

## Brava 45 Power Catamaran



# Bravado

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BARRY TYLER

**FOR PROLIFIC CATAMARAN DESIGNER AND MANUFACTURER PETER BRADY THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS THE PERFECT HULL SHAPE. SINCE HIS EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH CATAMARANS, ON-GOING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT HAS ENDEAVOURED TO ENSURE THAT EACH NEW MODEL IS THE MARKET LEADER OF ITS ERA. PERCEIVED BY MANY IN FACT TO BE LEADING THE CHARGE IN CATAMARAN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS, HIS LATEST BRAVA 45 CONTINUES THE BRADY TRADITION OF ECONOMY, PERFORMANCE, DURABILITY AND NOW MORE THAN EVER – STYLING.**

The Brava catamaran as we know it today evolved from an earlier and extremely successful Leopard design, constructed as a semi-production boat using the composite PACK system Brady developed. A partner's boatbuilding related illness and the inability to keep up with demand prompted the new partnership between the Brady family and one of his clients of many years, to form Brava Marine.

A new design partner in Trevor Loney had enabled him to further explore the intricacies of this single-most contentious area of a catamaran hull – the wing-deck slamming sensation which many feel is synonymous with catamaran hulls. They were determined to prove otherwise and their response was the design character-

istic Brady affectionately refers to today as CVD or Controlled Vapour Dampening – a series of V-pods or nacelles fitted to the underside of the wing-deck. The two also experimented with bulbs at the bow to further improve handling and efficiency and latterly a hull mod has further extended the hull out from 12.8m (42ft) to 13.7m (45ft), which allows it to carry greater loads. Construction is all vinyl ester infused composites including the bulkheads. Beneath the chine lines the core is currently end-grain balsa with the topsides, wing-deck and deck structure, foam. Keels, chines and transom corners are all solid fibreglass, with all vessels built to the USL commercial standard. Interior components are a mixture of moulded composite panels and custom woodwork.

**THE BRAVA 45 JUST DID EVERYTHING EFFICIENTLY WELL, IN ALL MANNER OF SEAS!**



THE DESIGN CHARACTERISTIC BRADY AFFECTIONATELY REFERS TO TODAY AS CVD OR CONTROLLED VAPOUR DAMPENING – A SERIES OF V-PODS OR NACELLES FITTED TO THE UNDERSIDE OF THE WING-DECK IS CLEARLY VISIBLE.

UP ON THE HUGE FLYBRIDGE LEVEL IS THE TRADITIONAL HELM STATION.

Our test version was powered by twin 4.163-litre LPA series 315hp 6-cylinder Yanmars running through ZK 630 boxes to Henley 4-blade 21½" x 26" propellers, that returned a very credible 26 knots at the maximum engine speed of 3800rpm. More importantly from a cruising perspective, the cruise speed of 17-18 knots offers the vessel a huge range at that most respectable speed. And yes, folks, the ride was all Mr Brady had rather eloquently described during the course of my early communications with him – smooth, quiet and uneventful. It just did everything efficiently well, in all manner of seas!

#### Two, Three or Four Cabins

There are three options available in the Brava range the, Brava Sports fly bridge, the single-level Brava Classic with its walk-around decks, and the very 'open-minded' Brava Commercial. It can then be personalised by drawing upon a multitude of different interior layout options, making it arguably one of the most adaptable cruisers on the market – monohull or catamaran!

One of the first points you note about the Brava is the 'balance' of the boat – nothing appears to be at the expense of anything else, although one could certainly argue that point when first stepping aboard. There is a most convenient (substantial) boarding platform each side, at a lower level to the central wing-deck, that leads you up onto what could only be described as an expansive cockpit, fully covered by the overhead flybridge

overhang which completely protected guests from rain or sunshine.

The transom upright is complete with a myriad of storage opportunities, along with a forward-facing leather look-alike lounge. Perhaps a break with tradition, the sole is covered with the owner's choice of Marinedeck 2000 cork, rather than the traditional teak finish. Other features include a substantial refrigerator or freezer unit against the starboard aft saloon bulkhead and opposite this, a set of moulded steps that lead you up onto the flybridge level. Again utilising space sensibly, a combo washing machine/dryer is recessed into the base of these steps.

