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#156 May/June 2019
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Helming was done under the shade of the bimini but viewing the sailplan required me to stand outboard and a remote winch control for jib sheeting was at my fingertips. *Image Kevin Green*



A smooth topside profile reduces windage while wide decks with Flexiteek nicely complete the Seawind 1600's topsides. *Image Kevin Green*



A boom gantry extension on each side is a lightweight solution to support the mainsail. *Image Kevin Green*



Twin outboard H50 winches easily controlled the mainsail and there was a preventer inbuilt to the boom as well. *Image Kevin Green*



The first hull of the 1600 (pictured) launched in 2017 and the second one (our review boat) has been modified to commercial charter standards so has gained weight but the essential sleek design remains. *Image Seawind*



The Seawind 1600 heralds a major change for the Australian company's philosophy, reports **KEVIN GREEN**.

S seawind Catamarans is an iconic Australian brand that moved its business to Vietnam during the last decade to make itself more competitive in the increasingly challenging international market. The move has given it increased access to supply chains and the growing Asian market where this stylish new 52 footer should be right at home. Known for its range of quality cruising catamarans the company has recently began to expand the brand, firstly with the 2018 cruiser-racer 1190 Sport and now with a completely new design from iconic supermaxi design house Reichel Pugh.

The designers of *Wild Oats XI* and host of other successful supermaxis clearly know how to create fast boats but this has been their first step in doing it with catamarans, so I was particularly interested to see the finished boat after having visited the busy yard in Ho Chi Minh City that is shared with sister company Corsair Marine. During my visit I walked through the first two hulls that were under construction but these were modified by composite experts Gurit Engineering and the interiors improved by outside designers. The result is a sleek looking performance catamaran that is now making its Australian debut, in time for the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show, while in Europe a third

hull debuts at the La Grande Motte multihull show (April 24-28, 2019) where I hope to see it as well.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In the yard I remember noting how the angled lines of the 52ft 1600 contrasted strongly with the more rounded profiles of Seawind's best selling 1160 and 1250's. The first hull of the 1600 launched in 2017 and the latest one has been modified to commercial charter standards so has gained weight but the essential design remains. Looking at hull number two, recently arrived in Queensland, the first word that comes to mind is 'proportion'; in that the all parts of this Seawind 1600 look in proportion – that is the topside height in relation to the length, the coachroof height in relation to the deck and from behind the fairly wide beam is in proportion to the length. This also cleverly hides the increased beam running aft on each hull to bear the loads that cruising sailors require.

The topside of the Seawind 1600 benefits from being fairly conventionally laid out: sheltered aft deck with twin helms outboard behind the coachroof while wide decks flow forward to the bows where trampolines predominate rather than fibreglass structure to reduce both weight and drag. Cleverly, despite the essential accoutrement of a performance catamaran – dagger boards in each hull – these are flush with the deck when retracted so further enhance the sleek overall design of this boat. Yet another unusual design feature is the retractable rudders that sit at the very back of the hull to allow quick removal (for cleaning or retracting in shallow waters).

AL FRESCO LIVING

Cruising catamarans are all about living space and most folk spend a lot of time topside; which requires plenty shade and water access in our tropical climate. This is something boss Richard Ward at Seawind has been aware of throughout the history of his company, and despite outside designers penning this 1600 model the

YET ANOTHER UNUSUAL DESIGN FEATURE IS THE RETRACTABLE RUDDERS THAT SIT AT THE VERY BACK OF THE HULL TO ALLOW QUICK REMOVAL (FOR CLEANING OR RETRACTING IN SHALLOW WATERS)



FROM TOP: The racing style high-aspect retractable rudders pivoted on their forward edges so weren't balanced, creating some heaviness to the steering but that's the price you pay for the enhanced performance (lift and lateral control). *Image Kevin Green*

The galley has lots of storage space, Corian worktops, twin sinks, three burner gas oven and an L-shape which can brace cookie at sea. *Image Seawind*

