

ON TEST: BOREAL 52

which any long-term cruising prospect has to conform. To others it is the catalyst inspiring them to make the move to a more ambitious type of sailing.

But whether you're looking to cover long distances or live aboard, anywhere from Patagonia to Alaska this, say her creators, is a truly go-anywhere boat.

Built for battle

Apart from those topsides, the one feature that draws your eye is the aluminium doghouse, with its tinted wraparound window. Although the structure simply does what most boats achieve with canvas on a tubular steel frame, this permanent structure says a lot about this boat.

Step inside and you are presented with a large nav area with chartplotter/radar, not to mention a tremendous, almost 360° view, and it's impossible not to start daydreaming about the ease with which you could stand your watch in even the foulest of weather.

The superstructure also provides substantial protection for crew in the cockpit, although it does mean that in order to get a good view forward, the helmsman needs to stand on the after deck. Yet this is better thought-out than you might expect.

At first glance the cockpit, comfortable and secure as it is, looks a shade shallower than you would have thought on a boat like this. But when you come to manoeuvre the boat at close quarters you see why as you step back and up onto the after deck. From here you can still reach the wheel with ease yet you get an elevated view over the coachroof without feeling as exposed as you might if you were standing on more normal cockpit seating.

With the mainsheet attachment on top of the doghouse, the cockpit is free of clutter, and the primary and secondary winches are well positioned on the coamings to be within easy reach of helmsman and crew.

What you don't see

But it is the detail that you don't see that offers the clearest indication of the level of thinking that has gone into this boat. One example is the provision for daggerboards inclined at 14° with a 4.5° incidence on either side of the single-blade rudder. These are used to help achieve a better balance upwind and reduce the physical loads and electrical demand on the autopilot.

Deploying both daggerboards downwind allows the centreboard keel to be lifted, which reduces drag while maintaining good directional stability.

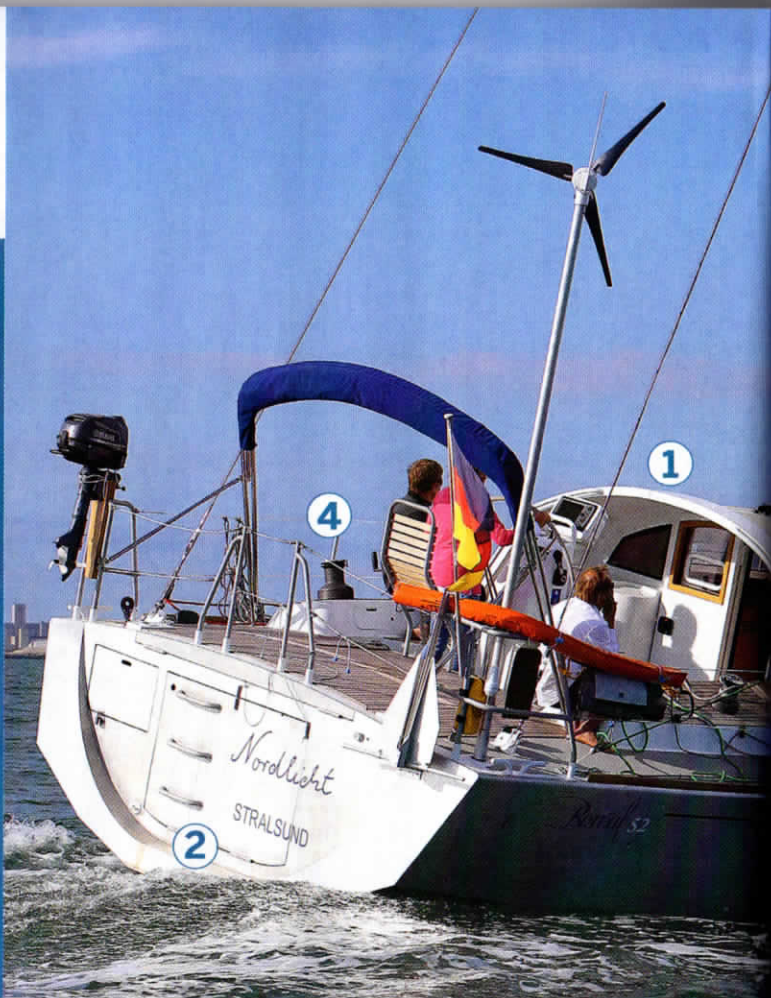
Having a lifting centreboard and a long skeg onto which the boat can settle when she dries out limits the depth of the rudder blade. Although aft-mounted daggerboards could help even with a deep spade rudder, the low aspect ratio of this rudder offers even more benefits.

