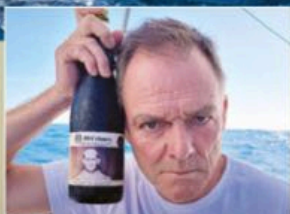


Seahorse

International Sailing

Issue 539 £7 US\$9.99

Off to the races – Sam Goodchild
Lifting the lid at Team NZ – Rob Humphreys
Great sailor, extraordinary life – Keith Musto
ETNZ is always a little faster – Paul Cayard
A life and death struggle – Andy Cloughton
Calm and well-rehearsed – Nathan Outteridge



A family affair
– Tapio Lehtinen

JANUARY 2025
The official
magazine of the
Royal Ocean
Racing Club



ISSN 0143-246X



Design



Great expectations

The brand new Grand Soleil 52 Performance is designed for versatile sailing, making it ideal for fast cruising experiences or competitive ORC racing

ALBERTO COCCHI

The number of boatbuilders that have consistently and successfully developed top-notch boats in their respective markets for half a century or more is vanishingly small. However, one of the standout names is Grand Soleil Yachts, an Italian brand that has made its name through engaging legendary designers to produce fast and well-mannered, high-quality yachts that combine comfort and space with an enviable Italian flair for style and engineering.

The previous Grand Soleil 52, for instance, was a supremely successful model for the yard designed back in 1987 by German Frers. Yet the same proven strategies can still be seen in the latest design of that size which comes from the board of Matteo Polli, one of the most highly regarded designers of his generation. The Italian naval architect

'The most innovative elements are its sporty lines and aggressive look'

has a string of successes to his name, such as having a hand in two of the class winners at the 2024 ORC World Championship, one of which is a Grand Soleil 44 Performance. Indeed, that model has won its class without fail for the past four years.

At the same time, Nauta Design crafted its magic to bring the interior and exterior styling, as well as the layouts of the Grand Soleil 52 Performance to life. In doing so they successfully maximised comfort and ergonomics for cruising without sacrificing any of the hull's impressive performance

potential, or its top-class handling and sailing qualities.

'For me the most innovative elements of the design are the sporty lines and the aggressive look that we brought to the boat,' Massimo Gino, design director at Nauta Design told *Seahorse*. 'These stylistic features establish the Grand Soleil 52

Performance at the pinnacle of sportiness and convey the sensation of speed that this boat promises.'

What was the most rewarding aspect of the project to work on? 'The simple fact that we were given the task of designing the exterior of the new version of such an iconic model was very rewarding in itself,' Gino adds. 'The Grand Soleil 52 Performance has already made a mark in the history of sailing, both in Italy and around the world, and we are proud to be part of that. It offers everything a sailor could desire.'

As with the other members of Grand Soleil's extremely successful Performance line up, the 52 is available in both "Performance" and "Race" versions, satisfying the needs of more sporty customers, as well as those who prefer fast cruising to regatta courses. In both cases the outcome is a supremely elegant yacht with harmonious shapes, yet impressive stability, performance and handling.

Importantly, the high stability does not





Design

Matteo Polli explains his design

The GS52 is the latest model in the Performance range of the yard and the underpinning goals set on the design brief were mostly in line with the GS40 and GS44, although the reference set with the glorious previous GS52 designed by German Frers placed a fair amount of pressure on the design team. Seaworthiness, elegance, performance are the three main aspects we needed to conjugate in a modern style. Normally, the larger the size the broader is the range of use so in conceiving the naval architecture of this new GS52 I have tried to put more emphasis on characteristics that allow blue water cruising and trans-ocean passages in a sporty, high-performance mode.

The hull lines share the style and functionality of the other models in the range, while the overall volume distribution is relatively different especially underwater. Bow sections are deeper and more flared in the topsides, entries are finer, softening the ride in head seas and keeping the deck drier. All adding up to a perfect equilibrium between speed, feel on the helm and comfort.

The appendages and sailplan have been designed following the same philosophy, especially reducing wetted surface vs sail area as much as possible while keeping high the controllability in difficult situations and the fun of sailing. As on the other models, there are different options that allow to mode the boat for individual specific use ranging from a pure cruising mode to a more performance/racing oriented setup.

Initial tests on water are proving the main goals have been achieved but of course I really look forward to seeing the boat in a racing environment.

78 SEAHORSE



The Performance model variant has an easily-handled deck plan with four winches

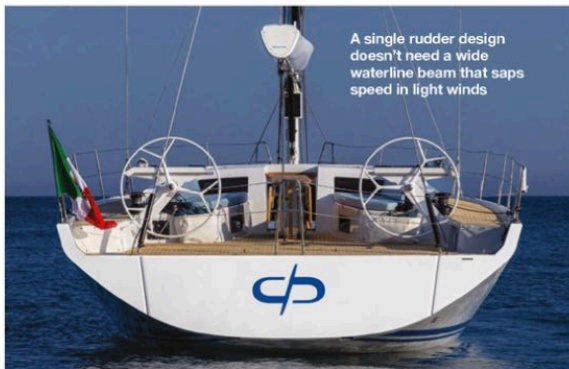
come at the expense of speed in light airs – a crucially important factor for the enjoyment of a yacht that's frequently overlooked. Whether you are sailing in the Mediterranean or in more northerly parts of Europe and the UK, in mid-summer light winds predominate around half of the time. Therefore, a cruising yacht that can't perform well in light airs may spend an inordinate amount of time motor-sailing when on passage. By contrast, a vessel designed with a low wetted surface area and equipped with an appropriate sailplan can sail at almost the true wind speed on many points of sail in as little as four to eight knots of breeze.