The galley adjoins the diners on the aft deck and note the step-down into the saloon but good scuppers should keep it dry. *Image Seawind*

THE BOOM IS CONTROLLED BY A DOUBLE MAINSHEET SYSTEM, WHICH IS IDEAL FOR A CATAMARAN'S WIDE DECK AS IT CAN BOTH TRIM AND BE A PREVENTER WHILE **AVOIDING THE TRADITIONAL HAZARDOUS TRACK** RUNNING ALONG THE TRANSOM

same philosophy continues. So there's wide moulded steps on each hull leading up to the aft deck where the fibreglass bimini protects both steering consoles and surrounding bench space. Underfoot synthetic Flexiteek is intended to be comfortable yet hard wearing unlike the real variety. Nestled in the forward starboard corner is a dining table with L-shaped seating. Sail controls are very much part of this cockpit – a centralised pod arrangement mid-transom surrounded by seating – which shows that this boat is aimed at the

discerning sailor who seeks performance along with home comforts. So, for instance when I'm sitting in the comfortable bucket seats at each helm with my hands on the light GS Composites wheels I can see clearly forward to give a good racing line. This proved very workable when at sea, but more about that later. At the helm the B&G instruments were easily viewed and remote control for the central winch pod allowed fast trimming of the jib while engine throttles were handily placed on both helms, so ideal for coming along side on port or starboard. For that run ashore the carbon davits holding the rigid inflatable look ideal, giving the dinghy just enough clearance from the water to avoid most waves.

PERFORMANCE RIG

The Brisbane made All Yacht Spars double spreader rig (21m) is well supported with wire shrouds, twin sets of spreaders and secured by composite chain plates. The alloy mast is stepped just ahead of the coachroof, which has moulded steps that allowed me to easily reach the boom. Here a gantry extension on each side supported the Doyle Dacron cruise laminate sail and



LEFT: Nearly all lines run aft and note the moulded steps for easy access to the boom. *Image Kevin Green*

ABOVE: An effective dinghy davit arrangement with enough water clearance plus that essential of cruisers – the transom barbecue. *Image Kevin Green*



along with the lazy jacks this worked well for us at sea; allowing the crew to easily move along the boom, between the gaps in the solar panels.

Crewmates Todd and Chris safely stood alongside the boom, with feet firmly planted between the solar panels, to douse the mainsail. *Image Kevin Green*

Alongside the mast is the track for the self-tacking jib and most lines run from here via a gutter under the nacelle and back to the winch pod at the transom. It's a system I've used successfully on French built Catana catamarans. The only downside is spotting any wear but running a mousing line through should be easy enough. Our review boat's sail plan was modest, given



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FROM TOP: Welcome to the pleasure dome – the functional but stylish saloon has a spacious galley, navigation station and dinette. *Image Seawind*

The aft portside guest cabin has good sized single bunks with ventilation on three sides, and these can be changed to a double. *Image Seawind*

The entire starboard hull is dedicated to the owner with island bed aft, vanity and forward is spacious longitudinal bathroom. *Image Seawind*

its job of being a skippered chartered boat, but on standard models a genoa would be fitted to balance the sail plan and perhaps a furling Code 0. Our boat had a bagged asymmetric with snuffer that flew from the retractable bowsprit.

The boom is controlled by a double mainsheet system, which is ideal for a catamaran's wide deck as it can both trim and be a preventer while avoiding the traditional hazardous track running along the transom. A pair of Harken 50's outboard on each transom control the mainsheet plus a centralised pod one above the row of jammers for most other lines including three for the reefing. Unlike the Catana pod which got congested with three winches, the Seawind 1600 simply has one winch and this worked well during our sail on Moreton Bay.

Crew working the running rigging are well protected under the fibreglass coachroof extension covering the entire aft deck. Most sensibly, there's a gap forward which is ideal for both visibility and air flow in the tropics. Cleverly Seawind has created a water catching gutter with outlets on both sides of the coachroof extension (to complement the watermaker installed).

