

COMFORT OR PERFORMANCE

Do we really have to choose?

There is probably no more subjective issue than comfort. As for performance, if it can be measured and compared, isn't it also relative? There is no intention here to impose a single view on such a personal subject.

Rather, our aim is to help you to ask yourself the right questions when choosing the multihull that you will need once you have established your program - a week's charter, long weekends and summer holidays, round the world or racing.



And technological developments have sometimes led us to take another look at some of our old prejudices. Whereas electric toilets or microwave ovens for example were still verging on heresy 10 years ago, this is no longer the case today. Between green electrical production (solar panels, wind generator, hydrogenerator) and the quality of the batteries, it is perhaps more efficient to heat your mug of tea for two minutes in a microwave oven rather than to heat a whole kettle on the gas cooker...

With the development of lithium battery banks, more and more owners are even opting for induction hobs, thus making all the constraints, risks and space requirements associated with propane a thing of the past. Comfort also means freeing oneself from chores. Like the water supply, which is now produced in quantity by the onboard watermaker. This particular comfort is also synonymous with performance, because you don't have to store and transport hundreds of gallons of water and the extra

What is comfort at sea? With our landlubber reflexes, the first criterion that comes to mind will undoubtedly be space. The longer we stay on board, the more important it will be. Going off for a couple of weeks with eight friends to the Caribbean on a 40-foot catamaran generally goes very well - as long as everyone does their bit. On the other hand, when you live aboard permanently, the close proximity induced by the space

constraints can quickly become problematic. Comfort means having space for everyone - and everything too. Let's talk about equipment: this is now a major factor when it comes to choosing your boat as you can read in our article «The true price of a multihull». Although «cooling» (refrigerators, freezers, etc.) is now widely available as standard everywhere, the list of options on offer has grown considerably in recent years in terms of home comforts.



100% comfort: Xquisite X5 - 15.44 m (50'8") - 18 tons lightship weight ▲

100% performance: TS5 - 15.24 m (50') - 8.6 tons lightship weight ►



weight associated with it. No more exhausting searches for a laundromat when you have your own washing machine on board - provided, of course, that you use green products. But beware of adding any extra weight that could have an impact on the performance of the lightest yachts. Above all, be careful not to fall into the trap of over-equipping the boat and making everything

too complicated. Comfort also means having the time to do what you want to do privately (reading, writing, cooking, diving, surfing and maybe just doing nothing. Why not...?) Spending your time maintaining, repairing or worse, trying to get complex systems repaired, far from civilization, is not very comfortable - at least for your peace of mind. The famous sailor Loïck Peyron used to say that «getting away from everything brings you a little closer to the essential». That's certainly something to meditate on...

Finally, even if the amount of time when you are actually sailing isn't really that much when cruising, your multihull's performance at sea will have a major impact on your comfort - both everyday life on board and your sleep. Your sensitivity to noise may cause you to shy away from certain materials (see the article on this subject), and you might worry that the low bridgedeck clearance on some boats

could induce unbearable shocks as soon as the sea becomes a little rough. The moment of truth will be a real test at sea which will reveal whether the multihull that has seduced you so much on paper can withstand the ocean swell.

If you've never been a keen racing sailor and aren't too worried about that extra tenth of a knot, then the VMG* and the AWA** upwind may seem rather meaningless to you. The apparent wind, noise, humidity and the greater stresses in the sails induced by high speeds can also be considered as elements of stress and discomfort. On the other hand, a few more knots on the log and the daily runs increase, crossings become shorter and less tiring and weather systems are easier to anticipate. Between the followers of Carl Honoré and his In Praise of Slow and the insatiable search for sensations and gliding, there are many compromises

to be made. But when it comes to performance on our multihulls, the factors that we can play with are clearly identified: weight, length, sail area, sail shapes and materials, windage, appendages, wetted surface and the cleanliness of the hulls.

Performance and comfort are therefore very closely linked. It's up to you to find the balance that corresponds to your program, your crew and also your budget. Although size may be everything, the economic situation that goes with it is not always manageable. In our opinion, the best multihull is always the one that we can afford. For if *Just dreaming about a voyage is already a voyage* - Marek Halter - then being on the water and sailing brings such happiness that it is well worth making a few compromises.

*VMG: Velocity Made Good

**AWA: Apparent Wind Angle

