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DREAM IT
PLAN IT
LIVE IT

A BIT
DIFFERENT
BUT SO
COOL!

SEAWIND
1260

REFINED
REFRESHED
RELIABLE

SHOW TIME
AT LA GRANDE MOTTE



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SEAWIND1260



ABOVE L-R:
Ample side walkways.
New alfresco galley and dining area.
Twin helm with all controls and good visibility.

REFINED REFRESHED RELIABLE

Three words sprang to mind when a first look at the Seawind 1260 was made. Refined, Refreshed and Reliable. The Seawind 1260 has been a benchmark in medium sized cruising cats since the launch about 10 years ago of the original 1250 and there wasn't too much that needed changing on this world cruising cat.





TOP: High bridge deck clearance.



ABOVE L-R: Large deck – easy to walk on. Controls back to each helm. Good visibility from the helm.



Let's revisit the basic design principles of the Seawind. At the core of the Seawind philosophy according to company founder Richard Ward, is Safety At Sea. That safety, according to Richard and his senior management team, comes from a matrix of features and principles. Underpinning the principle and defining all that follows is the concept of 'Outside In' design. Some multis appear to be designed from an inside out premise, i.e. the 'apartment' is created and then a boat is wrapped round it with all the seagoing compromise that brings. Not so the 1260. The 'Outside In' design process starts from a very simple, somewhat self evident but often ignored principle, that we are on a sailing catamaran, that all compromises must be weighted toward safety at sea and not style or fashion.

The first principle in this safety matrix is visibility and this is where the Seawind range has always been at the forefront of design. Anywhere in the saloon and cockpit on the 1260 offers a 360° view of your environment, at anchor and under sail there is a clarity of visibility that is somewhat rare on modern multis. A tangential benefit of this design principle is the wonderful ventilation

afforded by the the large forward opening windows. The visibility advantage is also evident in the hulls where light floods galleys and movement areas. Visibility is also enhanced by the twin wheel configuration where the helms person can move to the appropriate location to helm the boat. Often but not always this is the windward side of the vessel. However one of the many advantages of a twin helm setup is the ability to move to a position more protected from the elements, be they sun wind or rain. Another significant advantage of this setup is that there are no steps to climb to get to a helm, no dislocation of the helms-person from the boat and its crew and no mast or sails to try and look around or through. It seems self evident that if you can't see something you can't avoid it. And yet this is one of the few cats designed to ensure that full visibility can be maintained.

The next principle is sailing efficiency. The 1260 is a cruising boat not a racing weapon but as a sailing boat Seawind believes it should sail efficiently. Whilst heavy weather can and does occur cruisers will spend most of their days in 15kts or less of wind. Most boats can sail in heavy weather it is critical for cruisers that

their boat sails in moderate to light breezes. Experience suggests that the 1250/1260 range does this well. In 12kts of breeze when many other boats are motoring the 1260 will easily do better than half wind speed. This makes cruising more enjoyable and extends the cruising range dramatically. Coupled with good solar (800 watts in this case) and a water maker the boat becomes a self sustaining platform limited only by how much fish you can catch.

Often on sailing forums you will see people say they are cruisers and not racers. This misses the point that a sailing boat needs to be able to sail in light winds. Of course as wind strength increases the boat remains easy and simple to sail with all lines, including reefing lines lead back to the cockpit. Equally the traveller is located out of harms way on the targa bar but also easily trimmed from the cockpit.

A principle of being safe at sea is the ability to sail the boat and not leave the security of the cockpit in troubling conditions. That is easily achievable on the 1260.

