



PHOTOS ALLAN WHITING; ANDREA FRANCOLINI

SIMPLY, THE BEST

Nowhere — anywhere in the boating world you look — does it get any better than this, **ALLAN WHITING** reckons. Australian-designed and Australian-built, the new Buizen 52 is a true mini-superyacht that would be as much at home in Monaco as in Sydney's Pittwater

At an ask over two million well-fed Aussie dollars the Buizen 52 isn't for everyone, but its builders didn't ever intend it to be. The Terrey Hills (Sydney) factory can produce, at most, two hand-built masterpieces per year, so a long order queue would be an embarrassment. The plus side of this rarity is the value of owning an exclusive — like having a genuine Rodin.

My intro to the brand-new Buizen 52 was at Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club in Newport, Sydney.

Buizen's director Steve Howe told me I wouldn't have any trouble finding the boat and he was spot-on. Moored stern-to, with its folding swimplatform/garage door open, the new creation was eye-popping. No-one — not even the scurrying crew and skippers heading out for Wednesday afternoon gentlemen's racing — walked past without stopping and gazing, open mouthed, at the burnt-orange Buizen. No less a yachting personage than Bob Oatley was seen admiring the glistening new craft.

The Buizen 52 may only be slightly

more than a metre longer than the successful 48, but it's in a different league. Where the 48 is a boat with a large pilothouse and smallish cockpit the 52 has a large pilothouse and a huge cockpit. Both boats can handle global cruising, but the 52 can also be an entertainer.

NOTHING BUT THE BEST
Ascend the standard ladder and step through one of the boarding gates onto the Buizen's ample sidedeck and you enter a world where quality rules. Every fitting, every surface, and every joint is

NO LESS A YACHTING PERSONAGE THAN BOB OATLEY WAS SEEN ADMIRING THE GLISTENING NEW CRAFT



At the wheel of Australia's new dream yacht (above) Buizen 52. An inlaid teak table (left) takes pride of place in the cockpit and neatly folds up and drops down into the framework for double handrail support.

lowers hydraulically, with access via a stainless steel ladder that doubles as a transom rail gate. Alternative access to the platform is via

being slimmed in future production boats to improve headroom.

The saloon features a U-shaped dinette with coffee table to port and a settee to starboard, but the table can be raised, opened and swivelled to convert it into a dining table, effectively connecting port and starboard seating around the table. There's a 360-degree view from the table, thanks to the glazed cockpit connection, large saloon windows and windscreens.

Buizens are noted for pilothouse steering and the 52's steering station is to starboard, complete with armrest chair, duplicated engine controls and instruments and chartplotter display. A large windscreens wiper blade keeps this section of the front glass water-free.

Storage cupboards and under-lounge bins are provided, but 'blind' cupboard door catches help preserve a smooth, uninterrupted wood finish. Naturally, a large-screen TV powers up when required from its cupboard home.

Two steps with integrated storage drawers, lead from the saloon, down to a two-part galley/servery. This area occupies most of the available boat beam and is split into a starboard section,

worked to the highest standard. There are virtually no options — almost everything we saw on the fully equipped test boat is standard, including fully laid teak decking, dodger, bimini and zip-on infill panel.

The cockpit is dominated by a polished, folding teak table that disappears inside a double pedestal structure with full handrail. The table and pedestal are cruising-tough, in contrast to the flimsy folding table arrangements on many modern boats.

It's an easy walk aft to twin steering wheels and binnacles, where pushpit thwarts raise the seating capacity to 10. The binnacles are carbon fibre-faced works of art, housing many duplicated functions, including the power winch and engine controls.

The transom door/swimplatform

the garage, thorough a huge cockpit hatch.

At the forward end of the cockpit is a footwell between two mouldings with teak tops that make excellent under-dodger storage or serving spaces. The companionway is sealed by a glass-panelled door, with folding glass top section and flanked by two opening windows. With the glazed doors opened there's a two-step walkthrough between saloon and cockpit, and it's very easy for the cook and barman to put items on the serving surfaces, without having to enter the cockpit: an ideal entertaining layout.

However, there's inevitable compromise when a sleek coach house is set atop a high saloon floor, so head height is restricted in the walkway. The test boat had a deep ceiling beam under the mainsheet traveller, but the beam section is



[AT THE HELM]

The Buizen 52 has a solid helm feel and holds direction under power or sail. Remote power control of anchor windlass and thruster makes mooring and manoeuvring easy.

Most sail handling can be done remotely from the helm, and power winches with remote binnacle-mounted buttons allow one-person control of most functions.

