

BOAT REVIEW - MAVERICK 440

A Cat Grows up

By Matthew Thomas

It's always interesting to follow the development of boat builders and their yachts as it really gives one an insight into their design philosophy as well as their commitment to producing the very best they can.

Looking at the latest offering from Rudi Pretorius's Maverick Yachts, the Maverick 440, it is clear that this is not just a 400 with a new stern, but rather, a 'new' yacht, based closely on the multi-award winning Maverick 400. Both boats are in production and available, an indication that they are significantly different from each other.

While South African boat builders are a force to be reckoned with in the catamaran manufacturing world, builders like Maverick Yachts are focussed on producing a high quality product with numerous options for customisation, perfect for discerning owners. I have been a regular visitor to the Maverick factory over the last three years, following the yard's progress and the boats customised to each owner's personal style and requirements. Pretorius and his team are always wondering what little things can be done to make an already exceptional boat better.

When the Maverick 400 was originally designed, a primary requirement was for it to have the highest volume in its class and with this in mind, designer Phil Southwell widened the hulls and made the boat wider overall, which gave owners bigger, more spacious cabins and a very roomy saloon. This also produced a cruising catamaran with features more commonly found on larger boats, like island berths, fully equipped galleys and easily accessed engine rooms, essentially giving the owners 'more bang for their buck'. The Maverick 400 became the 'biggest, little boat' available in the world and won numerous awards, including best Sailing Craft in 2009 and 2010!

With credentials like these, why would it make sense to 'stretch' an already successful boat? Having exhibited extensively at US and European boat shows and having successfully sold a number of boats to foreign customers, Pretorius was left wondering why, after being really amazed by



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the size of the 400, a number of prospective customers had opted to buy longer boats from other manufacturers.

What he realised was that while on board, prospective owners were very impressed, but once home and surrounded by glossy brochures from various manufacturers, it was easy to forget about the almost double volume living space and nearly 40% additional load-carrying capacity that the Maverick 400 offers, and rather compare the boats by length against price.

Maverick Yachts has always included a complete package as standard, which also made the boat more expensive when compared, simply by length, against its rivals. With this insight, it was clear that by simply adding a nice big swim platform onto the rear end, this dynamic would change and the 'new' Maverick 440 would be a lot more competitive.

Of course, in true Maverick Yachts fashion, it isn't just about making a longer boat to compete more favourably. Everything about the new yacht has been taken up another notch! The rig is bigger, the interior finishes are more sophisticated and many of the optional extras on the 400 are now standard on the Maverick 440! Simply put, not only does the Maverick 440 compete in terms of value for length, but you just get a way lot more than the competitors offer – how many yacht builders offer an 8-man Viking liferaft as standard equipment?

Climbing onboard the Maverick 440 is easier as the new transom is lower and the large swim platform makes the boat feel really spacious. It's also cut away on the inside, which is going to make boarding from a dinghy really easy as you'll now be facing the same direction as the boat and riding the same swells, as opposed to having to climb up, over the back of the hulls.

At sea, the swim platforms are going to be fabulous. They're big enough to stretch out on while sailing, in perfect safety and comfort. They're ideal for landing fish and dealing with them. Returning from a diving expedition, they're the perfect place to load your scuba gear.

From the swim platform, it's two low steps up to the aft deck which, with its hard top bimini, becomes the perfect outdoor lounging area while anchored or a really safe and comfortable outside area while sailing. This area is all about usability and the table is mounted on a polished stainless steel pole. At sea, the table can simply be lifted up and out of the way, giving the crew another useful handhold in the middle of the aft deck. At anchor, the table can be set to be the ideal bar height for cocktails, or lowered further to become a dining table.

Located to starboard and raised just enough to give the helmsman a good view over the boat is the helm position with double upholstered seats, with the sailing instruments and control lines in easy reach.

The main saloon is on the same level as the aft deck and accessed via a sliding door which gives guests an expansive living area when open. This door closes against a large opening window on the aft end of the galley, and with this open, the galley effectively becomes part of the aft deck. Inside, the spacious galley, with dishwasher, washing machine and dryer, as well as stainless steel under-counter pull-out fridge and freezer, is located to port. When cruising, the galley is always one of the most important areas and this one is 'just like home' – provided of course you're used to having every modern convenience at your fingertips.

To starboard, the huge U-shaped lounge/dining area is located, and just forward of it is a convertible double bed or large storage area for things like the outside cushions, so important when cruising as you never leave them outside when not on board and more often than not, the first task upon arrival is setting them outside, just to make space inside.

The chart table is located on the starboard side too, and is close to the helm station. It's unusually big and the bulkhead-mounted flat-screen television is networked to the navigation instruments so becomes a chartplotter when needed – great for passage planning!

Accommodation is in the hulls and it is here that you really notice the volume of the Maverick 440. To port, there are twin double cabins, each with an extra length, queen sized bed. These cabins share a common toilet located midships. This arrangement is fine for passage making and sure to be sea kindy. The cabins are large and airy and each has a huge window which really makes the cabins feel enormous.

With the Maverick 440 designed for global cruising, the entire starboard hull is dedicated to the owner's cabin. Again, the extra length queen sized bed is located aft. Midships is storage and a dressing area as well as an office area. Forward is a spacious toilet area with 'his and hers' basins as well as a shower and bath tub, easily accessed, without having to climb over a toilet - such is the joy of wide hulls!

Everywhere you look, it's clear how obsessed Maverick Yachts is with quality. From the selection of the materials, to the ergonomic design of the seats, lots of thought and care have gone into this boat. Wherever possible, furniture is built using high tech, high strength, honeycomb-cored panels and finished with superior, water-based varnishes, custom stains and premium hardware.

The Maverick 440 is designed for serious blue water cruising. Safety and comfort are of utmost importance together with performance and pleasant sea-keeping. This was demonstrated with hull No 1, which was delivered non-stop to Annapolis in record time, averaging a knot faster than the Maverick 400 and averaging close to 200 miles per day.

With No 5 currently in build and additional boats on order, the Maverick 440 has met everyone's expectations, is a tough competitor in the market and a great example of the quality catamarans that the South African boat builders are known for. ↓

Maverick 440 Specifications

LOA	13.3m (43.6 ft)
LWL	12.3m (40.3 ft)
Beam	7.45m (24.5 ft)
Draft	1m (3.2 ft)
Mast Height	18.3m (60 ft)
Air Draft	20.1m (65.9 ft)
Displacement	9,930 kg (21,893 lbs)
Fuel Capacity	2 x 400 lt (2 x 106 US gal)
Fresh Water Capacity	2 x 500 lt (2 x 132 US gal)
Motors	2 x 30hp
Mainsail	68m ² (731.9 sq ft)
Genoa	4 m ² (462.8 sq ft)
Certification	CE Cat A

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