

World Cat 290 Express Cabin

BY DEAN TRAVIS CLARKE

HAVE THE REPUTATION FOR BEING A HUGE FAN OF POWER multihulls. And I agree with the laws of physics that dictate a catamaran will ride much more smoothly in rough seas than a monohull. In fact, if you travel around the world to those places with some of the roughest sea conditions, such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, you'll find a preponderance of cats. And those of you who bemoan the aesthetic shortcomings of power cats, take heart: Sheer lines, radius curves and other pleasing features have moved power cats away from the "brick through the water" category into the realm of "pleasing to the eye."

PERFORMANCE

A spring day in Beaufort, North Carolina, provided calm waters offshore,

with seas only two to three feet at their worst. Unfortunately, that represents flat-calm to the World Cat 290 EC.

My speed runs showed an optimum cruise of 29 mph at 4,500 rpm, which yielded 1.8 mpg. Wide-open throttle moved us along at just a hair better than 40 mph at 5,800 rpm while still getting 1.3 mpg. Thanks to the reduced drag of a catamaran hull form, you can expect all-around better fuel economy compared to a monohull of the same size.

Another aspect of cats some people find difficult to adjust to is the way most turn — by heeling over to the outside of the arc. Not World Cat. In fact, all World Cats turn on a dime, dropping the inside corner and spinning almost as fast as a PWC. With the combo of performance and silky power-assist steering, precious few monohulls can claim such responsiveness without tossing a passenger overboard in the process.

You'll also appreciate that with a catamaran — especially one powered with the high-torque Suzuki 250 four-strokes — you experience no bow rise when climbing onto plane, so you never lose sight of the horizon nor those boats in front of you.



And finally, those pesky laws of physics again step into the fray when trolling or drifting in a beam sea. You won't find any monohull with the same beam that rides nearly as stable.

FISHING

World Cat takes advantage of catamaran technology on all its boats but makes considerable distinctions between its cruising and fishing models. In addition

to a virtually clear wake at trolling speeds, the 290 EC features a walkthrough transom, allowing you to release or boat a fish with far greater ease than leaning over a gunwale.

Again, stability makes the World Cat a terrific platform for fishing with an extremely short roll moment. But one of my favorite fishing features comes from the squared-off bow and four bow cleats. When bottomfishing, you can move the boat laterally across structure by simply moving the anchor line from one cleat to another.

Other fishing-friendly features include a 40-gallon insulated, lighted livewell with a 1,100 gph magnetic drive pump behind the centerline helm. World Cat also engineers a comfortable, aft-facing seat atop the livewell along with a footrest to make watching your trolling spread less onerous. In addition to full-column water input, a clear gasketed lid and

baby-blue interior, the livewell provides a rigging station with cutting board and tool storage. Find built-in lure and tackle drawers in the bridge-deck bulwarks.

If the two in-gunwale rod holders won't suffice, choose the optional hardtop, which provides an integrated radio box, recessed lighting, numerous rod holders and floodlights for the cockpit. And please leave some fish in the sea rather than filling the twin 62½-gallon fish boxes.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Overall, the 290 EC feels larger than its LOA thanks to a large cockpit and huge queen-size berth belowdecks. Speaking of belowdecks, World Cat has done a masterful job of dressing up the interior with beautiful wood, rich fabrics, a small but comprehensive galley and a head that's bigger and nicer than what I used to have in my house in my younger days.

In addition, up on the bridge deck, the centerline helm also offers quite an expansive space to mount the latest in 12-inch displays. With such a large, comfortable berth below, you may want to consider opting for the 8,000 BTU air-conditioning system that chills the cabin, head and cockpit. However, you might not feel the need for air conditioning once you experience the great ventilation provided by

the portholes, overhead hatches with screens and solar-powered exhaust fans that suck fresh, cool air into the cabin.

Because of the nature of tying two separate hulls together, catamarans need to be exceptionally strong. World Cat bonds the hull and deck through its branded Unibody construction that uses advanced methyl-methacrylate adhesives. This process transforms two hulls into one solid, seamless unit.

Each hand-laid hull consists of fiberglass and composite materials. The transom is built from fiberglass and high-density urethane composite with aluminum backing plates molded in to deal with the greater stresses incurred from the higher horsepower and heavier weight of four-stroke outboard power.

As I've always said, you can't tell if you love a catamaran until you take it out in the worst possible weather. Try that once and you'll be sold too.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	29 ft. 1 in.
BEAM	9 ft. 6 in.
HULL DRAFT	1 ft. 3 in.
DEADRISE	Catamaran
WEIGHT	9,700 lb.
FUEL	250 gal.
MAX HP	500 hp
MSRP	\$173,396 (w/ twin 250 Suzuki OB)

World Cat
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SUZUKI 250 HP FOUR-STROKES

TYPE	V-6
DISPL.	245.6 cid
MAX RPM	6,300
HP/LB RATIO	0.43
FUEL SYSTEM	Digital EFI
GEAR RATIO	2.08:1
WEIGHT	580 lb.
ALT. OUTPUT	54 amps
MSRP	\$21,250

NOTABLE STANDARD EQUIPMENT

- Stand-up head with shower
- Frigid Rigid 81-quart ice chest with stainless-steel bait tray
- Pop-up stainless cleats
- Magnetic catches on doors
- Unique fender pop-up tie-off in cockpit gunwale

IMPRESSIONS

A boat with all the advantages of a multihull and none of the disadvantages makes for surefire popularity.

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