The wide sidedecks and Australian survey standard safety lines ensure safe passage to the bows where seats on each side create a social area alongside the trampolines. Two large storage lockers around the mast host the tankage, generator and leave plenty space for fenders and other gear. Between them the vertical windlass sits in a locker with enough depth to avoid the rode piling up and gutter safely takes it below the central beam to the anchor. A sizeable cross beam and wide dolphin striker supports the forepart of the hulls and a GRP extension sheaths the retractable bowsprit; so all solidly built. Storage lockers in each hull, behind the collision bulkheads complete a well laid out foredeck on the Seawind 1600.

OWNER'S LAYOUT

The low profile exterior and sloping saloon bulkheads of the 1600 belies a roomy interior, something that designers Reichel Pugh created by dropping the bridgedeck a foot or so from the main deck. The compromise here is 6ft plus saloon headroom but arguably less bridgedeck clearance (quoted at 0.8m). A deep gutter with scuppers separates the saloon

from the aft deck, and once inside a spacious interior is revealed with galley on the aft starboard quarter overlooking the transom. Ahead, on the forward part of the saloon is the large navigation station on starboard with settee space running athwartships alongside an adjustable table. Below it is the battery bank and ahead in the outside lockers is the tankage so an ideal arrangement for centralising weight on the Seawind 1600. The arrangement is also ideal for viewing the large screen TV on the port aft quarter in the saloon. Joinery is light beech with precise joins, smooth coamings and study fixtures throughout. This also creates a bright and modern environment inside the Seawind 1600.

The U-shaped galley has a lot of storage and bench space around the three burner gas stove/oven. Two deep sinks and two chest fridges plus a front opening Vitrefrigo one (and another in the aft cockpit) should ensure the stabbies and other perishables are taken care of. Yet more overhead storage surrounds this area plus another slide out set of shelves beside the TV bulkhead. And there's enough fiddle moulded into the Corian worktops to prevent your G&T from sliding off. The aft galley is convenient for serving the guests on the outside deck who are sheltered by the large fibreglass bimini.

Looking at the three cabin accommodation, the 1600 is a dedicated owner's boat, with the entire starboard hull for the sailing couple with large double bed aft, lounge midships and bathroom forward. The port hull has two cabins with twin beds aft, which converts to a double, while forward is a narrower double and a bathroom between. Headroom, volume and ventilation is good throughout the accommodation. Electric heads and moulded floors with good sized square sinks are other features of the ablutions on the Seawind 1600.

