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AS HUNT YACHTS GROWS ITS VAUNTED OCEAN SERIES TO 80 FEET, IT STAYS TRUE TO THE CUSTOM PROMISE AT ITS HEART.
BY CAPT. RICHARD THIEL



The first thing you notice when you step into the saloon of the Hunt 80 is the woodwork. It's beautiful, but then that's no big surprise since this yacht was built in Taiwan, a country famous for producing finely crafted and flawlessly finished yacht joinery. But walk in a little farther and you'll begin to notice some unusually fine details, especially the elegantly curved stairway to starboard, leading up to the pilothouse. You can't help but be impressed, not only by its sensuous curves, gleaming finish, and superb craftsmanship, but also by how solid and sturdy it is when you step on it.

But that staircase is something of an illusion—it's not the solid wood structure it appears to be. Each of its elegant turned balusters has been cut in half so that it can enclose a steel rod that provides the necessary rigidity to the structure. Look very closely at each baluster and you'll see—nothing. Each has been reassembled around its rod with such care that no seam is visible. A small detail? Perhaps, but one that perfectly exemplifies the blending of aesthetics and engineering aboard this vessel. Indeed, as the photos here indicate, the glossy teak interior imparts the feeling of a very traditional yacht, but beneath all of that is structure and substance that are undeniably modern.

The 80 is the latest product of a collaboration between the Taiwanese shipyard Global Yacht Builders and Hunt Yachts. The collaboration's first vessel launched in 2008 and was dubbed the Global Arrow 68. (The name combined "Global," representing the shipyard, and "Arrow," referring to the Hunt Yachts logo.) The idea was that Hunt would supply proven hull designs and engineering through its partnership with C. Raymond Hunt and Associates, while Global would provide its renowned construction expertise.

After that launch the project morphed into the Hunt Ocean Series, five vessels ranging from 44 to (now) 80 feet, all benefiting from the same unique synergy. Regardless of size, each of these vessels has been designed to provide an owner with a mere starting point from which he or she can create a truly personalized yacht.

The 68 amply displayed the advantages of this marriage. Global's construction regimen includes a combination of foam core laminates and vacuum-bagging, in the deck, in the hull (both above and below the waterline), and in the bulkheads. The result was a solid vessel with a listed weight of 120,000 pounds (light ship). Hunt contributed the hullform, which combined a moderate beam (19 feet 6 inches) with a proprietary modified deep-V shape, plus the major engineering for the superstructure. The addition of 1,550-horsepower Caterpillar C32s to the mix reportedly produced a top speed of 31 knots.

Being custom yachts, the 68 and 80 allow most anything short of structural components to be adjusted to suit each owner's preference. Both vessels use basically the same hullform, but naturally have different superstructures: The 68 is an express with a large hardtop over the bridge, while the 80 has an enclosed pilothouse. Obviously the 80 is longer, something that is explained by a much more fundamental difference between the pair: While the 68 is powered by conventional Caterpillar inboards, the 80 uses a pair of 1,600-horsepower



MTU 10V2000M94s driving Hamilton waterjets; some 6 feet of that extra LOA is dedicated to covering them. (The MTUs sit well forward of the stern of the boat, beneath the cockpit dining table.)

Although the 80's owner prefers to remain anonymous, we can safely surmise that there were two reasons he chose this propulsion package. The first is reduced draft. Where the 68 draws just under 5 feet 6 inches, the 80 requires but 4 feet—this on a yacht that will weigh a good deal more, especially when she's loaded up with all 2,150 gallons of fuel.

The second reason was no doubt speed. Because the 80 was undergoing a final fitting out when I was aboard, I wasn't able to sea trial her. But project manager Bob Riemans supplied me with the results from MTU's Sea Acceptance Test, which was conducted in Kaohsiung Harbor before the yacht shipped to Ft. Lauderdale. The full results, which are reproduced below, indicate a top speed of 29.5 knots. That this is a bit shy of the 68's reported top speed isn't surprising given the 80's added weight and the fact that her sea trial was conducted with no fewer than 14 people aboard.