

LEOPARD Powercat 53

review



Gangway ... here comes a real gamechanger – the all-new Leopard 53 Powercat

| story **JOHN DEVERS**

Next year, we will be well on the way to having a fifth of the 21st Century behind us. Scary thought, especially when we're starting to see how big data, AI and technology generally is changing the way we do things. Each year, new models of this, that or whatever sneak up on us, beckoning and beguiling in ways that have us techno-aversion sceptics yearn for a life less complex.

Then along comes something that demonstrates smart thinking, makes heaps of sense, looks brilliant and says, 'This is what you've been waiting for all along'.

With the appeal of a motor yacht and all the advantages of a highly evolved catamaran design, Leopard Catamarans has ushered in its next generation of powercats with the launch of their all new 53 Powercat. It succeeds the wildly successful 51PC and will arrive in Australian waters around May next year. A sneak peek reveals that the outstanding space, stability and efficiency offered across the Leopard catamaran range has been combined with new levels of comfort and luxury, creating an onboard ambiance of Euro refinement and style. And there's absolutely no compromise in performance. Indeed, speed, fuel efficiency and comfort on the water are set to take on the traditional fast motor yacht in ways not considered possible until now.

This completely new boat is designed to please existing Leopard owners while appealing to the more traditional motor yacht market. With its contemporary, re-imagined interior spaces, generous outdoor entertaining areas and engines now located aft of the cabins with access via large hatches located on the rear deck, the 53 Powercat makes a strong statement of visual and functional performance on multiple levels. Add in ease of operation and maintenance, along with up to 50% greater fuel efficiency than her monohull motor yacht counterparts, and the 53 Powercat is certain to win a dedicated army of new fans.

The design of this new boat maintains the traditional Leopard hull's narrow entry at the bows with big volume stepped hulls above the waterline resulting in incredible space down below, as well as unmatched range at cruising speed. With a maximum range in excess of 3,000km, no other type of motor yacht can compete on the speed, range, fuel efficiency equation. This boat

can reach a top speed of 25kts and cruise comfortably at 17.5kts. At this speed, it's best to tightly secure the chin straps on your hat!

The new layout is eminently practical and makes perfect sense. On the main level, retractable sliding glass doors lead from the aft cockpit to the galley making an appealing indoor/outdoor transition. The main saloon is set up with an L-shaped lounge to port and a two-person settee to starboard. Cruising pleasure is enhanced with the option of adding an interior navigation station. The flow is seamless with access to the foredeck via the forward saloon door. The 53

Powercat is offered in three or four cabin layouts, with the three-cabin owner's version providing a comfortable and spacious ambiance, especially with the large walk around bed, a walk-in closet and double vanity.

While the Leopard range of catamarans has been developed, tweaked and optimised over more than two decades to meet increasingly higher expectations, there's no doubt that the all-new 53 Powercat is exactly what this manufacturer and their parent company see as opening up a whole new world of possibilities when it comes to challenging the status quo. A gamechanger indeed!



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There are countless obstacles to the achievement of good design and this, quite simply explains its short supply. Good design is precious. It is the diamond in an often-mediocre experience. Design of real difference can enrich lives in unexpected ways. If we breathe more easily in a well-designed setting, it's because magical spaces possess qualities that heighten our sense of wellbeing.

Move around the external and interior spaces of Leopard's new 53 Powercat and you are instantly reminded that good design is alive and well. The possibilities of space, form, function and materials have been explored with a spirit that delivers a vessel of class and superiority. The overall impact of this boat gift wrapped with its high-quality GRP armour, set off with a stylish fashion plate of black Perspex with the ports located discreetly behind, present as a stunning, seductive and deceptively strong package.

Today's master designers would never attempt to divine a design without exhaustive research into client aspirations. There is an optimism when bold ideas are married with new possibilities and while the finishes on the 53 Powercat are fresh, elegant and inviting, they are anchored in tasteful and timeless appeal honed from the settings of sophisticated contemporary urban living. Succeeding the most popular powercat of all time, this new yacht possesses all the attributes that made her predecessor successful, while reimagining what

a powercat can be. Raising the bar, the Leopard 53 Powercat re-writes the standard for space and efficiency both inside and out, with a seamless flow from the interior to the exterior and aloft to the stunning and well-appointed flybridge.

INTERIOR

With cool tones of Silver Riftwood cabinetry, Alder Glow Staron worktops, Powdered Oak and synthetic sisal



flooring, a definite beach house vibe has been created, especially when combined with other finishes like the Koolhide Macadamia headboards and Sunbrella Carbon mattress covers. And of course, the external Flexiteek decking is a permanent reminder that you are always on the water.

