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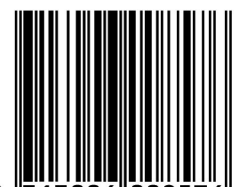


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# HOME ON THE REEF

Experience the wonderful Outer Reef 70 in a unique try-before-buy program. **TONY MACKAY** takes the plunge





After a life of corporate, business or professional achievements many people are desperate for a little adventure to spice things up. Our modern world offers a vast selection of opportunities, many of which involve a flurry of travel brochures to whet the appetite, but none as exciting as the chance to become master and commander of your own little ship. Turn the first page on

the Outer Reef 70 brochure and a world of tropical seas, luxury cabins and every modern convenience is ready at the stroke of a chequebook to whisk you away to a well-earned slice of paradise. In the case of our test boat, one has the marvelous opportunity to charter and try before you buy (see details hereabouts).

Under bright blue skies and with Sydney's Pittwater at its sparkling best, the Outer Reef 70 looked at once capable and

purposeful, her conservative good looks both tasteful and timeless. The all-white hull and superstructure are complemented by quality stainless steel fittings, the only teak being the cockpit coaming and laid boarding platform. Large square stainless steel portholes and twin anchors draped over her powerful bow give strength to the lines and add to the image.

Constructed in Taiwan and meeting a variety of stringent standards, the Outer Reef has quality that's evident from the first close inspection. Bi-axial, vacuum bagged vinylester are among the words of the build specifications from a company with experience and long-term skilled trades. Only two per cent contribution comes from American engineers, who fine-tune the finished product, mostly in the electrical sections.

Outer Reef, being a smaller manufacturer, is proud to offer a semi-custom boat and the yard actively encourages owner participation in the design specs and involvement in all stages of the build process. Our test boat *Aroona* was unusual in that it was built as an in-survey



Remote control allows for pinpoint berthing accuracy from the cockpit or sidedecks. Flybridge moulded white fibreglass helm (tops) contrasts with the traditional decor of the pilothouse.



Turn the first page on the Outer Reef 70 brochure and a world of tropical seas, luxury cabins and every modern convenience is ready at the stroke of a cheque book...





charter cruiser rather than the standard model, however, she was fitted with a range of worthwhile upgrades, which a knowledgeable buyer may have ordered in any case.

### OWNER FIRST

In this particular respect the Australian representative, Andrew Coffey, will quickly become the new buyer's best friend, with his longstanding experience in running big boats and a genuine desire to

be helpful in an authentic way. Based at The Quays Marina in Sydney, Andrew understands all about buyers' needs and is eager to both listen and please. The test boat had been fitted with this experience in mind.

The boarding platform incorporated detachable safety rails and twin semicircular stairs up to the cockpit. A watertight submarine-style door allows access to the aft crew's quarters, which features a two-berth cabin, en suite and a well-fitted galley. Despite the slightly lower headroom due to the increased survey construction specification, the crew cabin is nevertheless a most commodious commissary and suite that will store all manner of equipment for extended cruising. Think of it as a full guest suite in its own right.

A bulkhead door leads into the air-conditioned engineroom so that all servicing and maintenance can be carried out without disturbing poop deck passengers engaged in the serious business of partying. A second engineroom door is located forward into the master suite

There's unobstructed movement from the cockpit into the saloon (above) or up the stairs to the split-level flybridge (below left) with upper helm and seating and a lower entertainment centre featuring a large capacity barbecue. A watertight door accesses the crew quarters (below right).

that allows access or inspection internally when bad weather would prohibit safe use of the outside decks.

The twin 503hp Caterpillar C9 diesels are nicely installed with all the usual high-end fixtures, including filtered ventilation with fire shutdown, colour-coded fuel lines and twin Raycor filters to each engine. Four fuel tanks offer 7571lt of fuel giving long-range capabilities if required and 1514lt of freshwater is onboard, too.

