying Capacity	6,000kg
Engine	2x Yanmar 8LV 370hp with four bladed propellers

Fuel	1,500 L
Water	780 L
Holding Tank Capacity	170 L
Berths	6+1 or 8+2
Heads	3 or 4
Showers	4 or 5
Cabins	3 or 4
Design	Simonis Voogd

#### Fuel Consumption – official figures

Cruising speed 15kts – 48 l/PH; 2,500rpm (range of 420nm with 10% spare)  
Maximum – 19kts, 82 l/PH; 2,900rpm (range of 310nm with 10% spare)  
Price: \$1,395,000 as tested (taxes paid and delivered to Sydney)



  
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1 300 661 321

[www.leopardcatamarans.com](http://www.leopardcatamarans.com)  
[sales@leopardcatamarans.com.au](mailto:sales@leopardcatamarans.com.au)