

CRUISING THE OUTREMER 5X

A relatively lightweight hull, daggerboards and large sail wardrobe makes the 5x a fast boat.

Outremer's flagship 5x cruised into Sydney Harbour recently, the first of these 59-footers to reach here, so I jumped aboard for a sail, reports KEVIN GREEN.

photos Kevin Green

The Outremer 5x is a performance catamaran that is also a serious bluewater cruiser. I've enjoyed being aboard these in the past in Europe but sailing one in full cruising trim would be a new experience for me. The culmination of the French Outremer yard's 30 years' experience in multihull building the 5x comes with a powerful rig and large daggerboards for good windward performance. Outremer's can be called niche market boats as output is relatively small with only 200 hulls produced but these are discerning yachts – the 5x won European Yacht of the Year 2013, beating stiff competition from the major manufacturers including exotica like Gunboats. So I could appreciate Australian dealer Brent Vaughan's excitement at having a 5x visit Sydney Harbour. His company, Multihull Central, took on the

dealership to complement their Seawind cruising range only two years ago and has supplied several models – the nifty Outremer 45 that I found a lively cruiser and the 51 – so is pleased to see a 5x sailing here.

SOLID DESIGN CREDENTIALS

For the 5x, Outremer engaged designer Marc Van Peteghem, a prolific architect who's VPLP office has created the racing MOD 60 trimarans and production catamaran designs. Van Peteghem collaborated with legendary French sailor and two-time winner of the Vendee Globe, Michel Desjoyeaux for the 5x. Adding yet more horsepower to the style mix was interior designer Franck Darnet's collaboration with ex-Renault head architect Patrick Le Quément's for styling input.

So the 5x comes with solid credentials, a good thing as most of the company's buyers are bluewater sailors. "About 80% of our clients are cruising sailors travelling worldwide," manager Herve Leconte told me when I'd visited the yard in La Grande Motte a few years ago. Floating near the yard was hull #3, built specifically for a Middle East family while hull #2, now here in Sydney is a long range cruising boat. For this story I've included images from both boats.

The 5x is catamaran with tall and relatively narrow hulls ending in plumb bows and a low profile coachroof. The bridgedeck is further aft than many cats, which is intended to increase forward buoyancy, and the gull wing underside has plenty of clearance from waves. Infused GRP construction has produced a very light hull – only 13 tons (light compared with rival Catana 59's 18 tons and even compared with the 16 ton carbon Gunboat 60). Twin tillers are an unusual feature and the 5x claims the mantle as being the largest production multihull with tillers, which are fitted in addition to a single steering wheel. These tillers can be disengaged if

required and twin wheels is another option. The swivel seats at each tiller looked just like the ORMA 60 *Team Vodafone* ones and felt comfortable with clear views along each gunwale so ideal for race line starts; while sheet winches lay near my hands. Having sailed both the Outremer 45 and now the 5x using these tillers, I

THE CULMINATION OF THE FRENCH OUTREMER YARD'S 30 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN MULTIHULL BUILDING THE 5X COMES WITH A POWERFUL RIG AND LARGE DAGGERBOARDS FOR GOOD WINDWARD PERFORMANCE

find the setup comfortable for performance cruising or indeed sailing in Sydney Harbour where the need to steer from both sides of the yacht is apparent. When offshore they are lifted back, the Furuno autopilot is engaged and the steering wheel is occasionally tweaked from the safety of the cockpit.



Like fellow French builder Lagoon, the 5x has vertical saloon bulkheads but these are softened by sloping mouldings leading out to the elongated trampolines. As a performance boat, daggerboards are used on the 5x which greatly improves upwind performance, compared with mini keels (its polars indicate that it will reach wind speed as pressure hits double digits, so she's fast). The rig on the Middle East boat was a Lorima high modulus rotating carbon mast with an extensive sail wardrobe – self-tacker, gennaker plus code zero on a sturdy triangular bowsprit. Our Sydney boat came with the same sailplan, including the fully battened Incidences mainsail, but on standard fixed alloy spars. The main track runs across the transom and the sheet winch doubles as a hoist for the dinghy which nestles on its davits below a large solar panel. Headsail controls even include barber haulers on the 5x to close the slot with the main or improve the sheet angle, which indicates the discerning nature of this boat. Twin sets of winches sit on each corner of the saloon to control the headsails.