Stainless steel safety rails surround each engine and have very convenient tool trays above for almost-surgical maintenance procedures. Rubber flooring, unlike the dreaded checkerplate, is easy on the knees and retards noise reverberation. It is neat, tidy and well conceived.

A pair of almost inaudible Northern Lights generators offers 22 or 16kVa for house power. A vast range of survey



There is no shortage of outdoor entertaining areas and it is more a case of pick your view



### HIGHS

- ▶ Classic timeless exterior and interior styling will not date
- ▶ High-quality specification and engineering
- ▶ Smooth and capable sea-keeping ability
- ▶ Low-maintenance exterior finishes
- ▶ Parsimonious fuel consumption
- ▶ Full-beam flybridge with huge boat deck

### LOWS

- ▶ Lack of opening windows in saloon and galley
- ▶ Slightly heavy steering
- ▶ Galley was a little dark due to black granite
- ▶ Lots of refrigeration will require generators running for most of the time





These traditional interiors usually stand the test of time as opposed to some more modern attempts at 'bling' styling...



FEATURE TEST



**[TRYBEFOREYOU BUY]**

Our test boat was ready for departure to Cairns, where she takes up a charter role doing "luxury cruising to remote locations" Lead on McDuff! Even if your current account will not stretch to a purchase, *Aroona* and her crew will give you the holiday of a lifetime cruising the Great Barrier Reef and the Kimberley coast in season. Nemo, his other stripey friends, and the charms of coral reefs await your exploration. Fly in to selected islands or airstrips and *Aroona* will be waiting with chef, dive instructors and a master skipper. Should you be flush with funds, this is the unique opportunity to "do a Goldilocks" and enjoy the pleasures of the Outer Reef 70 before you buy. A brief visit to [www.aroonaluxuryboatcharters.com.au](http://www.aroonaluxuryboatcharters.com.au) and you will require little additional convincing. Or contact Ross Millar, phone 0409 903 193.

Magnificent picture windows ensure the best of views from the luxurious saloon (above). The galley (right) is forward and up a level, splitting the saloon from the sociable pilothouse (left) with sofa and table behind the shiplike helm.

equipment was included along with Victron inverter chargers, chilled-water air-conditioning, hydraulic thrusters, stabilisers, watermakers, and so on. The spec list rolls on like the Dead Sea Scrolls. Two portholes offer natural light and air.

**SOFA TEST**

The upper cockpit has an aft sofa upon which I settled while the crew rushed to serve chilled wine and a sushi platter on the wide inlaid teak table. The ability to serve a large banquet is easily imaginable. Doors to the sidedecks provide weather insulation if required and clear covers could easily encapsulate

this cockpit in the event that inclement weather might disturb the pages of your latest book or fritz the iPad. A dayhead makes for very convenient guest use, preventing them from snooping down below. One would hate them to overstay their welcome.

The Outer Reef has a spacious, full-beam flying bridge, its entertaining area including sink, fridge, icemaker and large-capacity GE gas-barbecue all serving twin dining tables with L-shaped sofas. There is no shortage of outdoor entertaining areas and it is more a case of pick your view. All-white fibreglass would tempt some to install outdoor carpeting, however, this did not diminish the impressive vision from the bridge and aft boat-deck that could double as a dance floor. Arthur Murray afloat, as it were.

A large davit will lift and secure the tender of choice, while the

hardtop looks good and is easy to maintain with a ladder to the roof. There's also huge weatherproof storage under the dash for all manner of equipment, while the sturdy railing above the Perspex windscreen allows one to hang on without damage to the screen itself. Indeed, all the railings are first-rate in their positioning and quality and most have the added bonus of a simple screw to detach them for polishing or repair. Twin Stidd helm chairs preside over a comprehensive dash, which duplicates all the important navigation or operating functions.