Accessed either from hatches in the cockpit floor or inside the saloon, the engines are surprisingly well forward in the Brava cats, so as to reduce the propeller angle. This of course equates to more storage provision aft, for items such as a water heater, tankage, Lombardini 6kVA genset, the Little Wonder watermaker the 2000/120 Victron inverter/charger, and in separated lockers just above the engines, four 200Ah batteries (3 house, 1 engine). Aft of the actual engine bulkheads is another fully sealed wet locker each side that would ideally serve as a dive compressor room on one side, and dive-bottle storage on the other.

#### Accent on Safety

I had already noted the 'attention to safety' aspect when I ventured up onto the large and surprisingly level foredeck area.



**TOP LEFT:**  
THE SALOON WAS A DEFINITE AND PRE-DETERMINED EFFORT AT PRESENTING AN AURA OF ELEGANCE, BORDERING ON LUXURY.

**TOP RIGHT:**  
A LARGE DINING TABLE FOR THE MANY GUESTS THE BRAVA 45 IS CERTAIN TO ATTRACT.

**RIGHT:**  
THE ACCOMMODATION WAS SPACIOUS, PRACTICAL AND WELL PRESENTED.



Its wide walkways, the grab handles prudently positioned and the sensible height bow rail that fully encapsulate each side and indeed the 'play' area up front – are nothing more in fact than what you would expect on a serious cruising vessel. I was happy therefore to observe that this flybridge entry was also treated with the same degree of respect, again from this all-important safety perspective.

The steps are sufficiently wide and deep and are of course covered with a non-skid surface. Grab handles are to the side and at the top, so even in big seas there is always something secure to hang on to, so as to ensure a safe and smooth transition between the two levels. Even when are on this flybridge level, there are heaps of well-positioned overhead and side rails, along with an entry (hatch) door that drops down to seal the area off from below.

Up on the huge flybridge level is the traditional helm station that features a Furuno electronics package, Morse K4 remotes and Seastar hydraulic steering to an in-house engineering steering system below. Ahead of this helm module there is a full width wrap-around lounge and I was particularly impressed by the neat table arrangement that is moulded into the front of the actual helm module. It adds that extra touch of class, as of course do

the two skipper-style helm chairs and the wet-bar module. Three sides of the fly bridge are enclosed, with across the back and part of the sides fully protected by a set of clears – great again for those balmy evenings on the sea! As the infomercial goes though, "But wait, there is more", for aft of the helm proper there is a huge uncluttered floor space and aft of that again a floor area sufficient enough in size to accommodate the ADC (Australian Davit Company) davit and a 3.2m RIB tender. Talk about maximising the utilisation of space!

#### Spacious Theme Prevails

All this afore-mentioned space allocation in theory seemingly has to be at the expense of interior space, but yet again the Brady bunch has been able to cleverly plan things around a more than adequate provision for inside living, albeit well outside the parameters of traditional catamaran thinking. The head as stated is to port as you enter the saloon, with sensibly an exterior access door also. A shower curtain partitions the shower off from the vanity and the Tecma vacuum-flush head.

While all we had discovered to this point could justifiably be described as entirely practical, user-friendly, appropriately spec'd and certainly very well presented, you wouldn't however describe it as unadulterated luxury. The saloon on the other hand was a definite and pre-determined effort at presenting an aura of elegance, bordering on luxury.

Considering it was a 'production' vessel there is a surprising amount of 'deep' lacquer coated Queensland maple and pencil cedar woodwork. This is delightfully complemented by vinyl wall panelling, Cantalupi lighting, an L-shaped leather settee, a huge six-person (more if you add chairs on the walkway side) feature dining table, beautifully crafted front windscreen pillars or mullions, and concertina privacy blinds. For ventilation purposes, cross-drafts develop courtesy of hatches over the front windscreen, the rear door and the slide-opening side windows. Or, if you prefer your air man-made, the 7.0kW air-conditioning system will provide cool air by way of clever ducting and re-direction, to the three levels of flybridge, saloon and accommodation.