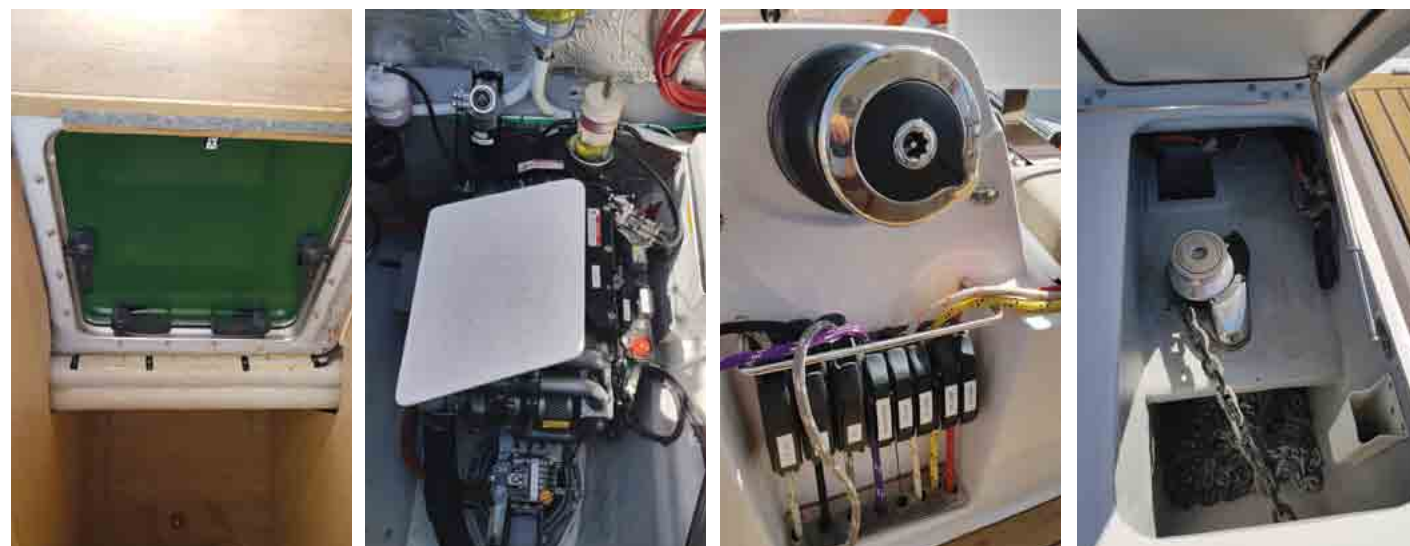
BUILD AND SYSTEMS

Our review boat was built with extra stringers and some bulkheads to meet Australian survey standards but apart from that shares the same build as the other 1600's (built to CE and ABYS standards) so the infused epoxy/foam hull has extra rigidity from kevlar/carbon structures designed by Kiwi specialists Gurit. The hull drawings show significant hull rocker which aids manoeuvring the 1600 (with no need for a bow thruster). For upwind performance composite daggerboards are used but hidden below decks while the twin rudders are retractable; allowing the 1600 minimise damage should it be grounded. I also believe the boat is capable of being beached as the hulls have a solid shoe 30cm wide on each side. I've used race



TOP: The navigation station is ideally placed with views fore and aft. *Image Seawind*

ABOVE: Both bathrooms had electric heads, spacious showers and moulded surrounds for easy cleaning. *Image Seawind*



L-R: Escape hatches are essential but these were below the hull steps; instead I'd prefer removable planks for quicker access to them. *Image Kevin Green*

Plenty of workspace around the Yanmar 80hp saildrives with all systems above the bilge for easy access. *Image Kevin Green*

Most lines are fed under the nacelle to this central pod location on the middle of the transom with single electric Harken 50 winch. *Image Kevin Green*

This sizeable Lewmar vertical winch/windlass with rode running through a gutter is an effective anchoring setup; just add a second bow roller for bluewater cruising. *Image Kevin Green*

boats with these high aspect rudders, including Alan Carwardine's Stealth models and they give good grip with some lift at higher speeds but aren't balanced so can feel heavy.

Looking at the main systems, the upgraded 80hp Yanmar sail drives are accessed from the aft deck and there's plenty of workspace around each with all systems and service points above the bilge level for easy access. Here also can be seen the large stainless linkages to the rudders and on portside is a Spectra 54l/ph water maker (with air conditioner in another locker on the aft deck). On-board power comes from the engine alternators, and the 800w solar panels on the bimini, plus stored power in a bank of Mastervolt AGM batteries in the saloon which uses a 2200w Mastervolt inverter.

SAILING MORETON BAY

I find the water often runs out of Moreton Bay so there's been some sandbanks with my keel marks on them in the past. But a rising tide and a boat with retractable foils eased my apprehension as I motored the Seawind

1600 out of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, where dealership Multihull Central has just opened its new office. Under power the twin Yanmar 80 saildrives with Gori three bladed folding propellers pushed us to a maximum speed of 9kts with the revs at 2,500 before I throttled back to an economical cruising speed of 8kts where fuel consumption showed 5.2 l/ph and the Yanmar spinning at 1900rpm.