Vision through the pilothouse screen or from the twin cockpit wheels, through the dodger clears, is excellent.

with sink, Corian benchtop and cupboards, U-shaped benchtop, full-size fridge and gimballed electric microwave/convection oven and a ceramic cooktop. This area is also home to a washer-dryer and a dishwasher while natural light streams in through the coach house windscreens.

Buizens are noted for pilothouse steering and the 52's is to starboard with wiper blade (above). The 160hp Yanmar turbodiesel (above right) also produces power for the house batteries.

Forward of the galley is the owner's cabin, with a separate shower and toilet behind a sliding door. The cabin has an integrated desk with pouffe seating.

Two aft cabins, each with identical shower/head modules, are accessed via semi-spiral stairways from the saloon. The standard layout is for one to have a double bed and the other two singles, but optional configurations, including an office module instead of beds, are available.

The ambience below decks is homelike rather than overtly nautical and the fit and finish is as good as it gets. American oak panelling and floorboards dominate, with skirtings and architraves highlighted by the use of contrasting African rosewood.



There are obviously cheaper timber alternatives, but they were never considered!

Door catches are either 'blind', recessed types, or small stainless steel units that work with little effort. Practical stuff like circuit breakers, plumbing and mechanical necessities are all concealed behind easily-opened, tight-fitting access panels that deny the entry of smells and noise into the interior. There are none of the floor and panel creaks common in production boats.

Air-conditioning via four separate water-cooled, reverse-cycle units is standard and the air outlets and returns are beautifully integrated into the joinery, making them difficult to spot.

NITTY GRITTY

The Buizen 52's interior feels isolated from the dynamics necessary to make a boat function simply because the boat is so well made: it's heavily built to ISO 12215 standards, to absorb sailing and mechanical stress and vibration without disturbing the structure.

Hull construction employs vacuum-infused vinylester resins with multi e-glass biaxial and Kevlar laminates, and end-grain balsa coring above the waterline. The deck is Divinycell foam core with handlaid multi biaxial e-glass laminates.



[HIGHS]

- First-class quality fit and finish
- Extensive standard equipment list
- Flexible aft-cabins layout
- Airy, spacious cabins and saloon
- Easy sail and boat handling
- Allround bulwark
- Central light control panel

[LOWS]

- Headroom at pilothouse entrance



Superb joinery mixes with deep windows and minimalist furniture in the saloon (top left), where two steps lead down to the two-part galley/servery (top right). Forward of the galley is owner's cabin (above). It's en suite head and shower (right) behind a sliding door.

All Buizen 52s are finished with Awlgrip 2000 epoxy paint for a flawless finish. The standard colour is white, but the test boat was a stunning burnt orange that turned the heads of passing sailors on Pittwater. The deck and coach house finish is gelcoat and the test boat deviates from standard white, with a cream that contrasts perfectly with the hull colour.

The standard keel-stepped, triple-spreader mast and boom are aluminium extrusions, but carbon is an option. The test boat's spars were finished in black gloss that aped carbon, while boat No.2 has been ordered with the genuine carbon option. Rigging on the test boat was Dyform wire. A hydraulic backstay ram is standard.

Standard kit includes an NZ-made Leisure Furl mainsail furling and reefing boom, with electro-hydraulic control and manual roller backup.

The test boat's boom is formed in aluminium but carbon is an option. An LED cockpit light is integrated into the underside of the boom.

Although the mechanicals, electricals and plumbing are well muffled and hidden, there are obviously plenty of them given the comprehensive equipment list. We started our check in the engineroom accessed through two large lift-up floor hatches in the saloon.

A cabbage-sized turbocharger helps the 3.5lt Yanmar pump out 160hp — 124hp continuous — and in the Buizen 52 it runs a 140amp 24V alternator for house-battery charging and an 80amp 12V alternator for the engine and generator starting battery. Also in the engine bay is an Onan 9.5kVA generator.

The prop shaft is easily accessible and regular service items are well laid out: the overall impression is

that of a small-ship's engineroom.

In another mechanical space, between the aft cabins, is room for a watermaker and access to the engine exhaust and pong box.

The electrical system is divided among digitally-switched sub-boards throughout the boat; all accessed via blind-catch cupboards.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

A turbocharger improves diesel engine efficiency and fuel consumption, and also reduces noise. The Buizen 52's Yanmar is almost inaudible at idle and in the normal operating range. The Max Power retractable bowthruster makes its presence felt, but is not as loud as most.

The Buizen 52 comes standard

with a Gori 'overdrive' folding propeller that effectively gives the boat a low-rev cruising mode to improve fuel economy and reduce engine noise. After manoeuvring the big craft out of its tight berth using bowthruster and full prop 'bite', it was a simple transfer into overdrive, by going astern briefly to alter prop pitch and then steaming

ahead once more. We didn't run the brand-new engine near WOT, yet saw 8.4 effortless knots on the SOG readout. More is obviously available.