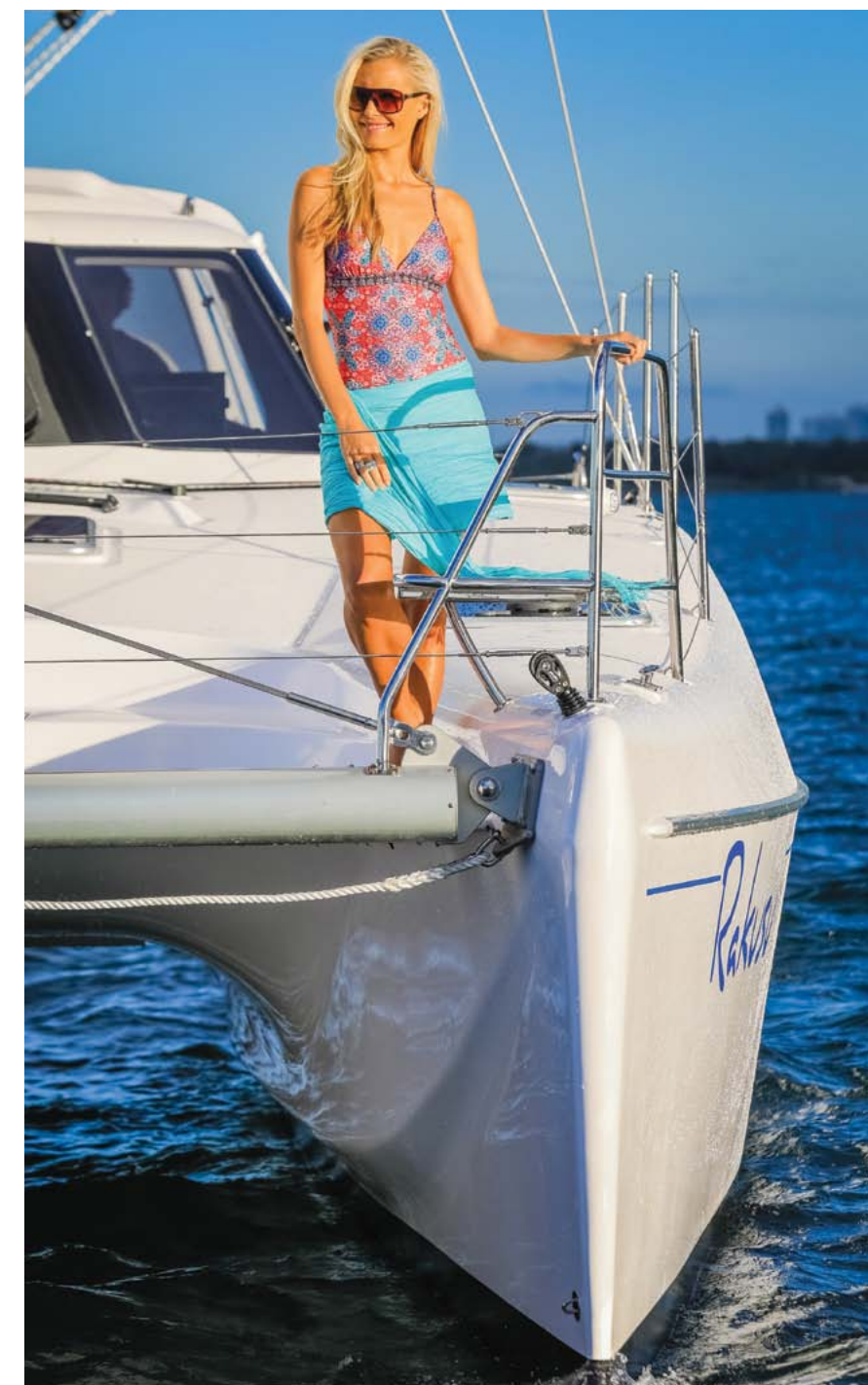
Following that theme the Seawind 1260 maintains a commitment to a flat cockpit saloon floor with out the need to climb ladders to attain the helm. That's has significant safety advantages as well as making the boat far more communicative. Whilst standing at either helm it is possible to talk to anyone in the saloon, cockpit, galley or nav station. For a cruising couple the safety benefits of this cannot be overstated. This arrangement brings with it a further advantage, when boats have the helm raised they must have the boom raised. This presents a number of negatives, accessing the boom/sail to undo the sail bag, check lines, rerun lines and the like is easy on the 1260. Additionally boats withe raised helms and raised booms have the disadvantage of reducing the sail area for the same mast height or having to to increase the mast height to maintain sail area. In many locations (in this case Moreton Bay where the boat was reviewed) there are impediments to the amount of air draft that can be managed. The access between southern and northern Moreton Bay is restricted by power lines with a 20m air draft at Highest Astronomical Tide.

Of course a key component of safety at sea is build quality. Seawind's have a very strong record of strength of construction reflected in the reasonable insurance premiums charged for this brand. The Seawinds across the range have been undergoing refinement in many areas and on the 1260 that has included making the furniture from lighter composite materials with no loss of strength but enhanced performance and or payload.

BELOW LEFT: Bathroom in four cabin version.

BELOW RIGHT: Open galley design with greater storage.

BOTTOM: Flared hulls have a narrow waterline with buoyancy.



BELOW LEFT: The Seawind 1260 is a strong performer offshore.

BELOW RIGHT: Pop-up barbecue enclosed in a hatch.

Alfresco galley with sink for food preparation.

Large comfortable steps and boarding platform.

The reviewed boat is a four cabin version destined for the Whitsunday charter fleet but it is expected that the three cabin version will remain the mainstay of the production run. Common to both variants is the new, refreshed cockpit arrangement. Whilst Seawind will not deviate from their commitment to twin helms on the flat cockpit floor, there was a demand from some customers for a refreshed cockpit treatment, accordingly the 1260 now has a rear targa seat arrangement with a sink and barbecue in



ABOVE L-R: Seawind's famous tri-fold door system.

Starboard queen cabin.

Port island queen bed and owners cabin.

their own cabinets with storage and covers integral to the arrangement. This appears to be a sensible compromise to offering more cockpit amenity without detracting from the safety of a clear unobstructed and safe working platform.

It is pleasing to note the high standard of the fittings on the boat, an All Yacht Spars (Brisbane Australia) mast, a freezer from ICEER in Brisbane, deck gear from Lewmar, Muir anchor windlass, Brookes and Gatehouse electronics to name some major components. Also pleasing was the overall build quality on the reviewed boat. Stainless welding for example is at the 'best' end of the market without doubt.

Internally the galley down convertible saloon arrangements remains and works work but has been

refined with different construction methods for the furniture and different style aesthetics in place with the finishes a more modern contemporary baltic look. For the dyed in wool conservative a teak and holly and timber bulkhead finish remains on the option list. Also on the option list is a galley up arrangement but frankly this is both unnecessary given the sensible helm placements and undesirable as you would end up



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Open galley design.



Gas stove and oven.



Interior saloon.



Aft daybed with ice coolers.



Internal day bed in saloon.



Sailing inshore.

with a small galley and a small saloon and still have to access the hulls to get pantry and pots and pans etc. Seawind is to be commended for refining the concept to include this option but it is doubtful any serious experienced sailor will choose it.

Externally the boat is safe to move about on and has excellent external wet and dry locker space. The saloon roof is easily and safely accessed for putting the main away etc and all the nonskid surfaces are very grippy.

From an engineering perspective the builder has retained 29hp Yanmar engines as the standard propulsion fixture. However given the sailing efficiency of this boat its not likely they will run up a lot of hours!

The Seawind 1260 has been refreshed in design, refreshed in build processes and construction methodology but remains the reliable cruising sailing boat that the company is famous for. Well done Richard Ward and the folk at Seawind.