The side and fore decks are fibreglass with nonskid sections, and are practical in their cleaning and maintenance, particularly with an absence of teak trim (a high-maintenance issue in the tropics). The foredeck is accessed via a Portuguese bridge-style bulwark with a door to starboard, various storage cupboards and





With the Quiet Roll Spay system there's no "slop slop" coming from under the bed in the forward guest cabin (right), while aft, and to port, is a twin cabin (below), with upper single and lower double berth.



a two-seat sofa just perfect for watching the world go by. A Maxwell hydraulic windlass is mounted on its own self-draining mud-collecting pan, with twin stainless steel anchors on separate bowrollers that can be operated from either helm station or the deck. Salt and freshwater deckwash outlets are here with a further freshwater outlet aft.

Outer Reef uses a drain manifold system, where all on-deck and flybridge surfaces are drained to a single waterline outlet, eliminating dirty streaking of the hull and unnecessary through-hull fittings. Why waste precious

crew-time cleaning when they could be put to more productive tasks such as shelling prawns or peeling you a grape?

### REEF VIEWS

From the aft cockpit, double doors lead to the luxurious saloon with two L-shaped sofas to port and a convertible table for dining or drinks. Two occasional chairs are to starboard and an LG 42in LCD TV with Bose surround-sound lifts from a cabinet to offer a home-theatre experience afloat. Nature is experienced through magnificent picture windows, framed and hiding blinds and curtains, all

softly backlit at night.

A multitude of interior décor options are available with a rustle of the fabric and carpet samples. Outer Reef prides itself in giving the customer whatever they want. The test boat had a teak interior, however, the use of very casual and colourful beach-themed cushions created a more relaxing holiday mood than the usual formal styling.

The joinery is satin finished and to a high standard; the total effect being restrained elegance rather than of clever gimmickry. These traditional interiors usually stand the test of time as opposed to some more modern attempts at 'bling' styling, which age quickly and in some cases with horribly alarming results. The Outer Reef will still look very smart in 30 years time.

The galley is placed up on a split level and fitted with a black granite bench and splash-back that to my eye looked a little heavy. An appliance specialist from LG had assisted with the specification and the appliances were all smart and shiny, including my particular must-have, an exterior-vented range hood. No doubt, one could order whatever are your favorite appliances. A double-door fridge-freezer had copious pantry space either side and there can be little or no excuse for the gourmet chef, other than he or she having too good a time elsewhere onboard to be bothered cooking. Indeed, aboard *Aroona*, a dedicated chef will have nothing better to do than prepare an endless stream of gourmet treats.



The master suite is amidships and full width with capacious walk-in wardrobes for Madame's multitude of cocktail frocks



### THE PLANE! THE PLANE!

When you're time poor or just want to brazenly show off, why not skip the journey and simply fly into your cruiser (devoted crew on standby)? Sydney by Seaplane will whisk you from selected destinations in Sydney right to your swimplatform, or pick you up and deliver you to a luxury waterfront restaurant. Perhaps, just an afternoon joy flight or zipping to the shops if you need a lemon for the drinks. They were the perfect accessory for our cruise on *Aroona* and this summer's must-have experience. Captain Steve Krug will look after your needs. For more information, phone (02) 9974 1455 or log on [www.sydneybyseaplane.com](http://www.sydneybyseaplane.com) Look for the planes with the snappy navy blue stripes.

Moving forward across the teak and holly sole, you enter the spacious and well-equipped pilothouse. Again, whatever is required can be installed. Meanwhile, securely seated in the Stidd helm chair, you front an array of Furuno electronics, autopilot, controls for the sat-phone and TV and a host of other electrical goodies intelligently installed. Three windscreens, cleaned by Exalto wiper/washers, offer a clear view ahead across the bows. Side access doors with split sections, can be partially or fully opened depending on the weather and are fully waterproof in heavy seas. A convertible guest sofa with table is positioned along the aft end of the cabin and is the position of choice when travelling and doing a little backseat driving.

