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FIRST LOOK // SHOGUN 43

RUPERT HOLMES



Where: Port Ginesta, Spain
Conditions: 10-18 knots with awkward swell
Main options: square top mainsail, teak effect decking, standard (2.7m draught) keel



Photos: Ludovic Fruchaud/Imacis.fr/EYOTY

HIGH VELOCITY CRUISING

THIS FAST, ALL-CARBON SWEDISH CRUISING YACHT INCORPORATES KEY ATTRIBUTES OF STATE-OF-THE-ART RACEBOATS. BUT IS IT REALLY A VIABLE PROPOSITION?

How many crewmembers of high tech racing yachts have wondered whether the boat could be tweaked and tamed to create a super-fast cruising machine that's enormous fun to sail? I certainly considered the idea as a navigator in the Farr 45 fleet when there was a strong class in the Solent. Australian sailors Ian and Annika Thomson went further and refitted an early TP52, J-Bird, as an ultra-fast cruiser and occasional racer.

Mats Bergryd, a former ClubSwan 42 and ClubSwan 50 owner, is of a similar mindset, but instead he commissioned renowned Swedish father and son design team Hakan and Oskar Södergren, along with the Rosättra shipyard (better known as the yard behind the Linjett brand), to create a no holds barred all-carbon 50-footer for very fast cruising and occasional racing.

The Shogun 43 is the second model in the range, retaining the same DNA, but at a more affordable (though still very high) price point, and has enough interior space for family cruising.

One of the great things about the few cruising yachts that have top notch upwind performance is that, once you're cracked off to true wind angles greater than around 50°, you're already on a reach. It's comfortable and fast, yet almost every other cruising yacht will still be struggling along in full upwind mode.

Equally, the Shogun 43 sails upwind at angles and speeds that would impress ►



Low and lean: the Shogun 43 sports aggressive lines



Above: the optional teak effect deck looks good but added 110kg of weight to the test boat



The Shogun has all controls available to a grand-prix racing team, yet most can be tweaked with the press of a button on the helm consoles

any race team on a similar size yacht. It proved quick to accelerate and very responsive. In a true wind speed of 15 knots and true wind angle of 40° our boat speed hovered consistently in the 7-7.5 knot range, with upwind VMG around 30% higher than many so-called performance cruisers of similar size.

But instead of requiring an army of talented crew to keep the boat constantly sailing at its best, all trimming and sail control can be carried out with only one or two crew on deck.

Hydraulics for the vang, backstays and deflectors, plus the electric traveller and toe-in adjuster for the twin rudders, for instance, all have fingertip control from the helm stations. This ability to fine tune the rig and sail trim so easily is a core part of this yacht's concept. The idea is to make fun and exciting sailing accessible beyond a relatively small group of die-hard semi-professional racing teams. This boat is therefore designed to make it as easy as possible for a single person on watch to get as

much performance out of the rig as you might when racing with a full crew of 10 or more people.

It's very much the type of boat that makes you actively want to hand steer and trim attentively to cover long distances quickly. When helming in gusty conditions, for example, you can drop the traveller, increase twist or apply more backstay to depower the mainsail, all at the touch of a button on the helm consoles. Reverting to the previous trim when the gust passes is just as easy.

FAST PASSAGEMAKING

Heading out from Port Ginesta near Barcelona after lunch, discussion initially centred on whether we could make Soler, or one of the many stunning calas, almost 100 miles away on Mallorca's rugged north-west coast in time for dinner. The consensus was most likely.

We then unrolled the Code 0 in true wind speeds of 13-16 knots, at a true wind angle of 110°, which produced boat speeds consistently in the 9-10 knot bracket, with

occasional bursts to 11. The boat was very responsive in this configuration, but also very easy to control, relaxed and finger light on the helm.

With the low freeboard, though, there was a tendency to bury the bows in a leftover swell and that gave a somewhat wetter ride than might be expected with only wind driven waves.

The following day delivered a little more breeze, averaging 15 to 18 knots. Sailing with the big 180m² A2.5 kite at a true wind angle of 140°, we made 10-12.5 knots sailing just a fraction higher than the optimal downwind VMG angle. Again this was not a white knuckle ride – we were never close to the edge and felt as though we would have remained in complete control in stronger gusts.

However, with a light displacement of 6,100kg this is a proportionately much heavier boat than a Class 40 or Fast 40+ and therefore doesn't get on the plane as easily as those designs. This is partly a factor of the Shogun's narrow beam – it's only 2.9m on the waterline – that promises excellent light airs performance, but also results in limited form stability. Therefore, even with a deep 2.7m draught, a substantial bulb weight is needed, with the result ballast ratio is 42% and the boat therefore isn't exceptionally light, despite a huge amount of effort having gone into saving weight.

CARBON FOR LIGHT WEIGHT

Vacuum infused carbon for all structural elements helps keep the weight of the structure to a minimum and even the keel fin is carbon. The hull is moulded in three pieces, with side decks, aft and transom effectively part of the hull, which massively increases stiffness, especially on such a narrow boat.

Oskar Södergren says the structural engineering uses much larger margins of safety than would be the case for a pure race boat, which also adds a little weight.



Even though it's not that light by grand-prix raceboat standards, this is still a boat that's rewarding to sail. Returning back to base on a fetch at true wind angles of 60-65° and 17 knots of breeze, our speed hovered consistently between 7.5 and 8.5 knots, with the helm again super light, but responsive and with lots of feel.