1 Robust alloy doghouse says a great deal about what this boat is all about. Subtle details include feed for air vents in the aft lip of the roof

2 To accompany her single spade rudder she has a pair of angled daggerboards either side to reduce the load on the helm and power consumption of the autopilot

3 A clear and uncluttered foredeck provides plenty of space to stow a dinghy. The anchor windlass is in a flush deck locker near the mast

4 While she has powered winches, primary controls such as headsail furling units use conventional rope-operated drums



← Above: the raised saloon provides good visibility, excellent security and plenty of handholds. Throughout this is a robust and beautifully built boat

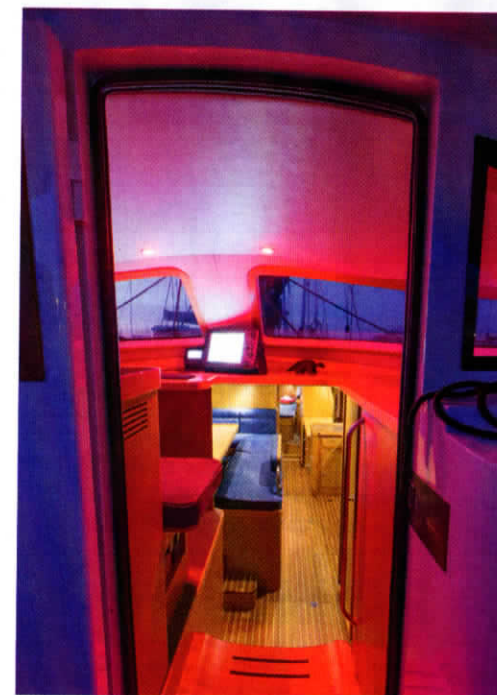
Elsewhere, discreet vents built into the aftermost lip of the doghouse force-feed fresh air below as and when required, and the solid alloy 'bye-bye weather' door inspires confidence in her ability to ride out the worst with ease.

One particularly clever detail is the use of the anchor windlass mounted in a flush deck locker by the mast – in order to keep the 250kg of chain more central – for raising the mainsail. Keeping the weight out of the ends of this boat is also helped by positioning the engine and batteries over the keel.

Room with a view

The overall deck saloon layout of the interior ensures that from normal seating positions it is possible to see what's going on outside. The arrangement does, however, make for a smaller interior than you might expect of a 52ft boat.

In contrast to the popular appetite for wide open spaces below decks that you see aboard many modern production cruisers, the Boreal's layout once again says much about her ability to keep you secure when the going gets lumpy.



Throughout the entire accommodation, from the quarter cabins aft, through the longitudinal galley to starboard to the spacious double cabin forward, there is nowhere where you can't brace yourself with ease, nowhere that you feel as though you have to take a leap of faith to reach the other side of the cabin.

And just as on deck, there are other more subtle details that demonstrate the considerable experience of the builders. One of the clearest examples is that all the interior lights switch on red first to avoid

accidentally ruining the night vision of crew on watch. Only by pressing the switches twice do you get white light.

Overall, the three-cabin, two-heads layout is the one most readily adopted by owners. According to Delvoye, individual variations are more common in the area forward of the mast and to starboard where options range from additional stowage to an office, a workshop or simply a sea berth.

But when it comes to her build quality and finish, there is just one standard: immaculate throughout.



← Above left: access to the interior through the doghouse. All lights turn on red initially. ← Top: owner's accommodation is forward. ← Above: in the doghouse, a perfect place to stand your watch in poor weather

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	15.86m	52ft 0in
LWL	13.82m	45ft 4in
Beam (max)	4.68m	15ft 3in
Draught	3.06m/ 1.11m	10ft 1in/ 3ft 8in
Ballast	4,800kg	10,582lb
Displacement (lightship)	14,500kg	31,967lb
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	130m ²	1,399ft ²
Berths	6	
Engine Volvo D2	56kW	75hp
Water	1470lt	323gal
Fuel	1,257lt	276gal
Sail area: disp	22	
Disp: LWL	153	
Price (starting ex VAT)	€685,000 (£540,000)	
Designed by	Jean François Delvoye	

www.boreal-yachts.com

See more photos of the Boreal 52 online at yachtingworld.com



Conclusion

There cannot be many brochures that describe a boat's accommodation as having 'a desk in every cabin where bluewater

children can do their homework'. But this is just one of many examples of what this boat is all about: live aboard, go anywhere.

Solidly built above and below decks, the Boreal 52 is the concept of a designer with many miles at sea sailing with a family. While the chined alloy hull won't appeal to everyone, the rugged style will instil confidence in many.

As for performance, at 18 tonnes she was surprisingly nimble, even in the light airs of our test, and was a very easy boat to handle with well thought-out control line runs.

All this for a custom-built boat with a price tag that is still considerably less than some popular alternatives even when you've added all the listed options. Impressed.