A stairway to the flybridge with large Perspex and stainless steel-frame door will let in light or insulate from poor weather. Another companionway leads



forward and down to the lower accommodation. A magnificently-crafted laminated teak banister rail assists you below to the lower lobby...

### NO SLOP SLOP

The forward guest cabin has a spacious queen-sized island bed with plenty of hanging and drawer space and every

Above photos provide two views of stylish amidships and full-beam master cabin with athwartships bed to starboard.



**FEATURE TEST**



The Outer Reef 70 sips the fuel at 9kts, and quietly, too. There's no shortage of outdoor entertaining areas, including in the undercover cockpit (above).



appointment needed for a comfortable night pondering the effectiveness of the Quiet Roll Spray system, which explains the no "slop slop" under the bed (we hope to test this to the fullest during a future rendezvous). Aft and to port is a twin cabin with an upper single and lower double bunk of generous dimensions. Both these cabins have their own en suite heads with showers, including portholes for ventilation. The master suite is amidships and full width with capacious walk-in wardrobes for Madame's multitude of cocktail frocks. As

touched on, a full-height door leads to the engineroom — very useful in heavy weather. More importantly, a king-sized bed awaits your pleasure after a hard day's cruising/eating/drinking/swimming or whatever. The en suite shower and head stalls, with portholes, are separated by a vanity section. Entertainment systems, air-conditioning and all manner of luxuries await the guests. A washer and dryer plus linen press are tastefully concealed, as the merest hint of such drudgeries being quite ruinous to holidaymakers.

**MUTE CATS**

Getting underway, the twin 503hp Caterpillar C9 diesels were muted and discreet. Underwater exhausts swished away noise and exhaust to a large extent, although there will always be some backpressure on all boats that brings a whiff of fumes. Electronic instrument panels provide all the necessary info and running maintenance will most likely be dipping the oil and checking the coolant.

The optional Glendinning electronic controls offer a warm-up facility, troll selection for fishing or go-slow idling, and synchronisation of engines at speed. Three remote points

allow a handheld controller to be connected and, combined with hydraulic bow and stern thrusters, most skippers will be able to berth her with professional dexterity.

The Outer Reef specification is for Northern Lights generators, usually the specification for superyachts, and our boat had a 16 and 22kVa for alternate use. Lifeline AGM batteries for engines and house power are attended by Victron Centaur battery chargers, while silent 240V is supplied by a Victron 4kW inverter charger. Cruisair chilled-water air-con offers complete climate control for all cabins. Fuel transfer pumps, hydraulic steering, separate 24 and 240V power boards, and a host of well-conceived and specified equipment will make for trouble-free cruising. Glendinning shorepower leads are an added bonus with their retractable convenience.

Nothing seemed to be a problem for the Australian Outer Reef representative and the only thing required is the spirit of adventure. Heading out into Cook's Broken Bay, we really were at the gateway to the world. With an Outer Reef there is little to stop you realising your cruising dreams.

**Facts & figures**

**OUTER REEF 70**

**PERFORMANCE & HANDLING**

The hull performed smoothly and quietly thanks to Outer Reef's patented quiet spray rails, which also apparently stop that irritating and sleep depriving "slop slop" when anchored or moored. She showed no hint of slamming in the short, sharp swells and when running abeam, the Trac stabilisers eliminating any unpleasant rolling.

It was all peace and quiet sliding along at 9kts and sipping the fuel, however, a push of the throttles to flank speed had her on the whip at a very satisfying 13.5kts. This capability is very reassuring when you simply want or need to get out of a situation in a hurry. The big Cats seemed happy to be of service at the skipper's whim. Still, what is the rush, and the glide upstream seemed effortless and serene at our former 9kts.

