



Activa 5300

A no-nonsense,
long distance cruiser

By Kevin Wolfe
Images by Nicholas Photography

There is a growing trend in Australia for dealers to buy motor yachts to find a good package that is already being built by an established yard, and to then design the boat to suit Aussie conditions.

To get New Zealand, Kevin Salberger, and his business partner, John White, have done just that. Kevin may be a Gold Coast real estate agent, but he's a former engineer and has been around boats for some 30 years, so he knows what's good in a boat and what's not.

The job found the yard they were looking for in China, at a plant called Suzhou. Active Marine has been operated by naval architect Charles Chang in Taiwan, and more recently in China, for more than 30 years, and has an established reputation. More importantly, the company offered a vessel that was unique and entirely different to any production motor yacht offered in Australia or New Zealand: Active West by the company.

Active, well, that built in the United States and Europe under the brand names of Active and Havel; however, they don't have the same specification level of the yachts that they build elsewhere.

In the April/May edition of *BoatLife* we brought you a sneak preview of the Active 5300. It debuted in Australia in time for the Sandringham International Boat Show, and we'd like to have the opportunity to take it for a spin on the Gold Coast.

A lot of thought and testing experience had gone into the interior layout of the boat, so I was to find out when they showed the model. The first impression is how big the interior of the boat is for a 53-footer. I doubt whether there is another boat of this size that offers the spacefulness of this one.

The brand new boat, then off to the shop, had recently been reviewed and there were still a few items that were to be fixed on the Gold Coast. These included items such as some of the electronics for the lower helm station and the wood-trim helixes in the galley cupboard doors. But these could be resolved, as they were temporary, and distributed from the overall top deck level of the boat.

The main cabin, entered through a large stainless steel-framed sliding door from the cockpit, with large picture windows, is compact with a lounge and an electrically operated table that sits opposite a huge TV screen and entertainment centre. There is a reason for this. The concept is legs with a curved stainless, providing one of two ways to get up onto the flybridge. The other is via an internal staircase. That takes up some of the room.

Then there's the galley, up a couple of steps and set amidships. This is bigger than usual, and accounts for some noise of the boat. So much so, that the lower helm station is probably a little further forward than most. The design is well proportioned, with the cockpit, galley, lower helm station and the forward accommodation contained in that individual area that connect seamlessly to each other.

Covers will keep the galley with its granite preparation and serving top, and there is more shower and outdoor space, including comfortable, flat in the engine bay. The shower follows a deep, drilled tub with a fixed but foldable surface and a discreet set around the edges to keep things tidy.

The lower helm station is compact, it doesn't need to be very big because most of the driving will be done up top... when we get up there, you will see why. A cruise function in the top deck at the helm. It's one way of providing the driver room to stand up and see out the windows without having to slide down from the fly.

The one thing that is missing here is slide-down access to the deck



"It would be nice to have it standard on the 38-foot version, and an option on this one."

With the lower helm station well forward, it's just down the steps to the guest cabin in the bow and the third cabin with a double of Pullman bunks. The layout also provides for a big bathroom with a walk-in shower. The area is made to feel at the more spacious with its marble floor and mirrors set in the ceiling. The master stateroom gets the same treatment - it's a complete suite, almost normally found on a boat this size. The configuration near the master stateroom under the helm and galley, taking advantage of the full beam of the boat, if it also supports a large, with a walk-around bed that comes with side tables, a vanity table and a walk-in wardrobe.

The timber finish throughout the boat is superb, from the solid teak floor to the cabin fixtures. At the corners of the cabin in the master stateroom are curved - that's not a sharp corner anywhere. As Clark says, "we were very particular about the woodwork."

Another thing noticed was there were no silver bowls showing, not even on the dashboard or the cabinetry - they are all hidden. There's not a lot of silver anywhere either. "The days of vinyl in a boat of this caliber are gone," said Clark. "All the hardware is brass, and the upholstery is leather."

Upstairs on the flybridge under the hardtop is where most of the entertaining on a day out will go on with guests will be entertained. But before we get about that, as you walk up the new stairwell stairs, the first impression, when you step into the flybridge, are the very clean lines of the helm - they really hit you in the eye. They are reminiscent of the US-made Crown chairs that cost a fortune. These are built in China by J/Boat for about \$200 a piece and look the part. As to be expected, there is a big



OCEANBRIDGE SHIPPING



Specialist Worldwide
Shipping of Boats and
Marine Equipment

Support the only New Zealand owned freight company in NZ Marine

Contact Richard Thomas for a quote
Phone: +64 9 449 8073 Fax: +64 9 449 8071
Mobile: +64 21 928 081 Email: rich@oceanbridge.co.nz
www.oceanbridge.co.nz

