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Open season

The 70 WallyPower Open is the latest luxury motor yacht from the Monaco-based yacht maker that gave the world the Stealth-like 118 WallyPower. identity inspects the sexy sibling and discovers a sailing boat in its DNA. Text: Matt Jones.

When Monaco-based yacht maker Wally launched the Stealth-like *118 WallyPower* fast motor yacht in November 2002, there were gasps of admiration from the Med to the Middle East. No yacht had ever looked like this.

The 36-metre, high-speed mega yacht powered itself from the design boards of Wally and Lazzarini Pickering Architects onto the front pages of magazines the world over, including *identity*, creating a buzz that was louder than its three 5,600 horsepower gas turbine engines. A glance at its picture alone was enough to make fast jet pilots consider a change of career, while those lucky enough to cruise in it were tied up in knots – 60 of them to be precise, the vessel’s top speed.

The sleek, metallic dark green yacht, the design of which was likened by one reviewer to “psycho origami”, was exhibited at the San Francisco Museum Of Modern Art, featured alongside super cars as the ultimate big boy’s toy on BBC World’s *Top Gear*, and last year had a starring role in the Hollywood movie *The Island*, with Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson.

Today, however, it’s the movie star’s sibling – two years’ younger, shorter, less muscular, but also very good looking – that’s making waves in the industry. In the summer of 2005, just as *The Island* was introducing cinema-goers around the world to a rising star named Wally, the company launched a day/short cruise boat, the *70 WallyPower*, that has many of the Stealth-like design cues of its more famous older brother, but costs much less – around US\$3 million, compared to the *118 WallyPower*’s US\$25 million price tag.

At 22 metres from bow to stern and 5.5 metres in width, the *70 WallyPower* is smaller than the *118 WallyPower*, which is 14 metres longer and 3.5 metres wider. It’s also slower, its two engines providing 1,520 horsepower each and a top speed of between 40 and 45 knots, depending on the version chosen. Its range at maximum speed is 300 nautical miles, or seven hours cruising, compared to the *118 WallyPower*’s 380 nautical miles.

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Open season/Page 2/...

But, like the *118 WallyPower*, the newer yacht incorporates the traditional Wally principles of comfort, speed, safety and enjoyment, which were established in the 1990s, when the company focused exclusively on luxury yachts with sails rather than motors. The *70 WallyPower*'s carbon fibre and composite glass superstructure; its flush teak deck, with no visible cleats or winches; its bulwarks that allow safe movement from bow to stern; its Dupont Awlgrip paint finish; its bright salon with minimalist, Japanese-inspired interior; and its high-tech navigation and galley equipment are all reminiscent of the larger vessel.

Like the *118 WallyPower*, the *70 WallyPower* has no vertical lines, other than the bow, the shape of which is designed to reduce "slamming" on waves. Both vessels have V-shaped hulls that allow for smooth and comfortable navigation at speed, giving exceptional stability. Both have an innovative "interceptor system" that controls the trim to improve performance and comfort in any sea conditions.

The salons of both yachts offer 360 degree views and living areas based on Wally's "inside/outside" design philosophy; each has been positioned by Wally as a "loft on the water", an appropriate description given the sloping glass walls and urban chic design elements, such as carbon fibre, titanium and teak surfaces that contrast with each other and with the upholstery of the seating areas.

In its three-cabin configuration – one of three layouts available to buyers; there's also a choice between a large owner's stateroom and a 'Lunch' version with a larger galley – the *70 WallyPower Open* can even accommodate six guests, as many as the *118 WallyPower*, though admittedly its crew facility is smaller, with beds for a complement of two rather than six.

Like the *118 WallyPower*, the *70 WallyPower* also photographs well – the iconic lines of its hull and cabin look their best against a bare cliff face, or quaint Mediterranean village, or the wake created as it cuts through the water at high speed, as if auditioning for a role in the next Bond movie.

So given the many similarities, can the *70 WallyPower* be regarded as the "baby" *118 WallyPower*? "Absolutely yes, from any point of view," says Wally founder Luca Bassani Antivari.

