TEST REVIEW
PRIVILEGE SERIE 5

Happy Koumata moved along in light airs during our test and showed her quiet strength

PRIVILEGE SERIE 5

A real Privilege to sail

With a deserved reputation and strong values, Privilège Marine is using its know-how across completely re-styled models and is showing new creativity. We took the opportunity of a test sail aboard Happy Koumata, one of the first Série 5s, when she stopped over in Marseille on the way to beginning a round the world trip.

Text: Philippe Echelle - Photos by the author and DR

The higher sailplan really comes to life in light airs

THE SÉRIE 5, SUCCESSOR TO THE 515

At 50 feet, the 515, first shown at the Grand Pavois boat show in France in 2009, confirmed a major evolution at Privilège, already experienced with larger models. The commercial career of this catamaran was unfortunately interrupted by problems at the yard. The new Série 5 revisits this promising start, modified by the Lombard design team (the waterline length has been slightly increased, the sail area is bigger and the deck layout improved). The new interior design is by Franck Darnet, whose influence is to be found on many French multihulls.

LINES REDRAWN TO SUIT BLUE WATER CRUISING

Marc Lombard's re-worked hull aims to achieve an overall balance in all conditions, anticipating that these comfortable and fun craft will be doing some long passagemaking. The behavior of a 21 tonne vessel fully stocked and well-equipped such as our test boat must remain consistent under load: with this in mind, the Lombard team has created fairly deep, wide U-sections for good buoyancy, and a progressive increase in volume back to the step (the waterline is around 15cm below the rib frame). The bows are fine-entry and the leng-

← *A quality hull covering transforms the appearance of the gelcoat and the lines*

thened arches of the new sugar-scoops produce fine wakes. The Lombard-designed skegs are fairly short, fine and deep for good performance while minimizing the whetted area. Our test boat, Happy Koumata, was fully loaded and ready for her forthcoming voyage.

A FULLY-MASTERED BUILD PROCESS

The hand lamination process has been abandoned, and the S5 is now built using infusion. The outer half-hulls, the nacelle and the inner half-hulls are dry-prepared in molds which have already been gel-coated: the directional glass cloth carefully applied using Divinycell foam for the sandwich, before being vacuum-infused with poly-vinylester resin. Monolithic materials are used for through-hull skin fittings, grounding plates and so on. The skegs are structurally isolated from the rest of the vessel, and impact zones are the subject of particular attention, with crash boxes preventing the ingress of water forward and flooding of the engine compartments in the event of sudden impact. The interior joinery by the Vendéen yard remains true to its reputation for excellence and rigorous attention has been paid to the installation of the technical systems.

HAPPY KOUMATA, AN ELEGANT CRUISING CATAMARAN

In her beautiful metallic gray livery (a film covering, applied straight onto the original gelcoat), the Série 5 gives an impression of quiet strength. The superstructure created by Philippe Jeantot and Guy Ribadeau Dumas on this 14.70 meter platform is reminiscent of that of its predecessor. This distinguishing structure significantly reinforces the forward beam and streamlines anchoring while creating an enviable increase in interior volume which the French yard had always wanted to maintain. A little wave-piercing skeg has been fitted below to diminish slamming from the most aggressive waves. The straight, vertical bows overhang the start of the step, which runs all the way to the aft, which is lengthened by the practical sugar-scoops for access from either the dock or the dinghy. A superb stainless handrail ensures that this tricky area is completely safe, with three rows of guard wires enclosing the entire platform bringing the security you need for long term sailing. The edge of the deck is hemmed by a nice teak toe-rail showing a slight sheer, and the dipped longitudinal section in the topsides breaks the straightness of the panel and houses the plexiglass light-wells, which have integrated opening hatches. The sloping appearance to

↑ *Having a cutter rig is made easier by the superstructure. The front of the S5 also benefits from an appreciable sunbathing area*

