

PDQ 32

This little sister to the PDQ 36 incorporates refinements that in some ways make the cockpit more comfortable and the boat easier to sail.

Our first look at PDQ catamarans was when we test sailed its 36-footer (see the review elsewhere in this book). Much of what we said of the PDQ 36 applies to the newer PDQ 32. The boats are built in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, and much of the workforce is comprised of former Whitby Boat Works employees (Alberg 30, Alberg 37, Whitby 42, etc.).

The PDQ 32 was introduced in 1996. The concept was to offer a smaller, lighter and less expensive alternative to the 36. With a base price of \$126,500 FOB Whitby, it hardly can be considered inexpensive, but compared to the 36, the difference is appreciable.

The Design

Like the 36, the 32 has fairly conservative proportions, but with an edge toward performance, which should make it quicker than some other cruising catamarans.

Displacement of the 32 is 7,200 lbs., 1,000 lbs. less than the PDQ 36. But it's almost 5' shorter, so its displacement/length ratio of 108 seems a little high compared to the 36 Classic model at just 88. We noted in the earlier review that in his book, *The Cruising Multihull*, author Chris White says fast cats have D/L ratios of between 50 and 70, and slow cruisers about 100 to 120. This would seem to make the PDQ 32 a bit on the slow side, but D/L ratios don't tell the entire story. Both the 32 and 36 have displacement/sail area ratios of about 19, which indicates ample power to drive the hulls.

The beam-to-length ratio of the 32 is .52, meaning length overall is nearly twice the beam. For sake of comparison, the PDQ 36 has a BOA/LWL ratio of .53. This is the traditional target—waterline twice the length of beam—though some catamarans, such as



Specifications

LOA	31' 7"
LWL	31' 0"
Beam	16' 0"
Draft	3' 2"
Displacement	7,200 lbs.
Sail area	443 sq. ft.

the Lagoon 37, with its 20' beam, 33' 4" waterline, and .60 BOA/LWL ratio, come in much higher. As we said in the earlier review, "On the one hand, increased beam improves stability, permits carrying more sail area, and reduces the possibility of hull waves converging and causing interference. On the other hand, narrower cats are easier to park in marinas." The bottom line is that the PDQ 32 has a sensible, safe BOA/LWL ratio.

Interestingly, the 32 has deeper draft than the 36—3' 2" compared to 2' 10". Both are fixed fin keels, which is the standard configuration for production catamarans. A few, such as the Gemini and Catana, offer centerboards, which improve windward performance by at least a few degrees and reduce leeway, but are more expensive to construct and may present other problems, such as making a banging

noise, marine growth inside the trunk, the risk of getting jammed, etc. On a multihull, we'd take that risk, but recognize why most companies don't offer centerboard options. John Farrow of PDQ told us that the company has engineered boards as an option, but buyers simply aren't interested because of cost and perceived complications. We guess this reinforces the notion that buyers of cruising multihulls are less interested in performance than one might think, basing their purchase decision instead on other attributes, like no heel, wide decks, large and separate cabin spaces. In any case, the somewhat deeper draft of the PDQ 32 should be considered a performance plus.

Rigs on cruising catamarans usually look rather stubby, and the masthead rig on the PDQ 32 is no exception. With an I dimension of 40' 10" and a sail area of 443 sq. ft., it's a bit smaller than monohull rigs on boats of similar length. For example, the Beneteau First 325 has an I of 41.6' and sail area of 489 sq. ft. The Catalina 320 has an I of 43' 7" and sail area of 521 sq. ft. Sail area of three performance-oriented boats—the B-32, J/32 and Beneteau Oceanis 321—are 500 sq. ft., 515 sq. ft. and 500 sq. ft. respectively. The Gemini 105M cat carries 515 sq. ft. of sail. Production builders of multihulls tend to keep the rigs small to keep them safe. But all that really suffers is light air performance; when the wind blows, a decent multihull will take off, even when fitted with smaller size sails.

