

Tradition meets Innovation



As more and more seafarers forsake the planing boat for the time-tested semi-displacement cruiser, Clipper Motor Yachts presents a yacht that marries the best of tradition with the latest technology

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photos: Clipper Motor Yachts

There is a new trend emerging on the water. It's a return to traditional pilothouse semi-displacement cruisers. But modern cruisers are not the sedate old ladies of yesteryear that putted along at 10 knots or less.

With the return of pilothouse cruisers comes some time-tested traditions. But the modern pilothouse offers something more than the ability to cruise economically in displacement mode all day; when called on, they can show a turn of speed almost as quick as many planing boats.

We are seeing a new era in boating. It's an era that has been brought on partly by the high price of fuel, partly by the desire to cruise comfortably at an economical speed without rushing around the ocean at 30 knots.

Clipper Motor Yachts are a classic example; they have been seen on Aussie waters for some 25 years. The traditional 34s were very popular in the '70s and '80s and were virtually a household name on Sydney Harbour and the cruising grounds of Pittwater and the Hawkesbury.

Now Clipper Motor Yachts has moved forward and developed six new models. Clipper Australia owns the designs and tooling but the vessels are built in three state-of-the-art shipyards in China.

There's an 86 footer and a 78 footer due next year and a 60 footer later this year. The newest of the fleet is an Europa 52, which arrived in time for the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show.

Traditionally this style of vessel was the domain of the 50-year-old-plus age bracket. That is all changing and younger couples around 35 to 40 years of age are seriously considering pilothouse vessels. So the Clipper Europa 52 is aimed squarely at this market.

The team at Clipper Motoryachts Australia are pretty proud of their new boat – and so they should be.

Step aboard the Europa 52 and immediately the stainless steel work on the three-stage sliding cabin door says that there is something special about this boat. The Clipper logo on the cockpit drain hole grates and the door kick plate start to set this boat apart.

Roll open the cabin door and there is a warm Burmese teak-finished saloon welcoming you with a contemporary lounge and two free-standing chairs. The



Traditional craftsmanship abounds



Classic timber cabinetry is well executed throughout the Europa 52

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whole of the main deck is open right through to the galley and helm station.

The layout is traditional and it soon becomes obvious that this boat has been built by craftsmen. There is not a sharp edge anywhere and self-tapping screws are nowhere to be found. All the mouldings around the edges of the furniture and the big picture window frames are plugged and in many cases it's hard to find the plugs, they are so well done. Even the light switches are mounted in teak boxes on the bulkheads.

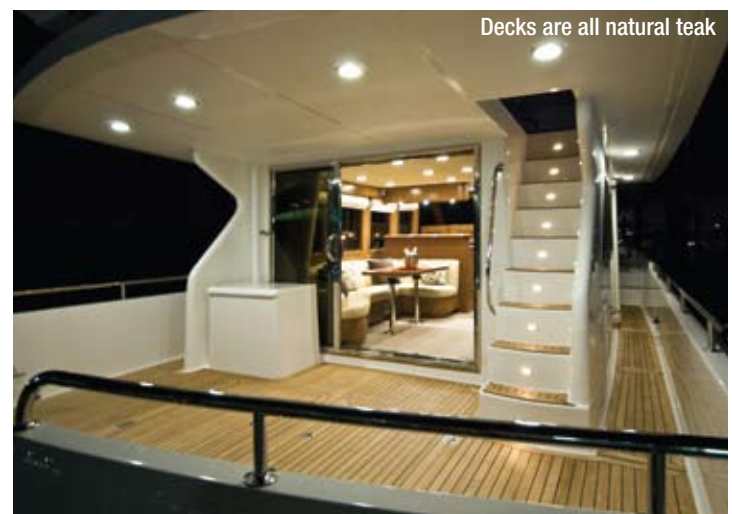
It's the same below in the accommodation. On many boats, the cabin doors are solid wood. This boat has proper doors with frames fixed together with tongue and groove joints and central grain-matched panels. A true sign that traditional craftsmen have been at work on this boat.

The galley is a yacht-style u-shape adjacent to the lower helmstation and is well set up with a granite top, a good size fridge and freezer, twin sinks, a microwave and a four-burner cooktop. There is plenty of storage space with overhead cupboards at the right height so that cooks don't bang their heads.

