

“FASTCAT II”: A Diamond in the Rough

After over a year of solid service, owner Sonny Eymann only has good things to say about the 25.3 meter “Fastcat II”. In fact, he’s happy enough that, come the first month of 2001, he will take delivery of another commercial catamaran from Gold Coast Yachts.

Established in 1986, Gold Coast Yachts has earned an international reputation for the design and construction of nearly 60 large, innovative commercial day-sailing catamarans, wave-piercing catamarans and offshore performance cruisers at its facility in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Its commercial clientele includes successful owner-operators, hotel and resort chains and transportation companies serving a variety of routes worldwide.

“Fastcat II” is the most recent of its power catamaran deliveries. Designed collaboratively with Sonny Eymann, it features Mancolm Tenant’s canoe sterns and the patented Gold Coast wave piercing bows. These are based on a similar principal to the hull-forms originally developed by Phil Hercus (Incat Designs) and Robert Clifford (Incat Tasmania) in as much as the low volume, slender hulls are designed to push through waves rather than ride over them, thus providing a smoother ride.

The difference, and it is a notable and easily spotted one, is the way in which the problems of nose diving and tunnel slamming are addressed. Both of the Incats rely on a central bow to provide the necessary additional buoyancy when required but the Gold Coast concept is to provide the necessary buoyancy and restoring pitch moments by having the hulls extend well forward of the superstructure. The required buoyant forces are created by the submergence of the hulls prior to the wave reaching the tunnel area.

Built in composites to American Bureau of Shipping high speed rules “Fastcat II” is United States Coast Guard rated for 100 passengers for ocean routes. She has been operating for Sunny Days, running from her homeport of Key West, Florida to the Dry Tortugas.

Operated by a crew of three, the 8.23 meter wide vessel has an operating speed of 27 knots achieved with relatively low power provided by a pair of Lugger diesels driving fixed pitch propellers via Twin Disk gearboxes.

Fuel capacity, at 1,365 litres divided between a tank in each hull, is not large but then “Fastcat II” is a frugal feline: on her 1,050 nautical mile delivery voyage to Florida in May 1999 she consumed just 4,780 litres of fuel. That’s one gallon per nautical mile for a boat averaging 22 knots over the distance and carrying the equivalent of 30 passengers.

Gold Coast Yachts says this performance can be achieved with as many as 70 passengers aboard, resulting in obvious economic efficiencies. The vessels are also competitively priced, the builder quoting a figure of US\$900,000 FOB at St. Croix for a standard 25 meter vessel.

The next power catamaran delivery from Gold Coast Yachts will be a 49 passenger, 19.8 metre wavepiercer for a commercial operator in Alaska. Due for completion in February 2001, it will take to 11 the number of wavepiercers delivered in under 10 years from the company's production facilities. Earlier deliveries consisted of two 11.6 meters, an 18.6 meter and 31.7 meter, 126 passenger "Fast Cat. Completed in 1995, this is still the largest vessel, power or sail, the company has produced.

Sailing catamarans have dominated production in 2000, with the 19.5 meter "Shangrila" completed for a Hawaiian owner in May. This combined commercial/private vessel is USCG certified for 49 passengers. Nearing completion at the time of writing (September 2000) was a 20.1 by 9.1 meter motor-sailing catamaran for John Emmerson of Costa Rica/Brazil. Based on the success of "Spirit of Kauai", claimed to be the world's fastest motorsailor, "Marlin Del Rey" will sport a carbon wingspar and 132 square meters of sail. Mechanical propulsion will be based around a pair of 425 hp Yanmar diesels, and a cruise speed of 22 knots is anticipated.

The next vessel for "Fastcat II's" owner Sonny Eymann is rather unusual in that it is a 23.5 meter schooner-rigged foam sandwich. The vessel is to be used for day charter work out of Key West and will carry up to 125 passengers. Measuring 10n meters across the beam, the vessel will be powered by either its 186 square meters of sail or a pair of Yanmar 43H3DTE diesels for a cruise speed of 10 knots.

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“Fastcat II” SPECIFICATIONS

**Type of Vessel: Wave-piercing
passenger catamaran**

Owner: Sonny Eymann

Operator: Sunny Days

Designer: Gold Coast Yachts

Builder: Gold Coast Yachts

**Construction Materials: Cedar/fiberglass
composite**

Hulls, ply/foam/fiberglass

Superstructure, fiberglass/foam deck

Length overall: 25.3 meters

Length, waterline: 25.3 meters

Beam: 8.23 meters

Displacement (full load): 26.3 tons

**Main engines: 2 x Lugger L6140 AL2;
600hp at 1,800rpm each**

Gearboxes: 2 x Twin Disc MG-5091; 2:1

Propellers: 2 x fixed pitch; 3" x 38"

Radar: Raytheon 24nm

Autopilot: Simrad Robertson

GPS/plotter: Garmin

Two-way radios: Icom SSB, 2 x VHF

Windows: American Marine

Fuel: 1,365 litres

Fresh Water: 455 litres

Crew: 3

Passengers: 100

Maximum Speed: 29 knots

Cruising Speed: 27 knots

“Fast Cat II: A Diamond in the Rough”, *Work Boat World*, October 2000, p 35.