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# THE POWER OF **positive** **thinking**

Maritimo is invigorating the boating market with new dealerships and clever new boats. DAVID LOCKWOOD thrills to its two new 55s — the cruisy Aegean with flybridge, and the slick Sports Cabriolet entertainer

**W**hile the cruiser market continues to shift towards single-level entertaining boats with model designations such as sports cabriolet or sport yacht, there's no questioning the value of a flybridge with upper helm station for gaining the best possible views of the road ahead. A bird's eye perspective is a boon to safe navigation and enjoying the scenery whether you are offshore amid the wind and waves or on a big-city waterway beset by flailing kayakers and drifting dinghies dead ahead.

This fact isn't lost on Maritimo, who now holds the mantle as Australia's most progressive boatbuilder during what are challenging times for the industry. Far from resting on its laurels, Maritimo has invested heavily in R&D and embarked on a concerted and calculated effort to re-invigorate the market with new boats. The bold move is already paying handsome dividends, with sales of new boats to new





**"THE STATEROOM IS THE CLINCHER. THINK OF IT AS A PRIVATE SUITE"**

customers here and abroad at a time when the second-hand boat market has never looked more appealing.

Not that Maritimo is putting all its eggs in one basket, mind you.

The Gold Coast yard is having an each-way bet in the luxury powerboat market by appealing to those who like to entertain on a single-level boat and those who also enjoy cruising from the crows nest or flybridge in the heavens. This two-tiered approach is no more ably reflected than with its new 55, a smart boat that loses just a sliver of space in the cockpit and saloon, and has one less bunk than the company's big 60.

Much to our delight, *Trade-a-Boat* experienced both 55s. We tested the single-level Sports Cabriolet (C55 hull #2) on the shimmering waterways of the Gold Coast and then the new Aegean (A55 #1) with flybridge via the new Maritimo dealership at The Spit on Sydney Harbour.

But for the extended flybridge and ladder, both boats are the same and, for this reason, the photographs of the lower decks, cockpit, saloon and accommodation accompanying this double test may well reveal a mix of shots from the two differently furnished but otherwise virtually identical boats.

**Top: Step down to the bed of the spectacular stateroom. Above right: Minimal effort is required to climb a ladder to the bridge on the A55 and it's well worthwhile.**



At which point, I should add that Maritimo has really cranked up the interior "wow" factor in its boats. The worldly finish has been designed to woo discerning local cruising buffs and those considering competing foreign marques on both local and world stages. To this end, Maritimo has embraced the Euro theme from keel to cap, adding its own spin and polish to create what it says is a better, farther ranging and more suitable boat for Australian conditions. The best of both worlds or, rather, hemispheres.

Of course, Bill Barry-Cotter, founder of Maritimo, isn't one to let his competition stray from his sights. He noted the gravitation towards Euro-style cruisers and set about designing and building a better boat that undercuts those imports on price. There's also some very

clever packaging going on, with some Maritimos intentionally pared down to make them even more attractive in the current market.

The pro-active approach to boat manufacturing and marketing is now paying handsome dividends at boat shows. Further, as the company expands its national dealerships and opens new showrooms while others contract, buyers are becoming more comfortable about buying a new boat. We're told the latest Maritimo dealership at The Spit in Sydney got off to a flying start, with deliberating skippers jumping aboard.

**HULL OF A TIME**

There are numerous other things Maritimo does extremely well, and efficiency is at the forefront of its hull



**HIGHS**

- Highly efficient hull
- Time-proven engineering
- Seaworthiness for serious coastal cruising
- Great design, utility and practicality
- Nautical style, comfort and space
- Big views from all quarters
- Optional well-priced flybridge on Aegean
- Established Australian marque invigorating the market
- National support network

**LOWS**

- No internal water gauge
- No insect screens on hatches in heads
- No internal dual helm seats for cruising couples
- Windscreen rail on A55 hampers view
- A55 needs mast for mounting the radar
- Could do with more storage in bridge of A55

design. Both C55 and A55 we drove had a pair of Cummins' finest diesel engines — the time-proven QSM11 common rail 670hp electronic motors, which are relatively modest grunt for a boat that weighs 25,000kg (dry) as a Sports Cabriolet and puts on an extra 400kg in Aegean guise with lid and ladder.

