

FJORD 48 OPEN

The Origin of a Species



In sea trialing the flagship of the Fjord fleet, INVICTUS discovers the originators of the contemporary cruiser genre still have a great deal to offer. Behind the purity of the minimalist exterior lines lies a remarkably generous accommodation deck, elevating the Fjord 48 Open from day boat to a weekender, and one with considerable style



Concealed within the cockpit's apparent simplicity is a considerable amount of artfully conceived versatility.



Pioneers of movements in art are held in high regard for their originality, their courage, for the influence that inspired peers and their establishment of a development that enabled future generations to further progress into other movements. Given the recent explosion of popularity in the contemporary day boat market, it is somewhat remiss that Fjord Yachts do not seem to receive the full credit they deserve for initiating a movement in design, style and their important contribution to the creation of a boating genre. When we first encountered the angular minimalism of the Fjord 40 Open at the 2008 London Boat Show, the almost plumb bow, Spartan lines and purity of line blew us away. Standing

amongst aisles of sports boats, Tran Tourismos, centre consoles and RIBs, Fjord's stark debutant was not only a unique proposition, but the cleanliness of the avant-garde concept came as a timely blast of fresh air. The industry concurred and in 2008 the Fjord 40 Open swept up numerous 'Boat of the Year' awards.

In the subsequent eight years the distinctive profile and notion of the original Fjord 40 Open has inspired numerous designers and brands. Every weekend, from South Florida's Intracoastal to the marinas of the Mediterranean, sharp chic cruisers can be seen ferrying style conscious boaters from home, to anchorage and waterside restaurants. In truth some brands have arguably been more successful in the

number of units produced and their profile in the sector, but there's no doubting that the Fjord brand—that originated in Norway—and the German Hanse Yachts, who acquired it in 2007, are deserving of recognition for their forging of the genre. Eight years after first our first introduction to Fjord, we were delighted to reacquaint ourselves with the yard and their latest model courtesy of the company's representative in North America, Douglas Brophy. Stepping aboard the Fjord 48 Open at the Epic Marina on Miami River, we first note the lowering bathing platform that not only provides enhanced access to the ocean for guests, but also allows for the launch and recovery of the 9' 6" (2.9m) 285 Williams Turbo Jet tender that resides

in a cleverly concealed garage under the aft sunpad. Capable of almost 50mph, the tender's performance is appropriately representative of the mother ship's sporty styling. For those who take the plunge a showerhead is thoughtfully installed in the starboard gunnel, so saltwater can be sluiced off with freshwater from the boat's 100 US Gallon capacity freshwater tank.

Indicative of Fjord's innovative approach, their debut unit was amongst the first boats to feature the composite alternative to teak decking. Highly durable, splinter free, resistant to heat and pretty much any substance you could be careless enough to spill on it, the benefits of installing teak alternative on smaller yachts are well documented. On the unit we alighted the grey FlexiTeak decking, with red faux caulking that complimented the yacht's striking matt red livery, certainly added to the boat's considerable aesthetic appeal. The quadruple sunpad that stretches across the transom transmits an irresistible invitation to strip down to the bare essentials and stretch out on: though perhaps fortunately for those onboard during our sea trial

the inclement provided just enough discouragement for us to submit. Instead we satisfied ourselves with proceeding forward and settling into the deep banquette.

Fjord's commitment to flexibility and guest comfort is evidenced in the versatile backrests that allow the sofa's occupants to face forward or aft, and the hydraulically actuated dinette that can transform into anything from twin cocktail tables, to a single dining or lower coffee table. Exiting the marina as a light drizzle began to fall we were grateful for the full solid hardtop over the amidships section that provided effective protection from the precipitation, or more likely the sun on more typical Floridian days. This protection can be extended further over the social cockpit through the use of a retractable bimini that deploys from the aft edge of the hardtop. Under the hardtop we discovered a very practical and well-equipped deck galley, with full wet bar—including refrigerators, ice makers, countertop and wash basin—and to starboard a double Kenyon grille plus plenty of storage for flatware and provisions.

