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MULTIHULLS
CRUISING
WORLD

JUNE 2015

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It's a Privilege to Sail

A French builder launches its new lineup with a sure-footed cruising cat.

By Mark Pillsbury

Privilège Marine introduced its new Privilège Serie model range this past winter at Strictly Sail Miami with a smart-looking 50-foot cruising catamaran that's an evolutionary upgrade from the older Marc Lombard-designed Privilège 515. (The previous boat was built by the former Alliaura Marine, a yard that fell victim to the global financial crisis.) With slightly longer hulls and an upgraded interior, the Privilège Serie 5 is the first new design since the company reorganized in 2012 under the direction of Gilles Wagner and moved production from Lorient, France, back to Les Sables d'Olonne, where many of the original Privilège boats were launched.

The new Serie range will also include a 64-foot Serie 6 and a 74-foot Serie 7, also designed by Lombard.

The Privilège Serie 5 in Miami was laid out for charter and lacked Privilège's signature owner's cabin that spans the nacelle and hulls forward of the mast. Instead, this boat had four cabins, two to a hull, and each with its own head and shower. The forward cabins featured athwartship berths; the aft cabins had bunks fore and aft — a double in the starboard hull and twin berths to port. Several other layouts are possible, including one with accommodations for crew.

The boat I visited was a bit unusual because it was customized to fit the needs of a former chef who plans to offer gourmet sailing vacations in the Virgin Islands. An industrial five-burner stove was built into the galley on the port side of the saloon, and a midship island-counter area contained six drawers' worth of refrigeration. There were also two standing freezers between the cabins in the port hull, and a washer and dryer tucked away in the starboard hull. The starboard side of the saloon was taken up by a dining table; there was a second folding table with seating outdoors in the cockpit.

Stepping aboard the sugar-scoop transom from the dock, I noted that the teak stairs leading up to the deck were inviting to look at and transitioned smoothly to wide, easy-to-navigate side decks. The



wheel, engine controls, instruments and electric sheet winches were all clustered around the raised helm station to port in a way that made it easy to sail the Serie 5 with a short-handed crew. Perched on the bench seat, I found the visibility was good all around.

The hulls, deck, cabin top and bimini are foam-cored and resin-infused. To keep weight down, furniture and bulkheads are made with foam-cored maple laminates. To my eye, the joinery looked top-notch.

By design, the Privilège Serie 5 has somewhat rounded hulls, with chines above the waterline that provide living space below and lots of buoyancy at sea. Underway in 15 to 20 knots of breeze off the Miami coast, the boat felt rock-solid underfoot and was very quiet below. The boat we sailed had voyaged 8,000 miles through the Med and across the Atlantic, and not a squeak could be heard.

On a beam reach, with the full main hoisted and genoa unfurled (there's an inner stay for a staysail, also with a Profurl furler), we flew along at better than 9 knots and, with a whoosh, surfed down the occasional roller. At cruising speed (2,400 rpm), the twin 75-horsepower Yanmars with saildrives pushed us along at 7.8 knots; wide open (3,200 rpm), the speedo jumped to 9.7.

Since its founding in 1985 by French

PRIVILÈGE SERIE 5

LOA	50' 0"	(15.24 m.)
LWL	50' 0"	(15.24 m.)
Beam	26' 2"	(7.98 m.)
Draft	5' 2"	(1.57 m.)
Sail area	1,517 sq. ft.	(140.9 sq. m.)
Displacement	37,000 lb.	(16,783 kg)
D/L	132	
SA/D	21.9	
Water	158 gal.	(600 l.)
Fuel	211 gal.	(800 l.)
Holding	56 gal.	(212 l.)
Mast height	69' 7"	(21.21 m.)
Engines	55 hp Yanmars (2) with saildrives	
Designer	Marc Lombard/Franck Darnet	
Price	\$1,385,000	

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single-handed racer Philippe Jeantot, the Privilège brand has been associated with safe family cruising and offshore performance. The new Privilège Serie range, judging from the look and feel of the Serie 5, will fit in quite nicely.

Mark Pillsbury is CW's editor.