With the Cummins QSM11s, the C55 is a 30-knot boat, which is plenty fast enough for pleasure cruising on local waters. The A55 loses only half a knot. Standard power is a pair of Caterpillar 715hp C12s, although buyers can upgrade to Volvo D12s putting out 775hp. Funny thing is, due to the exchange rate, there was a \$14,000 credit for the bigger Volvo Penta engines at the time of writing. Expect a lot more of the Swedish donks in Maritimos in future.

Efficiency gets back to the shallow shaft angles of just nine degrees and the variable deadrise hull, which has a pretty flat run aft, and is built with a solid GRP

**Above left: Three-way glass salon doors integrate the cockpit with the saloon. Below: The C55 had a top speed speed of 30kts on test day.**

bottom and cored sides. The boats lifts bodily from the water without bogging down in the tail and holds wonderfully low cruising and planing speeds with a naturally level attitude.

Plenty of focus has fallen on the running gear and reducing drag, with Maritimo bringing the casting of its five-blade bronze props in-house this year.

The integral GRP fuel tanks are amidships where they have minimal effect on trim, while the water tanks are back aft. And between the 3600lt of fuel and 800lt of water, which is likely to be a bottomless supply after owners tick the box for optional watermaker, you can liveaboard the Maritimo 55. But seeing the way more and more people use their boats, that is, only gadding about local waterways on weekends, it might be a year between fills.

Engineering is another thing that always impresses with Maritimos.

Since the inaugural model, a 60, I tested in 2004, the boats have proven themselves on the wide blue yonder. Coincidentally, there was a Maritimo 60 on its way through the new Spit dealership during my test of the A55. Its owners had come from Townsville





Left: Starboardside cabin has a bunk atop a washer/dryer and storage. Below: When elevation matters the A55 takes the C55 to the next level.

there's the requisite ladder and hot/cold shower, but it's the garage that makes getting ashore a breeze. An electric actuator raises the roof and reveals room for a 3.0m RIB with 15hp outboard, we're told.

As with all good Australian-made boats, cockpit space isn't in short supply. Outdoor seating comes via a low-profile U-shaped lounge around a teak table. Add lose chairs and an awning and you can cater for eight for lunch. Or convert the

the saloon. There is ample bench space and amenities range from four-burner cooktop and combination microwave oven to fridge, dishwasher and deep sink with separate filtered drinking water.

Amtico flooring adds to the utility of the galley before giving way to carpet that runs through to the main saloon with dinette to port that can seat six and a U-shaped seating area opposite that can take four people. Deep picture windows frame the views, a flatscreen TV folds out of a cabinet, and there's an electric sunroof with shade screen, plus surrounding curtains for privacy. What's more, you don't have to abandon the crew to drive.

**"THERE ARE NUMEROUS OTHER THINGS MARITIMO DOES EXTREMELY WELL, AND EFFICIENCY IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF ITS HULL DESIGN"**

and were heading for Tassie. Many other Maritimos are running north and south along the eastern seaboard, and there are more and more musters being organised, with the latest plan to cruise to Tasmania in company. At least one other owner jumped aboard his boat at the Gold Coast factory and promptly cruised around Cape York to Perth via the Kimberley.

Besides abundant servicing room and virtual standing room in the fully lined engine room, there is plenty of good gear: Racor fuel filters and sight gauge for the fuel tank; a 2kW inverter/charger; maintenance-free battery banks; and stainless steel sea strainers. The Cruisair air-con units are the latest self-contained models spread throughout the boat, which use a common saltwater pump shared by the eutectic refrigeration as well. The 17.5kW Onan generator is back aft and there is, of course, room for a desalinator.