**PRICE AS TESTED**

**POA** Charter from \$5500/day for up to seven people.

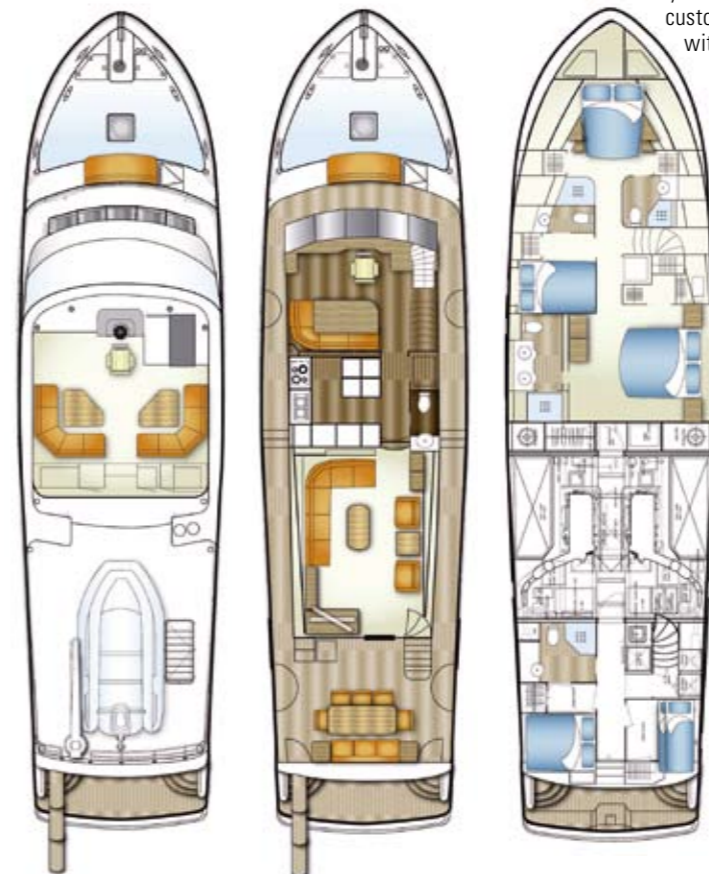
**OPTIONS FITTED**

Semi-custom boat built to 2B survey for chartering and try-before-you-buy liveaboard trips to The Reef and elsewhere. To this end, the Outer Reef 70 was the full package and fully loaded with everything from watermaker to twin generators and extra refrigeration, satcoms, wireless internet and Austar TV, as well as a full armory of fishing gear, dive compressors and tanks, 5m side-console tinnie tender for barra fishing, Hobie pedal-powered kayak for 'yak fishers, and loads more

**PRICED FROM**

**\$US2.426 million** plus duty and GST

**LAYOUT**



**GENERAL**

**MATERIAL:** Handlaid FRP with vinyl ester barrier lamination  
**TYPE:** Semi-displacement planing hull  
**LENGTH OVERALL:** 21.33m  
**BEAM:** 5.6m  
**DRAFT:** 1.52m  
**WEIGHT:** 50.5 tons

**CAPACITIES**

**BERTHS:** 7 plus 2/3 crew  
**FUEL:** 7571lt  
**WATER:** 1514lt  
**HOLDING:** 757lt

**ENGINE**

**MAKE/MODEL:** 2 x Caterpillar C9 ACERT  
**TYPE:** Electronic turbo-diesel  
**RATED HP:** 503 (each)  
**DISPLACEMENT:** 8.8lt  
**WEIGHT:** 946kg

**SUPPLIED BY**

Outer Reef Yachts,  
 Quays Marina,  
 1856 Pittwater Road,  
 Church Point, NSW, 2105  
 Phone: Andrew Coffey on 0416 045 142  
 Email: andrew@outerreefyachts.com

**OUR VERDICT**

There is plenty of everything on the Outer Reef models and a cunning and informed buyer would carefully be guided to customising a well-found cruising boat with timeless appeal.

The aft crew cabin (below) has two berths, galley and an en suite, plus access through a bulkhead door to the engineroom (bottom).