The wheel at the lower helm station is a work of art and has become Clipper's signature wheel. It would have taken a craftsman many hours to build it. The helm seat sits on a base that houses the switch panel and rolls forward so the driver can reach the helm. The console houses a Raymarine package, a C150 and a couple of C120s on the upper helm station are standard, along with an ST8001 autopilot and a 24-nautical-mile radar. And of course the Smartcraft engine monitoring package that comes with the Cummins QSBs.



Comfortable & roomy accommodation for a 52



Decks are all natural teak

The hull was designed by Canadian naval architect Trevor Bolt, who specialises in large motorsailers and deep sea trawlers. It's a very efficient hull and runs smoothly as the water clears down the sides – and there is no station wagon effect at the stern.

The top of the console is okay for someone sitting in the helm seat, where there is good all-round visibility, but for the average person standing at the helm it's a tad high. It will be lowered on the next boat.

The master cabin is fully lined with beautifully grained teak – and so is the ensuite. A feature of the ensuite is the hand-beaten stainless steel sink, big mirrors and a wooden yacht grate on the shower floor. A designer bedding package, cedar-lined wardrobes and insect screens on the hatch and portholes are also part of the deal.

There are two other cabins, one for the guests with a double berth and one with two Pullman bunks.

The access to the flybridge is by an outside staircase from the cockpit. The steps are the right distance apart for oldies to negotiate, you know, those with iffy hips and knees – like this writer.

The flybridge is a standard layout with lounge and table and an electric barbecue and sink. The welding on the stainless steel supports for the hardtop is masterful. It's the best I have ever seen on a boat and that includes many superyachts. Any visible screws up here are all square head instead of the usual Phillips head.

Some thought has been put into the hatch leading to the flybridge. Most boats have a hatch that lifts in one piece sideways. This can be a bit of a struggle in a seaway, so Clipper has installed a three-stage sliding hatch that makes it so much easier to open.

The craftsmanship hasn't stopped beneath the floorboards either. It is so easy for a manufacturer to take shortcuts in areas where he thinks the owner won't look. Not so Clipper. The workmanship has been carried right through the boat with the wiring and plumbing all neatly installed.

Entry to the engine room is via the lazette, which houses the washer/dryer, through a watertight door. The Cummins 425hp (313kW) QSBs – the standard engines in the 52 will be QSB 480hp (353kW) – sit on solid stainless steel beds and all the hoses, where it matters, are double-clamped.

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The boat has three fuel tanks with a total of 2,800 litres, which can be transferred through a manifold to balance the boat on a long trip.

Although not fitted, the boat is engineered to take stabilisers – one of the few options that are offered over and above the standard fittings.

For a boat that is so well built it must drive well too – it does. The hull was designed by Canadian naval architect Trevor Bolt, who specialises in large motorsailers and deep sea trawlers. It's a very efficient hull and runs smoothly as the water clears down the sides – and there is no station wagon effect at the stern.

The big plus is the boat's stability in a turn. It turns flat. Even when thrown into a 20-degree turn, it just sits there, flat, and doesn't tend to roll in. It will spin in its own length and backs up into a pen easily. Be gentle with the electronic controls though. It's a fair weight of boat at 20 tonnes and the engines spin big 24.8 x 30 inch props. If you get heavy-handed with the controls, the system will cry 'enough!' and shut the engines down, so no damage is done.

If an engine is lost, the boat will limp home on one at about 2,650rpm at 10 knots with a little bit of opposite helm on to keep it straight.

The Europa was happy running along at 9-10 knots where it was using between 25-30 litres an hour both sides. It was quiet too, the sound meter recorded only 62.3dBA at 8.0 knots and 72.1dBA at 16 knots. Even with



the smaller 425hp engines fitted, the boat had some grunt and on the day we recorded 19 knots at 3,030rpm.

This is a very friendly boat and it was so easy to set the autopilot and sit back and enjoy the environment. The Clipper Europa 52 is the next step up from the popular Clipper 40 and at a base price of \$1.1million, it is good value for the money considering it comes with equipment that is normally on the options list of most others in it's class.

For further information call +61 (0)7 3890 5000 or visit www.clippermotoryachts.com.au ○

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



16,45m	LENGTH OVERALL
15,84m	LENGTH WATERLINE
4,78m	BEAM
1,27m	DRAFT
20 tonnes	DISPLACEMENT
2,800L	FUEL CAPACITY
1200L	WATER CAPACITY
400L	HOLDING TANK CAPACITY
2 x Cummins QSB 480hp (360Kw)	STANDARD ENGINES
six	BERTHS
A\$1.1 million	BASE PRICE