That's a game changer for many owners and one that helps keep families engaged in the kind of bright and sunny weather that makes for some of the most memorable days afloat. But what about the other end of the spectrum? The combination of wide beam and the soft chines aft mean that form stability builds rapidly as the boat starts to heel. This gives the Grand Soleil 52 Performance an enormously powerful hull shape that copes with heavy weather far better than older and narrower hull shapes.

Of course this is not just about hull design and form stability. The standard configuration has a hefty keel bulb married to a 2.9m (9ft 7in) draught, which exerts a considerable righting moment as the boat starts to heel. There are also options for 2.3m (7ft 8in) and 2.7m (8ft 1in) – the latter option being optimised for ORC-draught keels.

Given the dominance of twin rudders among successful short-handed racing designs including Imoca 60s, Class 40s and even smaller JPKs over the past three decades, it might be easy to assume a single rudder will always compromise handling. While this was the case for many of the early wide-transom yachts, the reality today is very different.

Single rudder designs have continued to be refined, most notably in circles such as the TP52 fleet. Today, when mounted well forward and therefore clear of the disturbed water near the transom, a single rudder can be extremely powerful even at high angles of heel. Unlike twin rudder boats, a single rudder design doesn't need a wide waterline beam aft that increases the hull's wetted surface area and therefore saps speed in light winds.



A single rudder design doesn't need a wide waterline beam that saps speed in light winds



The open plan interior configuration and contemporary styling are by Nauta Design

The deck plan and sail plan of the GS52 are carefully configured to offer the best solution for each of the two versions, with optimal balance achieved by positioning the mast aft of the main bulkhead.

The Performance model variant has a more easily-handled deck plan with four winches near the helms stations and the German-style mainsheet led to a fixed point on the cockpit floor. A self-tacking jib is fitted as standard, as is the carbon bowsprit. This is an excellent arrangement that keeps sail handling and manoeuvres safely clear of the main guest cockpit area and is also easy for a small crew, or even a lone watch-keeper, to operate.

The race version has six winches, plus longitudinal cars for headsail sheets, a recessed mainsail traveller, larger sail plan and a carbon bowsprit that is 90cm longer than the standard unit. These changes turbocharge the boat's performance, while enabling a larger race crew to carry out the slickest of manoeuvres on a tight racecourse.

Both versions also benefit from plenty of on-deck stowage. The large forward sail locker, for instance, can swallow sails of all sizes, including a code zero, while the

anchor locker has space for the six fenders needed for daily use. An inflated 2.60m tender can also be housed in the completely watertight garage aft.

Interiors are designed around a single goal: comfort. This is achieved without adding unnecessary weight that would compromise performance, yet in all cases owners have a choice of exceptional timber quality and finishes.

The layout was optimised to the finest details to create big living areas for a yacht this size, while making the most of the space available. The three cabin, three bathroom arrangement includes an excellent forward master cabin with a large heads and shower stall.

Aft cabins include a double in the stern with a dedicated heads, plus a VIP double with heads, shower stall and the possibility of direct access from the dinette. This cabin can also be fitted with either twin beds or a large double. The spacious dinette area includes a navigation station, generous stowage and an ergonomic, fully equipped C-shaped galley with three fridge freezers that in total offer an

impressive 172 litres of storage space.

No matter how good the design, any yacht is only as good as its onboard systems. Cantiere del Pardo has gone the extra mile in this respect with an efficient 24V system that gives greater battery autonomy and top-quality equipment throughout. Even the air conditioning can be adjusted for different temperatures in the bow, saloon and aft cabins. Four stainless steel water tanks positioned centrally below the waterline enable

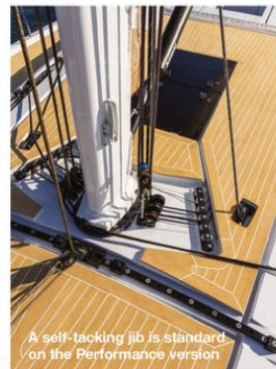
extended periods to be spent away from base, as does the generous 350-litre fuel tankage, feeding into a 50-litre day

tank for a capacity of 400 litres. Grand Soleil says it created the GS52 Performance 'for competent, passionate and very demanding owners who do not want to compromise on comfort or performance.' They won't be disappointed thanks to Cantiere del Pardo's quality and the heritage that is evident in every Grand Soleil, as a result of skills and knowledge handed down in the yard from generation to generation. At the same time, owners will benefit from cutting-edge naval architecture and design in all respects.

Equally, the boatyard's slogan "community is king" recognises the importance of creating a family of passionate owners that can share experiences though Cantiere del Pardo's exclusive regattas, events and presentations, in addition to the assistance and services that can be tailored to suit each owner around the globe.

Length overall	17.05m/55ft 11in
Hull length	16.20m/53ft 2in
Beam	5.15m / 16ft 11in
Standard draught	2.90m/9ft 6in
Optional draught	2.3 m/7ft 7in or 2.70m/8ft 1in
Displacement	16,500kg/36,376 lb
Berths	6/8
Fresh water	600 litres/159 gal
Diesel	400 litres/105 gal

www.grandsoleil.net



A self-tacking jib is standard on the Performance version



Joystick controls and instrument displays on the helm binnacles