It didn't escape me that the engine air intakes were mounted inboard in the cockpit, where there was no evidence of sucked-back spray after cruising offshore, and that the membranes for same are washable. A bowthruster with handheld remote comes standard with the 55, while lots of glass and side opening windows around the lower helm station — not to mention big views from up top on the Aegean flybridge — help with docking.

Compared with the big 60, the 55 is more an owner/driver-friendly boat and yes, it will be easier to snag a berth at the marina. Both 55s tested also had a sternthruster, while the A55 had a second set of cockpit controls for shorthanded docking, plus more than \$40,000 worth of Simrad electronics, and an upgraded AV system with Bose and more.

**TICKING BOXES**

But it's also about what comes standard on these boats that counts for plenty. The Maritimo 55s tick a lot of boxes. The boarding platform is a decent depth,

seating to an aft sunpad for post-lunch zeds. Such are the options.

The in-transom amenities centre includes freezer, sink and BBQ option, with storage below. There is also scope for an icemaker/fridge in the cockpit. Signature wide sidedecks lead to the bow where both boats had optional upholstered sunpads. The anchoring setup centres on a twin-capstan Muir windlass, 60m of 10mm chain, and a heavy-duty, self-stow stainless steel 30kg anchor. Open-ocean roadsteads are among the places you will find Maritimos.

Three-way glass saloon doors bring the outdoors back indoors and vice versa. The light and bright saloon has an aft galley for those who like to entertain and feed a crowd in the cockpit or forward in

**SLEEPING BEAUTY**

The C55 and A55 are both four-cabin and two-head boats. The VIP guest's cabin in the bow has an island berth with innerspring mattress, leather bedhead, nice big escape hatch with insect and shade screen, hanging locker and drawers, and portlights (in all cabins) so you can check the weather at daybreak.

To port is an adult-sized single berth (bunks are an option) and half-height hanging space in what amounts to a private but, upon testing the bed, pleasant second cabin. The third cabin to starboard has a bunk (options for two bunks) and provision for a washer/dryer, while the communal head doubles as the VIP en



Top: The 55s have a lift-up transom RIB garage. Above, left to right: At the wheel of the A55s bridge helm; Heads have an overhead hatch for natural light and ventilation; Engine room is fully lined. Below: Saloon helm and galley.



suite and is graced with a big shower, sink and switchable fresh/saltwater Tecma head. The 300lt holding tank will cater for a crowd for a weekend.

The stateroom is the clincher. I've lost count of the number of times I've heard a prospective buyer at a show or in subsequent discussion declare that the full-beam stateroom is what swayed their partners towards a Maritimo.

You step down to the athwartships queen bed, surrounded by a spread of storage amenities, opposite a walk-in wardrobe and separate private bathroom. Think of it as a private suite. And being away from the chines means you should sleep soundly.

**STATION TO STATION**

The lower helm is common to both 55s and I'm betting it's where most of the driving takes place during entertaining mode. Here you can cruise, share the views, tuck into something from the nearby



galley, and luxuriate on lounges and leather helm chair (to be made in-house soon). Dual helm seats might be a nice option.

Along with dual thrusters, there were electronic Cummins Quickshift boxes, twin VesselView engine and data screens, and twin Northstar 8000i screens on the C55, with a spread of Simrad screens on the A55. An autopilot is at call for offshore passages. Although you climb a ladder on the A55, it's worth the minimal effort, especially if you are partial to cruising the coast.

The low-profile flybridge looks the goods, has a U-shaped lounge set around a table for at least four guests, up to six at rest, plus there's another lounge opposite for a couple. A central bucket seat fronts the curvaceous helm console or pod.

Storage space is limited — I would like to see somewhere for lifejackets, flare and EPIRB at least — and a fridge option would be nice. The aft decks behind the seating could also be fitted with an upholstered cushion to create a sunpad. Hey, but as this was the first A55 to hit the water, and boatbuilders always fine tune their craft over time, I'm betting such things will be offered or included in future.