As the Miami River opened onto to the wind chopped waters of Biscayne Bay, so the captain opened up the throttles and spurred the twin 435hp Volvo Penta engines into life. Surprisingly for a plumb bow boat, which one would usually expect to produce something of a wet ride, the Fjord 48 Open remained dry even as the stiffening wind moved over the bow, through the starboard quarter and onto her full beam. This welcome attribute is courtesy of a hard chine that runs aft from the boat's

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 50' 1" (15.28m)

Beam: 15' 8" (4.81m)

Draft: 3' 9" (1.18m)

Engines (standard): 2x Volvo IPS600

Engines (optional): 3x VOLVO IPS600

Power: 2x 435hp (3x 435hp)

Max Speed: 30-knots (40-knots, 3x IPS)

Accommodation: 2 cabins (2+2)

Fuel capacity: 550 US Gal (2,080 L)

Fresh water capacity: 100 US Gal (390 L)

Black water capacity: 50 US Gal (200 L)

CE Category: B

Design: Fjord Boats, Allseas Design

Hard chines and a forefoot that rides gently above the water contribute to ride that is significantly drier than one would expect in a plumb bow boat.





The voluminous and well-appointed accommodation deck elevates the Fjord 48 Open above day cruiser into a very practical weekender.

forefoot, which was trimmed to bob smoothly above the chop. Encouraged that we weren't about to be soaked with spray, we made our way forward to the foredeck confidently, courtesy of high bulwarks that will no doubt provide considerable comfort for owners with young children.

For guests the attraction of the bow area lies in the deeply cushioned triple sunpad, which when removed reveals skylights that ensures an abundance of natural light is provided to the accommodation deck below. For the skipper however, the delights of the bow reside in the artfully sculpted pop-up cleats and the hidden anchor that is deployed and weighed courtesy of a throwing arm, controllable from the helm for effortless operation. As the waters of Biscayne Bay creamed behind us in a low wake that suggests considerable naval architectural expertise has gone into creat-

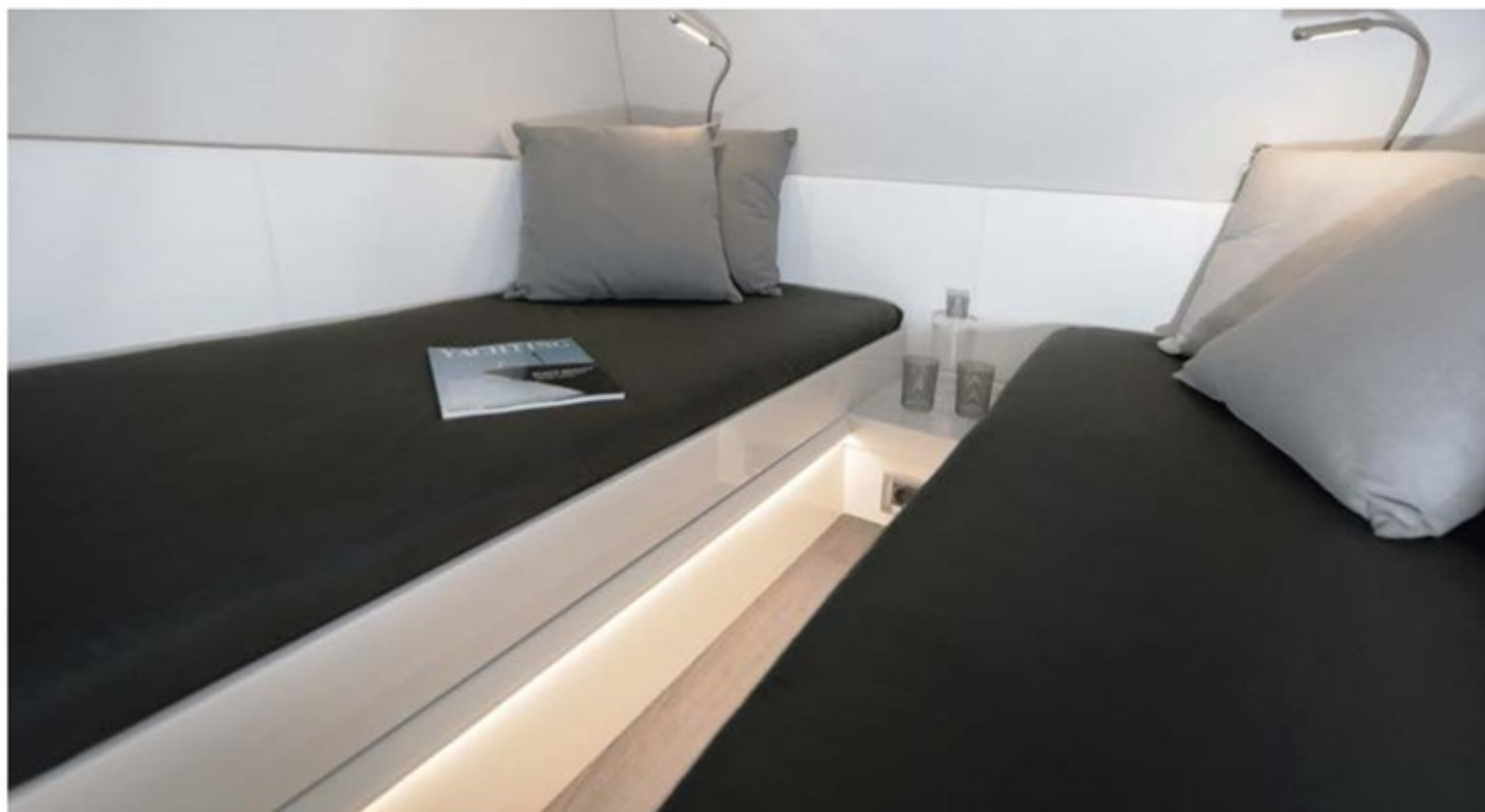
ing an efficient hull, we nestled into one of the two custom built companion seats that accompany the helm. In line with the minimalist design ethos of Fjord, the 48 Open's helm is exceptionally clean and clutter free. Behind the wheel the inclined dashboard presented just a single touchscreen display for navigation and monitoring, a limited scatter of display gauges and the VHF comms unit. With so little to distract the skipper from the task in hand, helming the Fjord 48 is therefore a synch. This is an important aspect of the model too, especially considering many owners of this type of yacht are intent on helming themselves. In fact, many of the larger megayacht owners we speak to bemoan the logistical undertaking involved in moving their larger craft and regretfully reminisce about the simpler days when they helmed their own sportsboat, enjoyed the thrill of the wind in the hair while