A recessed Antal fitting at the gunwale near the shrouds is a position for a snatch block that's used for an outboard headsail sheet. A problem with high aspect jibs, especially self-tacking sails, is the top of the sail twists off and loses power as soon as the sheet is eased. This can be solved by moving the sheeting position outboard, which gave us an extra 0.4 knots of speed, while the extra power in the headsail helped balance the sailplan better. As a result the boat tracked more easily and was easier to steer, with less weather helm.

Most of today's wide beam cruising yachts with non-overlapping jibs would benefit from a similar

'It sails at speeds that would impress any race team'



From left: large rope bins at the pit; angular lines melded to a long bowsprit for flying offwind sails; sheet leads include an outboard jib position

FIRST LOOK



Accommodation is well thought out, but narrow beam and low freeboard limit volume

setup, but all too often the problem is hidden behind the mainsail and is therefore not identified. Instead the pilot is frequently blamed for failing to steer a good course.

The Shogun's sail plan is primarily designed around a self-tacking jib, which meant the mast was brought a little further aft in the boat than usual to minimise loss of headsail area. This also helps increase options for staysails and large downwind and reaching sails.

I sailed the prototype boat, which has a Class 40-style jib on a furler, although boat number two will have a more conventional electric furler with a luff foil. There are also coachroof jib sheet tracks and cars for a slightly overlapping headsail, but outside of going upwind in very light airs, there's not much reason to use one on this boat and the expectation is most owners will stick with the self-tacking option.

Our test boat was equipped with a square top mainsail, though there's a pinhead option that loses roughly 4-5m² of sail area. The keel stepped carbon mast has fibre shrouds, while spreaders are swept aft by 24°. This means the backstay and deflector are primarily for sail shape and trimming, rather than providing structural support to the rig, which makes manoeuvres, especially heavy weather gybes, easier and less stressful.

Maximum permissible headstay tension is five tonnes, yet when I was sailing upwind with just 2.6 tonnes of load in the stay there was very little forestay sag: a mark of a boat with a very stiff structure.

Computational flow dynamics (CFD) scenarios were run with six different rudder sizes. This was followed by



on-water trials with two of these, with the team finally settling on the larger of the two options which has around 15% more area.

NARROW BEAM

Below decks the narrow beam and low freeboard means there's less volume than might be expected for interior accommodation, but it has been well thought out with a view to offering everything needed for family sailing or short-term cruising.

All interior joinery is epoxy sandwich, mostly using linen fibres that help reduce the noise a little compared to only carbon.

The semi open plan interior has a minimum of full bulkheads and is open to the forepeak, though this cabin can be closed off with double doors. It's comfortable enough that, unlike a full-on raceboat, when you drop the kite you're less willing to put it down the forehatch, which can make it harder to hoist the next time.

Three big overhead hatches, plus coachroof and hull



windows, combined with the use of light coloured veneers creates a bright and open feeling in the saloon and galley areas. There are also two separate double aft cabins, plus a well appointed heads and shower, making this a boat with enough space and privacy for civilised family sailing, or to bring a group of friends along for a week or two. The finish is good throughout, with enough wooden and fabric finishes to create a warm ambience.

OUR VERDICT

In many ways I'm enthusiastic about this boat, and indeed the whole concept around it, which is the result of a huge amount of thought, experience and vision. It's also beautifully executed.

Comparisons with very high-end sports saloon cars spring to mind: anyone can drive it, but those who have appropriate skills and experience can also extract an awesome amount of performance and enjoyment.

But one comparison that can't be ignored stands out. The Pogo 44 is only 200kg heavier, has similar sail area and vastly more accommodation volume thanks to an extra 0.8m of beam. Yet it's roughly a third of the price of the Shogun.

Still, Bergryd ought to know this rarified part of the market as well as anyone, having the unusual perspective of having been both an owner and a boatbuilder. It won't need that many similarly-minded owners to make this design a success, and at the time of our test three more Shogun 43s had been sold and were in production, alongside a further two Shogun 50s.



WATCH THE VIDEO
youtube.com/yachtingworld

SHOGUN 43

SPECIFICATIONS

- LOA 13.1m 43ft 0in • LWL 12.3m 40ft 4in
- Beam 3.7m 12ft 2in • Draught 2.4m 7ft 10in or 2.7m 8ft 10in
- Displacement 6,100kg 13,450lb
- Bulb weight 2,660kg 5,870lb
- Mainsail 65m² 700ft²
- Self tacking jib 49m² 527ft²
- A2.5 gennaker 180m² 1,940ft²
- Fuel 140lt 31gal • Water 2x130lt 2x 28.6gal
- Base price €970,000 ex VAT (as tested: €1.31m)

shogunvachts.com

ALSO CONSIDER

POGO 44

Simpler to sail than the Shogun, but weighing only 6,300kg with a hull shape optimised to promote early planing. Wide 4.5m beam gives good accommodation. Price €331,500 ex VAT.

pogostructures.com

CLUBSWAN 43

Nautor's new 43-footer provides a tempting mix of high level performance and accommodation comfortable enough for fast cruising, though its 10% heavier than the Shogun. Price TBA. nautorswan.com

ITALIA 12.98 FUORISERIE

The Race edition of this slender Maurizio Cossutti design offers great promise and comfortable accommodation, though it's much heavier than the Shogun. Base price €386,900 ex VAT. italiavachtsinternational.com