(more)

Open season/Page 3/...

The *70 WallyPower*'s heritage runs deep, however. As similar as it is to the *118 WallyPower*, it also owes much to the *WallyTender*, a more modest 13.6-metre fast runabout/cruiser that was launched in 2001 and displayed at last year's Dubai Boat Show. Like the *WallyTender*, which was Wally's first foray into motor yachts after more than a decade producing the sailing kind, the naval architecture of the *70 WallyPower* was designed by Wally and Allseas (another company, Rodriquez Intermarine, had worked with Wally on the *118 WallyPower*).

In as much as the *118 WallyPower* was itself inspired by Wally's 27-metre sloop *Tiketitan*, designed by Wally and German Frers and built by the Green Marine yard in the UK in 1998, the *70 WallyPower* also carries the DNA of a sailing boat.

"The development of the *70 WallyPower* follows our concept of integrating design with innovative technology, and combines the open-air living characteristics of the *WallyTender*, with the hull lines of the *118 WallyPower*," says Antivari. "The result is fast, comfortable, stylish, safe, and seaworthy."

Constructed at the new WallyEurope yard in Massa Carrara, Italy, the first *70 WallyPower* – a 'Lunch Boat' version with larger galley that comfortably seats 20 people for formal dining and can reach a top speed of 40 knots – was delivered to a customer in St Tropez in July last year. Two months later, in September 2005, the new WallyPower line made its public debut at the Monaco Yacht Show.

This March, the latest variant in the line was launched at La Spezia in Italy: the *70 WallyPower Open*, also known as the *70.2 WallyPower* – a faster, sportier version of the original.

During sea-trials, the *70 WallyPower Open* reached a top speed of 47.5 knots with a half load and 45 knots with a full load. Powered by the same propulsion system as the *70 WallyPower* – two MTU diesel engines that generate 3,000 horsepower and drive the same Rolls-Royce KaMeWa water-jets that are fitted to the *118 WallyPower* – the Open version is faster because of its lighter displacement. At a cruising speed of 45 knots, it consumes 250 litres of fuel per hour, though the potential running cost in these times of sky-rocketing fuel prices is hardly likely to bother anyone who can afford such a boat in the first place.

(more)

Open season/Page 4/...

The variant launched this March is the first to be fitted with the suite interior configuration below deck, which consists of a very large owner's suite, with king size bed, en suite and tinted rectangular windows, that takes up two-thirds of the available space. The rest is taken up with a crew/service quarter towards the stern, with a double cabin and en suite, and a crew mess and galley.

On the upper deck, the most important part of the boat for daily use and entertaining guests, the enclosed sloping glass superstructure – double-glazed, tinted and treated to provide protection from ultra-violet rays and high temperatures – opens to the rear, or “aft transom” as it's known to seafarers, with air conditioning rather than glass doors acting as the barrier between the inside and outside – hence the name “Open”.

There are three social areas within this loft on the water – only one less than the *118 WallyPower*. Designed by Wally and Gillian Brown, the forward social area is completely covered by the superstructure and lies behind the high-tech helm station, from which the owner or a crew member sails the vessel. This area, which is unusually large for a boat of this size, can be used for dining or, with the removal of the table top, as a lounge.

The second social area is half covered by the superstructure and also doubles as a dining area or lounge. The third social area is the large towelling-clad sunbathing pad at the rear of the yacht, under which are stowed various water “toys” (this boat is a floating pleasure palace, after all). And if guests and children want to wander to the bow, they can: the *70 WallyPower* is the first motor yacht in its size range to have a safe forward deck entirely protected by a bulwark.

A distinctive feature of the new Open version is the metallic red hull. Moored alongside the many predominantly white yachts in Mediterranean marinas it stands out like lipstick on a collar. According to Antivari, red is a colour that “matches well the soul of the boat”. The last time *identity* caught up with him, he referred to the *118 WallyPower* as “clean, aggressive and sexy”. The same could be said for the new *70 WallyPower Open*. Clearly, such attributes run in the family.

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