The other most obvious feature in the saloon was of course the port-side galley, again a revelation in size! Most appealing for the 'cook' was the amount of actual usable bench space, along with the deep and sensibly-seized twin sinks. The owner's preference was for the two-burner electric option, along with a convection microwave oven. Under the bench were two side-by-side 135-litre refrigerator/freezers.

When it came to the accommodation provision in each of the hulls, this particular layout option was perhaps more appropriate for a two-couple situation. Up front in fact, the 'duplicated' accommodation was spacious, practical and well presented, without being 'flashy' or over the top. The queen-size island



berths were athwartships, which again will appeal to the poor person who ends up with the bed-making chores. In both these foreward cabins you were able to sit up in bed (with head-room to spare), the room was well lit and certainly well ventilated with overhead and port-hole hatches, and there was heaps of storage provision in the base of the bed and in hanging lockers recessed into the wall. Bedside cupboards and wall lamps were tastefully complemented by the plushly-padded wall panels and generous sprinklings of Queensland maple.

**HUGE OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES ARE A FEATURE OF THE BRAVA 45.**

**THE PORT-SIDE GALLEY IS A REVELATION IN SIZE!**



The two aft cabins, (well, one in this particular instance, as the other is a storage facility) were definitely double size only and were full width. You could stand up at the foot of the bed to change, and you still enjoyed all the other features of the above-mentioned foreward accommodation options.

**Conclusion**

As a pure, unadulterated long-range cruising boat, the Brava 45 Sport Cruiser has few peers. It enjoyed good performance from what was a decidedly meagre powerplant (when compared against a like-sized monohull for instance), it cruised at a very generous clip thanks to what was obviously a most efficient under-hull shape, and it had good stability at rest and underway. The ride was most predictable and certainly devoid of any noticeable hull banging/slapping. Priced at \$A992,000 with the standard 240hp Yanmars the price is up there for a 45-footer. Compare apples with apples however, consider the features and benefits traditionally associated with a much larger vessel, and all of a sudden this boat equates to damned good value for money. For me, on the plus side were the performance capabilities, the substantial cockpit, plenty of storage provision and of course the flybridge access. The negative side? – I had to think long and hard and the worst 'negative' I could ruminate over was the lack of a downstairs head – and that was the owner's choice!



**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

Boat Design Name: Brava 45	Propellers: 4-blade Tigers, 21 1/2" x 26"	Heads: Tecma
Year Launched: 2007	Generator: Lombardini 6kVA	Veneer/Plywood: Queensland maple / pencil cedar
Designer: Peter Brady / Trevor Loney	Inverter: Victron 2000/120	Davit/Passarella: ADC (Australian Davit Company)
Builder: Brava Marine	Air Conditioning: MarineAir 7.0kW	ELECTRONICS
LOA: 13.7m	Watermaker: Little Wonder 31 L/h	Autopilot: Furuno
Beam: 5.49m	Windlass: Muir 1250	GPS/Plotter/Sounder: Interfaced Furuno
Draft: 1.00m	Anchor: Manson 45lb Super Supreme	VHF: Icom
Displacement: 10,500kg	Steering: Seastar hydraulic	Radar: Furuno 24-mile
Max Speed: 24 knots	Engine Controls: K4 Morse Digital	Entertainment: NEC / Clarion
Cruise Speed: 17-18 knots	Lighting: Aqualuma / Cantalupi	Instruments: Yanmar
Construction: Composites/resin infused vinylester	Paint: Gelcoat Finish	Weatherfax: Maxsea
Fuel Capacity: 1400 litres	Paint (antifoul): Wattyl	Software: Furuno
Water Capacity: 600 litres	Hatches: Lewmar	Switch Panels: In-house / BEP
Engines: 2 x Yanmar 240hp	Wipers: Exalto	Base Price: \$A992,000
Gearboxes: ZF 630 2.5:1	Windscreens: Australian Window Company	Price As Tested: \$A1,200,000
Drive System: Conventional shaft drive	Port-hole Hatches: Lewmar	

Contact: Brava Marine, P.O. Box 7162, Hemmant, Qld 4174, Australia. Ph +61 7 3295 0177, Fax +61 7 3396 4555, Email: sales@bravamarine.com Website: www.bravamarine.com