taking the family to lunch without the encumbrance of megayacht operation and intrusion of crew. With IPS Pod propulsion offering joystick control for slow speed maneuvering, owners who's docking skills have perhaps become rusty over the course of time can now depart and arrive with confidence.

Powered by the standard twin installation of IPS600 engines rated at 435hp the unit we sea trialed comfortably achieved top speed in the region of 30-knots and cruised in the upper 20's. For such a sporty design however and in order to keep up with her peers, we couldn't help feel that electing to fit the optional third engine would help this model achieve her full potential. With the confidence one enjoys from the heavy duty hand-laid hull, which tracks solidly and predictably through turns, the additional 10-knots provided by the triple installation that would drop easily into the cavernous engine bay, would certainly be beneficial.

Though one suspects the Fjord 48 Open's primary employment will entail day cruising, she also offers well-appointed and generous accommodation in the forward section of the lower deck. Accessed via a central companionway protected by a glass door that slides neatly into a vertical pocket, the 48 Open's interior is surprisingly voluminous. The vertical hull sides and carrying of the yacht's 15' 8" beam well forward provides considerable space and comfortable head clearance for those around 6' 6" in height. A convertible twin is located to starboard as one descends the companionway, and this is served by a comfortable en-suite that doubles as a day head. Further forward, the VIP double berth nestles in the forepeak. Flanked by divans, with under berth storage supplemented by a wardrobe that almost qualifies as a walk-in closet, plus an en-suite with full stand-up shower that one would more likely find on a much larger yacht, the 48 Open can accommodate four extremely comfortably for possibly longer than just an overnight or weekend trip.

As the simplistic purity of the Fjord 48 Open's lines suggest she hides few surprises on the outside. An eminently able day cruiser she ticks all the boxes one requires for lounging, entertaining, cruising and partying... especially with the \$30,000 additional sound system fitted on the unit we tested! Inside however, the space and amenities provided on the accommodation deck places the 48 Open in a category beyond a simple day boat. Unfortunately we only enjoyed an hour or so blasting around the Bay on this occasion, but it certainly whetted our appetite to experience a more extended cruise on-board. Fjord, the original trend setters prove they still have a considerable amount to offer.



Simplicity and minimalistic design reigns throughout the 48 Open, from the guest cabin, through the en-suite and even at the helm.