The PDQ 32's fully battened mainsail measures 268 sq. ft., and the 175 sq. ft. jib does not overlap, which makes tacking and trimming simple. At least one owner, however, has equipped his boat with an overlapping genoa, which made quite a difference in performance.

In our review of the PDQ 36, we digressed about underwing clear-

ance. If the wing is too close to the water, it will tend to pound in heavier seas. The problem is that when there are accommodations built over the wing, you don't want the cabin top 12' off the water—the center of gravity gets too high, windage becomes ferocious, looks suffer, etc. So the wing is lowered. The underwing clearance on the PDQ 32 is about 40" forward, decreasing to about 23" aft. The latter figure is minimal and will cause some pounding, but we still prefer it to the submersible nacelle of the Packet Cat and Prout designs, though the nacelle does soften the ride and provides increased headroom, it also increases wetted surface area.

The PDQ 32 has a clever cockpit design that allows two levels of seating, all under a hardtop that has proven quite popular. In fact, the 36 now comes with a hardtop, and retrofits for older 36s are available. To help solve the headroom problem in the saloon, the hatch is very wide and slides forward so that persons standing in the cabin, just aft of the dinette table and walkways port and starboard, have full headroom (6' 11") under the hardtop. When the hatch is closed (and it doesn't have to be often if you have acrylic windows connecting the hardtop to the deck), you stoop. Nevertheless, we found the cockpit of the PDQ 32 delightful. While not too large (5' 6" across the sole), there's plenty of seating, good visibility on the top tier, easy access to the deck, yet a feeling of protection and shelter.

Construction

One of the things we like about PDQ boats is the quality materials and generally clean workmanship. A modified epoxy resin (AME 5000) and tri-axial

With its shallow fin keels the PDQ 32 will make some leeway upwind, especially in light air but, like most cruising catamarans, with the sheets eased and a bit of wind, it accelerates nicely.



knitted fiberglass fabrics are used in the hull and deck. The mast is supported in part by a carbon fiber-reinforced deck beam. The hulls are solid glass below the waterline and cored with Klegecell foam above the water, an arrangement we think makes a lot of sense. Each hull has an air-tight compartment forward, which provides a measure of safety in the event of collision, and the keels also have sacrificial sections. Vacuum bagging is used for good bonding and glass-to-resin ratios. When you poke around in lockers, you don't see a lot of unfinished glass. Pieces seem to fit. You get the feeling that care was taken in putting everything together.

Good quality hardware is used throughout. The spar is supported by three 5/16" stays plus diamonds. There is no backstay. The stainless steel chainplates are bolted outside the hulls. There's a lot of Harken equipment: travelers for both the self-tending jib and mainsheet, and a #32 jib sheet winch. Rope clutches are Spinlock Easylocks. There are double lifelines on 24" stanchions. Handrails are stainless steel (there's no wood on deck), and cleats are 10" anodized aluminum. Pull-pull steering is by Whitlock. Seacocks are made of Marelon® by Forespar.

Tankage consists of a 30-gallon aluminum fuel tank aft of the cockpit, a 44-gallon polyethylene water tank under a shelf forward of the dinette, and a 30-gallon fiberglass holding tank that can be emptied offshore by means of a Y-valve and hand pump.

With so much interior volume, there needs to be lots of ventilation hatches, and the PDQ does not fall short: Four Bomars on deck, above the amas and over the dinette; four smaller ones aft; and three in the cockpit. Plus there are two solar and one standard mushroom vents. Additional light pours in through the smoked acrylic windows over the saloon.

Interior

As can be seen from the accommodation plan, there are three double berths, two in private staterooms aft (54" x 78") and the third being the convertible dinette

in the saloon (64" x 64"). Headroom is 4' 11" in the saloon, 7' 2" in the amas, and 6' 5" in the aft cabins.

In the tropics, the dinette will likely be the most comfortable berth because it will have better ventilation. Aft cabins tend to get stuffy, in spite of overhead hatches. This is owing to their location. Nylon wind scoops fitted to the hatches will certainly help, though they should be tall to reach over the obstruction of the house and dodger.