THE OWNER'S OPINION

We were occasional sailors, boat show visitors, pontoon stalkers, magazine readers (and even owners of a motorboat), and then after a few sailing trips on monohulls over the course of the last 25 years, my wife Catherine and I chartered cats in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean. With our family now comprising 6 children, the choice of a multihull was very quickly imposed on us, due to the habitability, the number of cabins, peace and quiet on board and the ease of handling the machine. Our first cat was a 44 footer we bought in 2009: over five years of weekends and vacations, we sailed from Marseille to the Iles d'Hyères, to Corsica and Sardinia, much to our enjoyment. In 2014 we decided to stop working and prepare for a trip around the world under sail. As the main dreamer in the project, I came up with a list of specifications for our search for a boat. The characteristics of the catamaran chosen would be adapted a little to accommodate my wife's wishes on the precondition that our 5 to 6 year trip around the world was to be a shared pleasure. So, gone were the daggerboards, owner's hull, self-tacking jib and lightweight cat. We kept our requirement for performance under sail (the figures quoted by the yard have happily been confirmed over the last 2,700 miles), for personalization and comfort on board with a nice owner's cabin and a galley which allows the first mate to exercise her culinary passions. And lastly, a solid and reassuring boat in all conditions. The final criteria important to us: sharing the emotion with those in charge at the yard who would allow us to realize our dream: Our choice took us to the Privilège yard and the Série 5.

The new cockpit design works well. Conviviality, safety of the dinghy on its own specific platform, and a special mention for the handrail and three-level guardwires →

At deck level or from the cockpit, the access is good and safe ↑

the coachroof is pleasing , enhanced by the design work which has gone into the forward and lateral wind-shields. The lacquered gray Maréchal mast completes the picture of an accomplished model.

A SOPHISTICATED COCKPIT

The S5 already has the complete cockpit layout which was standard on the 515. Welcome additions are the handrails and guardwires making it safe all the way aft, as well as the design of the davit system. Only used for raising and lowering the dinghy (stowed in a cradle on a dedicated platform). This pertinent arrangement relieves the arms from permanently carrying the full weight of the tender and outboard. The new sugar-scoop design simplifies access to the water for swimming or embarking or disembarking to or from the dock or the dinghy. The bimini has two large opening panels, which allow for a good view of the mainsail. Another good point is the folding table/bar: located to starboard near the sunbathing area, it can seat 8 people in addition to the little corner unit to port with removable table. A large bench seat aft completes this chic and practical relaxation area. The grip of the slatted teak deck adds a touch of luxury.

50 FEET OF LUXURY AND COMFORT

You enter the S5 by opening the splendid sliding door, whose polished stainless steel frame really sets a tone of quality. The first glance reveals straight away the radical change of style. The superb cabinetmaking is evident, as are the exacting standards of fabrication, but the matt varnish finish to the light oak furniture, the beige headlinings, the sleek, formal lines show off a creative atmosphere which has been redesigned. Still showing all the Privilège hallmarks, but with a more contemporary feel. The sliding blinds covering the light-wells in the ceiling open to reveal good sized opening panels. Venetian blinds allow you to adjust the amount of light in the salon to the required level of intimacy. The galley is a model example of the genre, and the dining area has a true dining table (height-adjustable on remotely controlled struts). A reversible climate control system allows you to deal with high or low temperatures, to dry the air in tropical regions or to fight the invasion of culicidae (otherwise known as mosquitoes). Welcome to the unusual world of luxury at sea. The semi-owners' version we tested combines all the advantages of separated accommodation while offering 3 nice double cabins (of which one is a twin), all of which are equipped with shower and head. The gray oak style floorboards are perfectly fitted and secured to avoid any annoying vibration, and are carefully edged to prevent absorbing any dampness. The general hardware used, notably the drawer mechanisms is of excellent quality.

MOTORS, ANCHORING, BATTERY BANK

Despite the unfortunate increase in maintenance needed by having saildrive transmission, the engine compartments are well designed, painted throughout, light and accessed by metal ladders. The strong, watertight hatches are located in the deck and not on the aft steps. The motors have been moved forward in the boat, creating space for the generator (to starboard) and the watermaker to port. The anchoring station

↑ *The helm station is the nerve center of the boat, its design and construction largely participating in the sense of controlling the boat*

↑ *The splendid sliding door in stainless steel provides access to the new design, and to the discovery of Privilège quality*

Separate shower, heads compartment and WC occupy the owner's suite in the starboard hull

The main forward cabin benefits from the space in the superstructure

The cabinetry shows all the Privilège hallmarks, and the marine fittings are all top quality

benefits from the clever design of the superstructure to house real offshore equipment: a 40kg Spade anchor with 75 meters of 14mm chain and a 1400W windlass which you can see clearly - a great choice! The secondary anchoring setup consists of a 35kg Brittany anchor with 25m of chain and 50m of rode. The battery bank is located below the salon floor in a specially designed, enclosed locker, protecting the batteries from being sprayed or from tools which have been dropped. The tightness of the terminals is identified by red varnish markings.