Motoring into the wind, our crew from Multihull Central went to work. The main halyard runs to the aft pod electric Harken so was steadily hoisted while at the helm I stepped onto the sidedeck to ensure it cleared the lazyjacks. Alternatively, on my own I could have used the remote buttons for this central winch to hoist it (but not slacken it) myself. With the big top Dacron Doyle fully battened mainsail hoisted I steered us off the wind so that the self-tacking jib could be easily unfurled. Its furling line is a neat arrangement that runs in a gutter tube along the port gunwale and is typical of the high level of detail that has gone into this boat. As the Seawind 1600 gained speed, I pointed our bows towards north Stradbroke Island while watching all the

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LEFT: Simple but effective joinery on the sliding cabinetry. *Image Seawind*

INSET: The washer/dryer in the owner's bathroom can be operated with the generator set running or shore power. *Image Seawind*

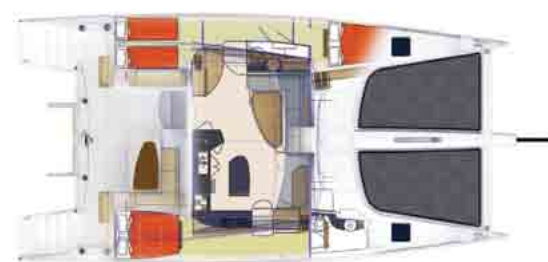
light blue patches on the 12inch B&G plotter where 6m of water means deep on Moreton. With the jib control sheet now on the central pod winch I could control it from the helm so trimmed it tight as I pushed the Seawind 1600 hard to windward, reaching about 40° with boatspeed 4kts in the light 8.1kt breeze; a fairly good performance for this heavyish boat with Dacron sails. It made me want to try hull number three which launches in Europe soon and is a more standard (and lighter) version. The composite helm felt fairly heavy which probably reflected the high aspect, unbalanced rudder design combined with the sturdy linkage system. The downside of this is more amps used in your autopilot but that's the price you pay for performance foils, where the racing helmsman rather than the autopilot is doing the work.

Putting the helm down, we tacked nimbly through about 90° despite the light pressure and the boat kept this momentum on the new tack while I easily walked between the helms to resume my perch on the windward side. As the day heated up the winds increased to 20kts as we prepared to gybe home. This would have been challenging on some cats, however the twin sheet arrangement on the 1600 allowed us to quickly centralise the mainsail using the winches on each side while the jib slid over by itself on its track. Off the wind, with daggerboards half up, the lack of wetted surface again benefited our speed as the 1600 didn't loose much momentum. As pressure rose to about 22kts the first of the three single line reefs was put on the pod winch (after the halyard had been lowered) which showed that this system worked well, and all completed from the safety of the aft cockpit. The Seawind 1600 clearly relished the flat water sailing on Moreton Bay and as our bows pointed north, the urge to continue towards the fabled Great Sandy Strait and cruising grounds beyond came to me; one day perhaps and hopefully on a Seawind 1600.

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SEAWIND 1600 SPECIFICATIONS



The three cabin layout of the Seawind 1600. *Image Seawind*

Price	\$1,145,000 (review boat in 2C survey (ex factory excluding taxes)) USD\$1,045,850 (review boat in 2C survey (ex factory excluding taxes))
LOA	15.74m (51.8ft)
LWL	15.70m
Beam	7.9m
Draft (daggers down)	2.6m
Draft (no daggers)	0.54m
Draft (lifting rudders down)	1.6m
Bridgedeck clearance	0.8m
Displacement	13,000kg
Engines	2 x Yanmar 57hp (80hp option)
Fuel	750L
Water	600L
Sail area	
Mainsail	100m ²
Jib	44.5m ²
Code	0 92.5m ²
Asymmetric Spinnaker	220m ²
Design	Reichel/Pugh
Builder	Seawind, Vietnam
Sea trial video on	www.multihullcentral.com



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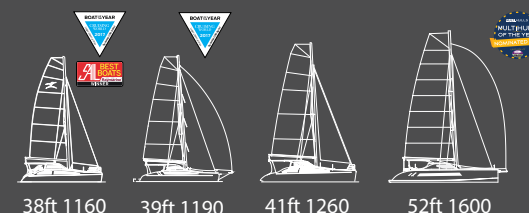
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