The rail tracing the windscreen should be dropped in favour of smaller fixing points for the canopy tensioning wires. And I'm hoping Maritimo creates a mast for the radar dome to get those microwaves above head height. These are easy fixes. Add the latest suction pad drinkholders and you're done.

## SPORTY SPICE

The vibe on the A55 is definitely sporty. Slip behind the wheel, hit the new keyless ignition, tweak the thruster controls, advance the electronic shifts and rip the boat around with the race-bred steering. The A55 wasn't too far behind the company's agile 60-footer in respect of handling and I'm guessing it will be tweaked some more.

From a standing start, touch of tab on, the boat is eager, shooting to cruising speeds while remaining delightfully quiet and smoke free. The C55 averaged about 30kts top speed on the Gold Coast passages and, to reinstate, the A55 with lid was only 0.5kts behind.

With 1000lt fuel and half water, high-speed cruise of around 2100rpm returns 26 to 27kts on the C55 and 25kts on the A55 for 180 to 190lt/h at 77 per cent engine load. But reel back and a slippery speed of, say, 22.5kts at 1900rpm is clocked for 140lt/h at 63 per cent load. That's loping along. And, leaving 10 per cent fuel in reserve, this setting will give more than 500nm range. In displacement speed, you can more than double that, of course.

Ease the throttles some more and at 1720rpm and 53 per cent engine load you are cruising at 20kts for just 108lt/h. Now that's efficiency. Heavy-weather cruise of 15 to 16kts at 1470rpm costs 75lt/h. And if it's wet weather, head to the lower helm and call on the wipers and radar.

Considering the windage on the Aegean with flybridge is minimal, the loss of performance negligible, and the cost about \$50,000 over the C55 sister ship, it edges ahead in my eyes. You still get your Cabriolet entertainer but with the option of heading up top when the mood strikes. And at sea, elevation is everything. Either way, the 55s are a lot of boat for your buck.

High-waisted and high-volume, agile and exciting, long range and liveaboard yet svelte and sporty. The experienced folk at Maritimo have invested in the future while others are trimming sails and sales. The 55s embody the power of positive thinking and are the next step from our triumphant marque.

Top: As with all Australian-made boats, cockpit space isn't in short supply. This photo: With a flybridge, the A55 spans the best of both worlds.



## MARITIMO AEGEAN 55 & SPORTS CABRIOLET 55

### PRICE AS TESTED

A55 #1 was selling for about \$1.74 million w/ options; C55 cost \$1,665,278 w/ options.

### OPTIONS FITTED

A55 had engine upgrade to twin QSM11s and 17.5kW Onan genset, Simrad electronics package, and more. C55 had engine upgrade to twin QSM11s and 17.5kW Onan genset, Northstar electronics, and more.

### PRICED FROM

A55 \$1,515,280 w/ 775hp Volvo Penta D12s; C55 from \$1,465,402 million w/ 775hp Volvo Penta D12s

### GENERAL

Material: ..... GRP fibreglass w/ cored decks, superstructure and hull sides

Type: ...Hard chine planing hull w/ tunnels and underwater exhausts

Length overall: ..... 17.3m

Beam: ..... 5.30m

Draft: ..... 1.4m (max)

Deadrise: ..... n/a

Weight: ..... Approx 25,000kg (dry w/ standard engines) plus about 400kg for bridge on Aegean

### CAPACITIES

Berths: ..... 8+1

Fuel: ..... 3600lt

Water: ..... 800lt

Holding tank: ..... 3000lt

### ENGINE

Make/model: .. Cummins QSM11s

Type: ..... Six-cylinder common rail electronic diesel engine w/ twin turbocharging and aftercooling

Rated HP: ..... 670 at 2300rpm

Displacement: ..... 11lt

Weight: ..... Approx 1188kg

Gearboxes (Make): ..... ZF

Props: ..... Five-blade bronze

### SUPPLIED BY

C55 from Maritimo Offshore, Lot 6 John Lund Drive, Hope Island, Qld, 4212  
Phone: (07) 5530 1477  
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