While there's a good deal of white fiberglass showing, the overhead liner is vinyl. The sole is teak and holly. Plywood is used for the access boards. In the sleeping cabins, the ceiling is carpeted and there is ash trim. Each has a small hanging locker and some cubbies for stowage.

The galley has a propane stove top by Plastimo and a microwave above it. A propane fridge by Dometic is located at the forward end (because catamarans don't heel much, this is a practical selection). Although there isn't much counter space and stowage is limited, the designer has worked in a few clever aids such as a pull-out cutting board.

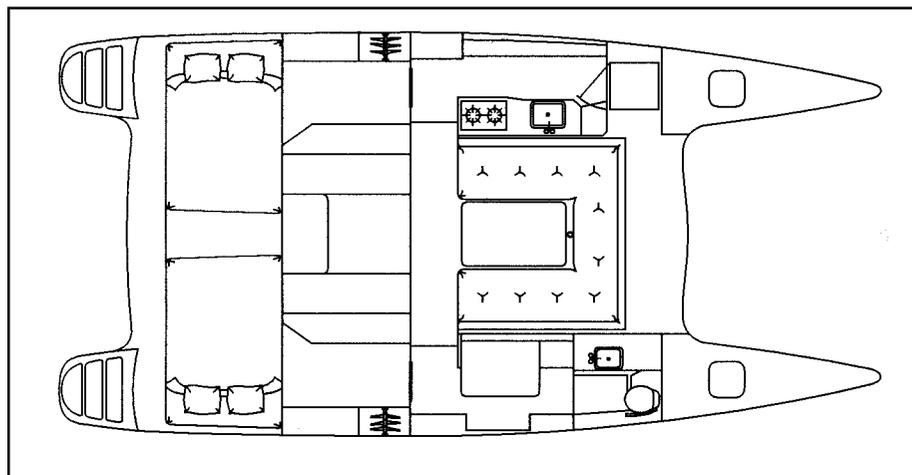
Performance

As we said of the PDQ 36, the same is essentially true of the 32: These are basically 7-10-knot boats. During our test sail of the 32, we took out both the outboard and diesel models. As expected, the outboard model, which is both lighter and has less drag with the motors lifted clear of the water, is about a knot faster.

Upwind in 15- to 17-knot winds, we made about 5-1/2 knots. Beam reaching in the same winds, we made 6 to 6-1/2 knots. With a little following sea, we hit nearly 8 knots.

Most owners are buying 90% asymmetrical spinners for off-the-wind sailing. The tack snaps on to the bow of the windward ama, a pretty simple operation. And with a sleeve, setting and dousing the sail is pretty fail-safe. We set one on the 32 and watched the knotmeter climb.

We keep hearing stories about how fast these cats are when the wind screams, and we don't doubt it. Some owners wait for such days to



There are two private staterooms aft and the dinette table can be converted to sleep two more persons. While voluminous for a 32-foot boat, looks can be deceiving. A person working at the nav station obstructs access to the head, counter space in the galley is minimal, and stowage is somewhat limited.

thrill themselves with double digit speeds. Other owners don't care for the perceived risk, and, we think, find it fairly easy to depower the boat and keep speeds at what they feel is a more comfortable level.

In any case, you'll probably sail faster than on most monohulls of equivalent length, at least when reaching. How much is difficult to say, but in our experience it's about 25% under most conditions, up to and exceeding 50% when the wind is blowing, the sheets are eased and the sea conditions right.

Conclusion

About 20% of PDQ owners opt for the twin diesels.

The reliability and power of diesel inboards make them attractive. However, the twin outboards can be retracted and performance significantly enhanced. Plus, they're less expensive and can be taken to a shop for service. The lost battery charging power can be replaced through the addition of solar panels on the hardtop and possibly a wind generator mounted aft on a pole.

The basic Classic model with Yamaha 9.9-hp. outboards sells for \$126,500. The LRC (Long Range Cruiser) model, is no longer available with 9-hp. diesels, only with 20-hp. Yanmars; it sells for \$142,500.

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