

All the X5's windows are in toughened laminated glass.
No more leaks or expanding. ↓

XQUISITE X5



A catamaran set up for blue water cruising

In 2010, the Dean 5000 became a big hit at the La Rochelle boat show, but then the actual launch of this model got bogged down with the various problems at the yard which eventually led to its demise. Phoenix Marine, a major South African manufacturer (in the composites fabrication and shipyard sector) bought the rights to the plans and asked architect Rudolf Jonker to take up the project and design a completely new boat within the existing lines: the Xquisite X5. We were able to get a first look and try her out in some great weather conditions.

Text and photos: Philippe Echelle

DIRECT MARKETING!

Tamas Hamor, the commercial director and developer for the X5, is a professional skipper: a seasoned and a well-experienced sailor, he is passionate about the techniques and the development of boats. Owner of a Dean 5000 which he has had in charter for several years, he has put a lot into the specs and quality control meaning that a top-quality multihull goes on the market. The quality of build and of equipment used reduces

any potential problems and makes resolving them easier thanks to closely-monitored technical maintenance. As a day-to-day user (short-handed, with his wife) of a big catamaran, he is easily able to envisage things from the point of view of a future owner. The approach is original and genuine, the result convincing.

A NEW BOAT WHICH IS ALREADY FAMILIAR

Rudolf Jonker was formerly a naval architect at Dean

Catamarans. He has his own design team at Phoenix Marine and has redesigned a large part of the original boat. The waterline, the bows, the interior layout, the build technique and the layout plans are all new. So why keep the original lines with a boat which has been so significantly redesigned? It's simple really: the developers like the shape, it is well-proven at sea and above all, it clearly stands out from the rest of the South African and European production. It was important to create a brand identity and good exposure in a very competitive global environment.

BUILT BY CRAFTSMEN IN A SAFE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL FRAMEWORK

The Xquisites (the X5, for the moment, and the forthcoming X5 Power) are built at the Phoenix boatyard, a small, dedicated yard which knew how to draw on all the know-how in and around Cape Town, where the majority of South African multihull builders are to be found. The main tooling (lower part of the nacelle, with inner half-hulls and structure to support the skegs, the outboard half-hulls and deck) are built here, along with 60 other small molds required for the build. The hull and deck are manually laminated (using a vacuum) in glass/vinylester sandwich foam for the underwater hull with epoxy gluing techniques. A balsa core is used for the deck, with bulkheads in 24mm marine ply, reinforced by multidirectional E-glass cloth. The build process and the sampling has been subject to the approval of Swedish specialist Composites Consulting Group. To help with the initial production costs, Xquisite secured payments from the first five clients, paid into an escrow account independent from the yard. This unique process guarantees that the buyer will end up with the finished product and peace of mind.

DIFFERENT LINES AND A FUNCTIONAL DESIGN

The curvaceous style of the boat is fluid and aerodynamic. The forward face is composed of a vertical windshield in two sections which is cleverly designed and offers a great view, and the split between the lateral port lights in the coachroof is innovative and provides a remarkable panoramic view, with great quality of light, thanks to the use of high-strength, tempered laminated and glued glass. So no more expansion, sources of leaks or the crazing associated with Plexiglas. Having them inset creates a protection against the harmful effects of UV light. The sleek sailplan shows this to be a robust and quick cruising boat. The helm station is well integrated into the overall lines, and is protected by a clever convertible bimini. The large archway after seems a little out of place and is easier to accept or when you understand the program. The cutaways for the topside hatches extend the functional style, also making use of high-strength glass.

TOP OF THE RANGE DECK FITTINGS AND A WELL-DESIGNED DECK LAYOUT

The usual guard wires have been replaced by a rigid stainless rail, 75 cm high which is much safer than the current recommendations require, and the solid rail can also be used as a step. Access on board is either aft via the sugarscoops, or via a very well-designed pivoting lateral cut-away. The side decks are wide and ringed with handrails on the coachroof. Space is increased by a raised area which is not fitted out, but which houses lockers (watertight with carefully draining hatches) concealing the furling lines. Very flat, with a good non-slip surface and lacking in any trip hazards and line-ends, this design choice illustrates well the philosophy of the boat. It is streamlined with the installation of a proper blue-water anchoring station. A first locker gives access to the 1500W windlass while a second reveals the chain lead as far as the pivoting bow roller. The general design of these vital elements for anchoring highlights that nothing has been forgotten. The attachment of the indispensable bridle (often requiring improvised and dangerous maneuvers) is done here in perfect safety. This neat device also allows the Harken furler for the staysail and the big reacher to be



Functional ergonomics are one of the strong points of the X5. The rigid handrail is reassuring on a family cruising catamaran. The layout of the various areas is very successful such as the accessibility around the helm station. ↑

The Xquisite X5 is a luxury catamaran capable of producing good performance. It goes very well in light and medium airs. ↓



The rear arch is not very attractive, but it houses some interesting features which make it easier to accept. The anchoring set-up is exemplary. Note where the anchor lurches beneath the platform. ↑

The split sailplan (self-tacking solent / big, overlapping reacher on furlers) and the choice of sailcloth (North membrane) show a level of excellence. ↓