Another good cruising essential the 5x has is a functional anchor arrangement: twin rollers with the rode running safely underneath the deck to the bows. My only gripe was the rather awkward placement of the vertical Lewmar windlass in the locker on the Middle Eastern model. Other good features up here are large sail and storage lockers behind the bows but weight should be carefully monitored in these extremities. The stern deck is enclosed with seating and is partially protected with hardtop bimini and is self-draining while aft facing windows

ABOVE: The Sydney Outremer 5x had a two burner stove-oven made by Wallas in Finland that is diesel powered; something the owners like and is safer than gas.

LEFT FROM TOP: Sail controls are clustered around the single starboard helm, including electric Harken winches and note the barber haulers forward.

A well organised foredeck with plenty separation between the cutter rig and the Code 0 on the bowsprit.

Netting keeps the three kids safely aboard the 5X Moana.

Mainsail handling is easily done from the saloon roof.

Single or double helms are available and note the lever beside the compass that engages the tillers.



in the stern cabins add that extra dimension below. Large deck hatches give good access to the twin engines, with 54hp Yanmar sail drives on the Middle Eastern boat and Volvo 55hp's with folding propellers used on the Sydney 5x.

STYLISH INTERIOR

Saloon headroom is good on the 5x thanks to vertical bulkheads that maximise volume and keep the tropical sun out. The single level floor runs inside from the cockpit to where the topside galley sits to starboard with navigation station forward of it and U-shaped couch central. Interestingly Outremer has used

LEFT FROM TOP:

The aft port berths have slatted bases, good ventilation and adequate headroom.

The navigation station has plenty room for extra nav aids and has 360° views.

The two bathrooms have a separate shower cubicle on the 5x.

Corian laminated with alloy to create the stylish (but lighter weight) galley moulded tops, nicely contrasting with varnished wooden laminated lockers; although cupboard space is a bit limited. A four burner gas stove/oven with large (190L) fridge is fitted to #3 while the Sydney boat uses the more unusual diesel power

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OWNERS'VIEW

Swiss family Urs and Miriam Rothacher, along with their three boys have owned their Outremer 5x since June 2015. Dinghy sailors but catamaran novices they've proved their mettle by cruising this large 59ft catamaran from New Caledonia to East Coast Australia, as part of a year long break from their busy professions. "As a marine geologist I loved visiting the Pacific region and one day hoped to see it in more detail," the petite Miriam explains to me as her three boys romp around the catamaran. Aged three, five and seven their mother thinks it's a great time to take them on a sea adventure. Safety is paramount so their 5x is fitted with strong mesh fencing and extra communications gear has been fitted including a KVH Tracphone V3 for global satellite coverage. Also impressive is husband Urs who handled the big cat with ease during our time on extricating ourselves of the marina. Windage is a challenge on these tall modern catamarans but despite a lack of bow thruster we departed a tricky berth in Rushcutters Bay without dramas. The Swiss

electronics engineer and company owner told me he had no real complaints about his 5x. Apart from a worn topping lift line and broken steering seat, his 5x *Moana* has been a safe family home and cruising boat for them. One addition for better weather protection is their installation of a canvas bimini over the port side to cover the gap in the GRP hard top, which also is handy for wash days says Miriam. For the offshore legs they bought a large drogue which they've not deployed yet despite encountering some bumpy weather down the east coast of Australia. With a large family, particularly useful equipment is their desalinator which allows enough water for ample showers and to run their Soba washing machine (in the foredeck locker). When extra power is needed, the engines are run but apart from that the 1500watt solar panels supply all their needs, including charging the three iPads for the boys who are supplied with downloaded movies for offshore trips.