DYNAMIC TEST

We easily pulled away from the dock in the old port of Marseille, there being not much of a crosswind, but with not much room forward or aft. The all-round visibility from the helm station is good. The engine torque with the three-bladed Maxprops is generous (meaning you have reserve power on hand for tricky situations). The suppleness of the manual controls for the gearboxes is noticeable, and simpler and cheaper, and I don't miss electrically assisted controls. Fully loaded and equipped the Série 5 can make 9.5 knots at full throttle, with a cruising speed of between 7 and 8 knots depending on the consumption you are looking for. The quietness of the motors would make for easy long trips under power. We quickly shut down the Yanmars to make the most of the tiny bit of breeze which was building from the south, and, surprisingly, the Série 5 set off at 2.5 knots in a breath of air which was barely detectable! The pace is regular and the boat happily accepts coming up on the wind without making any leeway. Not bad, eh? The Hydranet sails by Incidences Voiles, kept perfect shape in this anemic breeze, despite their modular construction. Remarkable! We were on a level playing field with a prototype 12m monohull which appeared to be well sailed. The wind continued to build, and the GPS showed we were keeping up with it: 4, 5 then 6 knots in less than 10 knots of wind. Entirely satisfactory for a cruising boat as luxurious and as laden as this one. Tacking was smooth and we picked up again easily. Happy Koumata is cutter-rigged, so the genoa has to be partially rolled up to tack, so as to avoid snagging on the staysail. This doesn't lead to a problem though, thanks to the turning blocks and the electric Antal winch. The breeze was picking up more now, building progressively to 20 knots, and I reduced the genoa by taking in a few turns before tacking and I noticed that the boat seemed to complain a little

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Naval Architect: Marc Lombard	
Interior Designer: Franck Darnet	
Builder: Privilège Marine	
Length: 15.24m	
Beam: 7.98m	
Draft: 1.57m	
Working displacement: 16.8t	
Maximum displacement: 22.8t	
Mainsail area: 88m2	
Genoa: 53m2	
Height of the JP Maréchal mast: 21.21m	
Motors: Volvo 2x55hpcv or Yanmar 2x75hpcv as option	
Transmission: Saildrive	
Bilge pumps: 2 manual pumps, 4 electric pumps	
Water tanks: 2x300 l	
Fuel tanks: 2x400 l	
Holding tanks: 2x106 l	
Batteries: service 800A / service 2x55A	
Price ex-tax: €930,000	

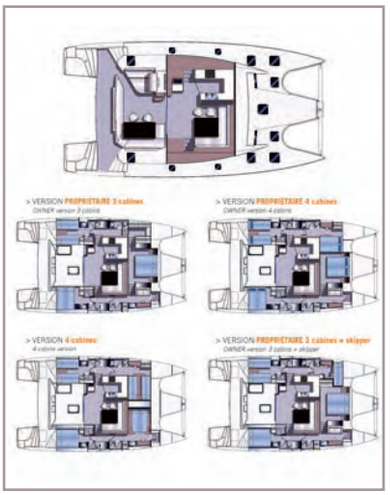
Principal options on the version tested:

- Semi-owner version with galley "up"
- Gennaker on furler
- Hydranet radial sails
- Watermaker
- Solar Panels
- Wind generator
- Reversible climate control
- Yanmar 2x75hp + three-bladed folding Maxprop propellers
- 2nd autopilot in place
- Hull covering

Price ex-tax of the boat tested: €1.2M

THE COMPETITION

Model	SABA 50	DISCOVERY 50	NAUTITECH 482
Builder	Fountaine-Pajot	Discovery Yachts	Nautitech/Bavaria
Naval Architect	Berret Racoupeau	Dixon	Mortain Mavrikios
Upwind sail area in m2	141	138	116
Weight in tonnes	15.7	14.5	11.2
Basic price in € ex-tax	585,000	1,044,000	545,500