Making sail was done remotely, once furling lines and halyards were loaded onto the appropriate powered Harken winches. Buttons on the steering binnacles allowed the helmsperson to control pretty

[THE DESIGN TEAM SPEAKS OUT]

"The new Buizen 52 reflects modern thinking, having good freeboard, an upright stem to increase waterline length and a broad transom for spaciousness, both above and below," says Will Hardcastle from Peter Lowe Design naval architects.

"Particular attention has been paid to keeping the sailing lines well balanced, producing a boat that is a delight to steer both upwind and down."

"Buizen has taken advantage of the latest construction techniques and the result is a hull that is stronger, lighter and stiffer."

"Extensive use of a newly-installed computer-controlled router table has enabled a magnificent interior and optimised many 'behind the scenes' components."

"We would like to congratulate Steve and his team at Buizen for producing a striking, world class yacht. Few boats can stand inspection so closely as does the new 52," Hardcastle said.

"Given the reputation and pedigree of Buizen Yachts, the brief to design the deck, superstructure and interior of the new 52 was an exciting project," said Anthony Starr Design.

"We had to create a modern, world-class cruising yacht that would be easily recognisable as a Buizen; retain the raised pilothouse design of the famous 48; maintain the structural integrity, functionality and sea-kindliness synonymous with a Buizen; and to have a modern, stylish interior that retained classic, bespoke, handmade appeal."

"I think our input, coupled with the legendary craftsmanship and attention to detail for which Buizen Yachts are famous, has produced a truly world-class Australian-made yacht that offers its owners all the comfort and luxury expected by today's discerning cruising yacht-people," the design firm continued.

much everything remotely.

The helm feel from either wheel station or in the pilothouse was heavy but stable, making the linkage ideal for cruising, where the helmsperson isn't looking to make tiny race-adjustments all the time.

The Buizen 52 comes standard with a Hood self-tacking jib and fully-battened mainsail. Mid-boom sheeting with mainsheet led under the deck to aft winches, keeps rope tails out of the cockpit, and on the test boat they were due to be further tidied by a pair of rope bags.

With only 130m² of easily-handled sail area and a displacement around 21 tonnes the Buizen 52 is never going to be an around-the-cans flyer, nor is it intended to be. However, in 10 to 12kts of easterly breeze it hovered around the 5.5- to 6-knot mark when on the wind and climbed over 6kts with sheets eased. A reaching sail with snuffer would be a good investment for passagemakers, we think.

Shortening or furling sails could hardly have been easier and the roller-boom system worked much better in all respects than in-mast furling. It also meant that the main had a decent shape, without the bed-sheet flatness necessary to make in-mast furling work well.

The only jarring note in the yacht's stately progress was the noise from the autopilot servos. The system

Transom flips down (below) for garage access, and as a swimplatform with two-step ladder to the cockpit.



The Buizen 52, the cream of cruising yachts. Colour lights the way from stern to stem in a subtle but brilliant lighting display (below).



tradeaboard SAYS...]

Buizen yachts have established an enviable reputation for quality and cruising ability, and this situation can only be enhanced by the arrival of the new 52 model. The 48's cruising credentials haven't been compromised, but the 52's larger pilothouse and cockpit expands the marque's appeal to those who simply want the best.



worked accurately, but the sound intruded.

As said, it doesn't get any better than this. The Buizen 52 proves that Australian design, construction and craftsmanship can match anything available around the globe. It's a product of which this nation can be proud. ☺

Facts & figures

BUIZEN 52

PRICE AS TESTED

\$2,211,000

OPTIONS FITTED:

4kW Raymarine radar and sat dome TV reception

PRICED FROM

\$2,195,000

GENERAL

MATERIAL: Vinylester balsa sandwich hull and Divinycell-cored deck. Hull solid laminate below waterline.

TYPE: Keelboat

LENGTH OVERALL: 15.85m

WATERLINE LENGTH: 14.2m

BEAM: 4.76m

DRAFT: 2.2m

WEIGHT: 20,800kg

BALLAST: 6000kg (lead bulb)

CAPACITIES

BERTHS: Three doubles (other aft-cabin layouts optional)

FUEL: 1380lt (two tanks)

WATER: 785lt (two tanks plus standard watermaker)

WATER HEATER: 40lt

SAILS

MAINSAIL: 74.5m²

HEADSAIL: 53.6m² (self-tacking)

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL: Yanmar 4LHA

TYPE: Turbo-diesel

RATED HP: 160

PROP: Folding three-blade 'overdrive' pitch

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LAYOUT

