

# The Future ... Right Now



At the upper end of the cost equation for the 2021 Boat of the Year contestants, there were three boats with a price tag north of seven figures, which in our viewpoint puts them into Luxury Cruiser territory. The Southerly 480 was the outlier of the three—very cool and versatile, but with older if proven technology—which steered us into a lively discussion of the merits of two truly state-of-the-art sailboats, the HH 50 and the Hylas 60. So the question was, how do you choose between excellent and exquisite?

The similarities, apart from their rarified sticker prices, were rather striking. Both built in the Far East. Both with similar Boat of the

Year pedigrees, having each notched victories in previous contests. Both marketed similarly. Both with strong support systems for buyers, including the services of pro sailors who guide you through the first days of ownership. When you buy either a Hylas or an HH, you're also buying into a quite exclusive family.

Of course, there's also a huge difference. One boat has a single hull, the other a pair. Neither is right, or wrong. So it comes down to personal taste and sailing style and ambitions. Island hopping or ocean crossing? Blue water or backwaters? At the end of the day, you can't go wrong with either one of these boats. If you have the wherewithal to buy one of them and you're a good sailor and confident in your ability to handle a big boat—and these are both that—then who are we to say that one is a better choice than the other?

"I do think that these are two very good, very different expressions of cruising

luxury," Murphy said. "They represent the pinnacle of cruising luxury in 2021 as we know it."

We couldn't in good conscience choose between the two, so we didn't. Each is named 2021's Best Luxury Cruiser. Let's delve deeper, starting with the HH 50.

"As I said earlier," Murphy continued, "the HH is one of the two best-built boats in the fleet. Unlike the X40, it employs thermal form construction, which means they take flat panels of Corecell foam core and heat it up to make the complex shapes of the hull so that there are no slits or kerfs in the foam. In the simplest terms, you're using that flat sheet to construct complex curves, and then you're using the best resin available, which is epoxy, in the laminate. This is infused epoxy construction, post-cured after the fact. So this is a very, very high-quality hull."

"This may have been one of the more interesting boats I've climbed aboard in terms

of some of the gear choices that the owner made and the willingness of the builder to go along with them," Pillsbury said. "For instance, the auxiliary engine was a Beta Marine diesel. And on earlier HHs, I kind of scratched my head as to whether a couple could really handle a big cat like this. But on this boat, a couple without a whole lot of

## THE BIG QUESTION: HOW DO YOU CHOOSE BETWEEN EXCELLENT AND EXQUISITE?

big-boat sailing experiences was handling it just fine. The Jeffa steering was rack-and-pinion and very sweet. The self-tacking jib certainly made the boat a joy to sail upwind. And for a cat, it could actually sail very close to the wind. I thought the daggerboard controls were brilliant. It was just a simple continuous-line Antal winch. Not a much could go wrong there."

Designed by the veteran cat designers Melvin & Morrelli, who brought the Gunboat line into existence, with the HH 50 they've moved on from the forward cockpit that distinguished those boats, and brought the helms aft and outboard, further establishing yet another trend in the moving target that is boat design. The visibility is outstanding, and the sensation of steering this boat, even in light airs, is otherworldly.

This is sailing, quite frankly, that was once unimaginable in a cruising boat. But to paraphrase Teri Hatcher on an old episode of *Seinfeld*, as far as the HH 50 is concerned, it's real. And it's spectacular.



BILLY BLACK (2)/COURTESY HH CATAMARANS AND HYLAS YACHTS