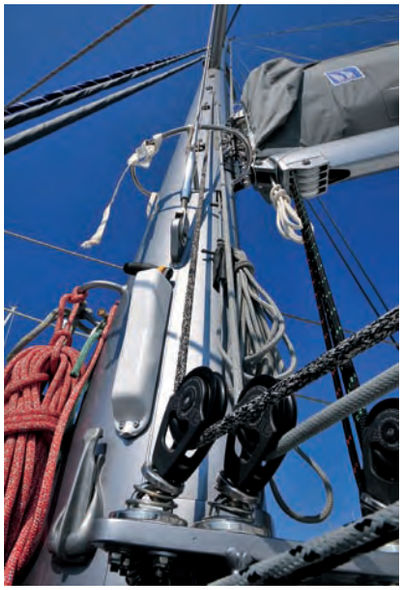


A WORD FROM THE ARCHITECT

Privilège Marine's new Série 5 is an evolution of the 515, but the improvements are noticeable: the deck layout and the cockpit have been redesigned, hulls lengthened and the sailplan made higher. The interior has not been left out, with an overall improvement in the way the volume works, and a very successful design by Franck Darnet. The attention to detail at the yard is omnipresent, in the structure, the equipment and the interior finish. It's a measure of safety and comfort for exacting clients and Privilège owners who really sail long term. At a time when other yards are standardizing everything with a vengeance, Privilège Marine knows how to listen to their clients and offer an à la carte personalization. Our partnership with the yard has been going for 25 years now and never has the will to make a difference been stronger. The yard's new director knew how to bring together a quality team working with this in mind. The Série 5 is the wonderful result of this, while we are waiting for the all new Série 6 planned for a few months' time...

Marc Lombard

The JP Maréchal aluminum mast, a top of the range product whose lacquer is coordinated with the color of the hulls →



when picking up again on the wind under full main and partially furled genoa. I listened to what the boat was saying, reduced the main, and order was restored! Setting a reef is done in the traditional fashion with a webbing strap at the mast and a line back to the halyard winch at the helm. With the mainsheet let right out to spill the wind, the maneuver was simple and quick. The balance under 1 reef and 5 rolls of genoa is excellent, and you mustn't forget that at 88m², it's the main which should be reduced first! After gybing I rolled up the genoa and unrolled the staysail. This smaller headsails very practical and would nicely complement the main with two reefs at probably around 28 knots true. The wind which had picked up to over 25 knots seemed to be dropping now, so it was the time to test the gennaker. Bearing away to around 160° to blanket the unfurling of the gennaker by the main, its 120m² set with ease even doing it solo, as the controls for the electric winch located in the cockpit and the tail from the furling drum are both led back to the helm station. A big thumbs-up to the designers of the deck layout: I was new to the boat, yet was able to successfully complete all the maneuvers on my own. Between 8 and 9.5 knots our limousine came back inshore to the Iles du Frioul, the wind reduced and we had to hoist the full main again. The gennaker furled gently (the furling line is perfectly calibrated to fill the winch next to the helm and needs no manual assistance), I unrolled the genoa, sheeted in the main, and there we were, upwind heading back to port, alas all too close!

CONCLUSION

I had a lot of fun playing with the compact, clever and ergonomic deck plan, centered around the Série 5's helm station: with a little practice, any member of the crew could shorten canvas, day or night. The ease of this on such a big boat is one of the qualities of the Série 5. The quietness under way is great, the atmosphere on board is warm and comfortable, and the reliability of the comfort equipment seems to have been demonstrated following a 3,000 mile shakedown. The highest speed achieved was 16.7 knots off the coast of Portugal (on a wave), and a few days ago the owners emailed me to say they were making 9.2 knots (with a peak of 10) at 60° to a wind of 15 knots. All is well aboard this happy boat... Aside from preoccupations with instant performance, the Privilège Série 5 goes along at a senatorial pace: the ease of handling, the quality of build and the "club" comfort are its major assets.

A guest cabin: here, starboard aft →

The engine compartment is fully painted, and fitted with shelves for stowing consumables ↓

ENHANCED DIGITAL EDITION VIDEO

The helm console contains all the sail handling equipment from an efficient deck layout, making the boat easy for one person to handle

Protection of the helm station is ensured by the top quality bimini (adaptable for rain or sunshine)

The addition of a bowsprit is made easier by the superstructure, and handling the furling line from the helm station is particularly well achieved

The JP Maréchal aluminum spar is lacquered. Privilège remains loyal to this proven top of the range product.

Safety on the S5 is enhanced by fixed stainless rails and 3-level guardwires which go around the whole boat

Protected from impact by a wave-piercing wing, the superstructure reinforces the forward beam, simplifies the anchoring station and creates the original distinctive Privilège living space

The vertical appearance of the topsides is broken up by the light wells and the hatches

The new sugar scoops improve the flow through the water by lengthening the waterline: they also make for practical boarding and landing places

The straight, fine-entry bows overhang a modern and balanced hull

The topsides blend elegantly with the step

+

- Quality of build and passive safety
- Luxuriously fitted out
- Efficient helm station
- Maneuverability when short-handed
- Reliability of the installations

−

- Upkeep of the saildrives in the long term
- No mainsheet traveler
- No boom vang for sailing downwind
- No electric winch for the mainsheet
- No active alarm for the engine coolant