model. Two deep drawers added yet more refrigerated/freezer storage on the Sydney boat, so ideal for family victuals. The use of curved wooden mouldings gives a lovely customised (rather than machine cut) feel to the interior. Other pluses include the full sized navigation station on the forward starboard side. The new owner of the Middle Eastern boat, hull #3, had fitted high-end B&G H3000 instrumentation with a B&G Zeus plotter. Stored power came from lightweight lithium batteries, part of the Mastervolt charging system fitted (including a dedicated alternator). Our Sydney boat came with the factory standard Furuno gear, AGM batteries and relied on 1500watt solar panels and Volvo 55hp engine alternators – rather than a generator.

The 5x has four accommodation layouts – including three double cabins and a bunk arrangement. Being a family man the Middle East owner of hull #3 had the latter layout so the forward port hull came with a pipecot above the three quarter berth and the owner's large double aft. Ablutions are spacious with separate shower and two heads in each hull and the Sydney boat came with an owner's desk in the middle of the port hull. Other semi-custom work on #3 included the unusual purple bulkhead finish on our review boat, a good example of what Outremer can do and yet another selling point for this boat. Our Sydney boat had similar accommodation but with a single bunk in the starboard bow and bathroom ahead of this.



ABOVE: The Outremer 5X saloon is composite built and volume is maximised by using vertical bulkheads. Photo Outremer

SYDNEY HARBOUR CRUISE

Out on Sydney Harbour aboard the 5x the electric Harken winch made quick work of hoisting the mainsail while I steered into the wind, before the jib was unfurled to send us on our way while we lowered both daggerboards via their control lines. Engaging the tillers from the single steering wheel, I moved to the



Swiss owners Urs and Miriam find the 5x an ideal cruising catamaran for their young family.



The unusually large foredeck on the 5x is an ideal playground for her kids says Miriam.



The boys Henry, Philip and Louis are allowed some iPad time between sailing chores on the Outremer 5x.



The portside desk allows Miriam to manage her onshore and offshore affairs with ease, leaving the kids in the saloon to play.

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comfy outboard seats on the 5x to enjoy the sail up the harbour. Noticeable immediately is the feel of a fully equipped cruising catamaran, compared to a relatively light demo boat but the pressure on the tillers felt in proportion to the 59ft of loaded catamaran beneath my feet. But nevertheless their response was firm and direct when I steered the hulls through the wind for a tack, winding on the lazy sheet as owner Urs let off the other from across the cabin top. Despite not bothering to ease the mainsail the 5x obediently swung round and gathered speed, reaching 8kts at about 50° in the 14kt breeze. With jib up the balance was good, allowing me to roam around while the 5x sailed herself, so boding well for the power usage of the Furuno autopilot. As a practice for sail-changing during their upcoming Tasman leg we hoisted the gennaker from the GRP bowsprit and I unfurled it from my helm position as we sped past the Sow and Pigs reef doing 10. 2kts at 170° until the looming Bradley's Head forced me to gybe, done by only semi-furling the big gennaker before aiming our blunt bows at Farm Cove and our anchorage for the night.

SPECIFICATIONS: **OUTREMER 5X**



Price	\$1,579,365 excluding shipping, GST & duty.
Length	17.98m
Width	8.58m
Draft	1.20 – 2.65m (dagger boards)
Displacement	13.1 / 15 T
Mast hight	23.60m
Main sail	127m²
Solent	59m²
Gennaker	175m²
Spinnaker	243m²
Air draft	26.50m
Engines	2 x 54 CV
Water	672L
Fuel	672L
Architect	VPLP (Marc Van Peteghem)
Designer Interior	Franck Darnet/Patrick Le Quément
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