A REINVENTED SALOON AND GALLEY

Look out at the open water with expansive panoramic windows. The flow is seamless with access to foredeck through the forward saloon door. Create your choice of atmosphere by electronically lowering or raising your TV.

The galley is outfitted with premium refrigerator/freezers, Staron® worktop surfaces, four-burner stove, microwave oven, sink and tapware, and there's ample amounts of storage. Using fine materials and uniform elements to tie it all together, Leopard has created the perfect blending of saloon and galley interior living space.

OUTSIDE

Outside, the 53 Powercat optimises all available exterior space with plenty of social zones. The heart of the boat is the flybridge. Accessed by staircase, the flybridge is covered by a fixed, solid hardtop. The flybridge provides a well-thought-out helm station with great visibility. Spacious seating and a large table allow for a great place to entertain family and friends and enjoy a meal with spectacular views.

The optional wet bar, grill, refrigeration, and storage, as well as an aft-facing sun pad with cushions enhance the space. The flybridge is the ideal spot to create magical moments on the water.

At main deck level, the large aft cockpit features a table and walk-around cockpit seating with multiple seating configurations.

It's time for you to discover cruising pleasure taken to a whole new level!



SPECIFICATIONS

Dimensions

LOA	16.19m
Beam	7.67m
Draft	0.97m
Bridgedeck Clearance	0.83m
Overall Height Above Waterline Including Nav Light Pole	8m

Engine

Engine	Yanmar 370hp x 2
Maximum Speed (in light ship conditions)	25kts
Cruising Speed (in light ship conditions)	17.5kts
Maximum Range Speed (in full load condition)	7.9kts
Maximum Range Speed (with one engine in full load condition)	6.8kts
Range at Max Speed	342nm
Range at Cruising Speed	463nm
Maximum Range with Both Engines	1330nm
Maximum Range with One Engine (in full load condition)	1995nm
Engine No. Cylinders	8
Fuel	2200 L

Extra Details

Water	700 L
Displacement	18,629kg
Load Carrying Capacity	13,512kg
Holding Tank Capacity	160 L

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THE SECRET BEHIND THIS NEW 53 POWERCAT'S ASTONISHING PERFORMANCE

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE HULL SHAPE

Respected naval architect Alex Simonis has been designing catamarans for more than 30 years and he is the design inspiration behind Robertson and Caine's very successful Leopard series. Here's what he had to say about what's at play in his perpetual quest for the perfect design. And why this new boat which builds on an extensive research and testing program presents as a serious performance challenger to the traditional fast motor yacht.

For motor yachts remaining in displacement mode, weight, wetted surface and wave resistance remain the key factors. Irrespective of how many hulls you consider, their performance will be more or less identical. However, if it is a fast craft not operating in displacement mode, then other factors come into play, and it is here where you will see a distinct difference in the behaviour of the vessel between fast monohulls and fast multihulls.

A monohull will move over its bow wave and start planing, thereby reducing wetted surface and wave resistance. It can do this because with its wide hull, it has sufficient planing area. Powercats haven't got anywhere close to sufficient planing area so remain in forced displacement mode. To have a slow enough resistance, they must rely on slender hulls so that wave resistance at high speeds remains small.

This brings us to the point of the trim of a power yacht. All yachts under power tend to trim by the stern. This happens because the bow wave lifts the front while the propeller

tends to pull the stern down. On a monohull, this is only momentary while it gets on the plane, after which it levels out. A monohull can also make use of its trim tabs to operate at the best running trim giving the least resistance for different load conditions. On a power catamaran, these options were not available.

So, our challenge was to work out how to design a hull shape which is less sensitive to trim over a range of loading conditions at different speeds. We wanted to find the perfect balance between the trim generated by the bow wave and the downward force of the propellers to be counteracted by a dynamic lifting force in the stern generated out of a specific tunnel design to partly house the propellers. The tunnel design on the 53 Powercat works to keep the boat level over

a range of speeds and conditions. The idea sounds simple enough and propellers in tunnels have been used for decades to improve propeller efficiency. But the idea to use the tunnels to reduce trim is far less common and may even be unique.

To get this right, we started an extensive Computational Fluid Dynamics program with NUMECA in Germany and tested study results over a period of six months. The program allowed us to look at trim angles and associated power requirements to drive the yacht. In applying these design principles to 51 Powercat, we were able to prove the concept worked and now we see the new 53 Powercat with its low running trim kept under control in all conditions. The resulting speed and fuel efficiency dividends can be as high as 22% when compared to vessels with similar Power to Weight ratios.

What does all this mean for the owner? It's best summed up by the designer's philosophy which in simple terms means easily achieving around 200nm a day cruising in safety, comfort and style so a family can anchor up in a new location with enough of the day left to raise a glass of bubbles, enjoy a sunset and take in their new surroundings!



Alex Simonis.



SEA PERFECTION

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