

COMFORTABLE
CRUISER





STORY BY JOHN WOOLDRIDGE
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF OUTER REEF YACHTS

**DESIGNED WITH THE
CRUISING COUPLE IN MIND, THE NEW
OUTER REEF 63
TACKLES OPEN WATER IN STYLE**

We were making good time cruising in the Atlantic, delivering an Outer Reef 63 from Ft. Lauderdale to Stuart, Florida, for the 2009 Trawler Fest when a fast-moving cold front swept by from the north, not at all unusual in January. I was aboard with Fred and Melanie Azar, principals in the American Global Yacht Group, getting to know the newest design from Outer Reef Yachts under way, when the wind-speed indicator started climbing precipitously from below 10 to 25 knots, with gusts of 30 knots. Whitecaps appeared, changing the surface of the northward-flowing Gulf Stream from a mild chop to a seemingly endless procession of steep, compact 4- to 5-foot waves on the nose.

And the ride changed from comfortable to—well, just a little bit more active, made more stable by the broad surfaces aft and by the big TRAC stabilizers swinging into action. A good handhold here and there, thoughtfully placed by Outer Reef, made moving around inside the boat effortless as we checked the rest of the cabins to make sure that small, moveable items were secured. The wipers functioned flawlessly when occasional spray doused the forward windshield panels, while the air conditioning serving the pilothouse kept us dry and comfortable. It was not a bad day to be on the Atlantic in an Outer Reef 63.



The Outer Reef 63's full-beam aft deck, a pleasant spot for relaxing with a good book, is well protected by the boat deck overhang.

I expected no less from a classic pilothouse trawler built by the company founded by Jeff Druke, also a principal in AGYG, a man whose 15 years of building luxurious, efficient passagemakers were defined by a commitment to excellence and a focus on getting the details right. When I met Ray and Susan Cope, experienced cruisers and owners of an Outer Reef 65, they shared photos of their boat during the build. In one of the photos, there was Jeff Druke, sitting on the sole, covered in dust, working face to face with the naval architect and engineer, Chaucer Chen, and the craftsmen of the Tania Yacht Company in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

The OR 63 is an extended version of the OR 58, a series that the company decided to build when the OR 65 was the smallest model offered. Slips for boats over 65 feet were going for a premium, and new insurance regulations mandating a certified captain on boats over that length threatened to restrict ownership by couples

who wanted to be owner-operators. Lines for the 58/63 series boats evolved from the OR 65, with a change in the deadrise aft to help optimize top-end speeds when time is of the essence and to achieve greater efficiency at cruising speed.

The hull is a solid, handlaid fiberglass structure that is solid fiberglass below the waterline and cored with PVC foam above. Full-length fiberglass longitudinal stringers and cross members that stiffen the hull are also foam cored, as are the decks, house, and flybridge. The emphasis is on strength without excess weight, which gives this twin-engine cruiser a substantial leg up when it comes to fuel consumption. A full keel extends below the arc of the props to help protect the running gear in case of accidental grounding. Selecting the 63 over the 58 adds not only a highly usable aft cockpit but also waterline and volume that can be used for, among other things, a larger master stateroom.



Standard engines are a pair of 503hp Caterpillar C9 diesels, which can top out at 13.5 knots or cruise comfortably at 10 knots, burning a combined 10gph (a gallon per mile). At this speed, the standard tankage of 1,000 gallons gives a range of approximately 900 nautical miles, assuming a 10 percent reserve. With its additional length and volume, there is room in the OR 63 to add two additional 150-gallon wing tanks for extended range. Twin 700hp Caterpillar C12s are also an option if two to three additional knots of top-end speed are desirable and increased fuel burn is acceptable. Smaller engine packages are also available.

Besides fuel efficiency, the OR 63 was designed for the cruising couple with comfort and luxury in mind. The saloon is a perfect example, designed by Argonautica Interiors with leather armchairs like you'd find at home facing a plush, built-in, L-shaped settee. Between the two, a fixed-height table with quartersawn panels on the exterior of the folding leaves opened to display a gorgeous starburst inlay. The interior craftsmen also paid lots of attention to fit and finish in the teak joinery, with beautifully book-matched panels lining the sides and bulkheads, creating window boxes for elegant Roman shades. Natural light floods in when they are raised, and the views out the sides are easy to enjoy even when sitting down. Where the lamps hang,



Abundant seating, great views all around, and a large helm console are signature features of the flybridge.

stunning panels of bird's-eye maple add visual interest. A large Sharp flat-screen TV, recessed into the aft-facing side of the galley counter, was perfectly positioned for all to enjoy. Headroom in the saloon is approximately 6 feet 7 inches, and there is a stout handrail running down the center of the ceiling to steady you in a seaway.

OUTER REEF 63

LOA	63' 1"
LWL	57' 11"
BEAM	17' 2"
DRAFT	4' 10"
DISPLACEMENT	73,000 lb. (half load)
BRIDGE CLEARANCE	25' (to top of steaming light)
FUEL	1,000 U.S. gal.
WATER	300 U.S. gal.
HOLDING TANK	100 U.S. gal.
GENERATOR	16kW Northern Lights
ENGINES	Twin 503hp Caterpillar C9 ACERT diesels (standard)
MAXIMUM SPEED	13.5 knots (standard power)
CRUISE SPEED	10 knots
RANGE AT CRUISE SPEED	900nm (with 10% reserve)
DESIGNER	Chaucer Chen, Outer Reef Design Team
BUILDER	Outer Reef Yachts
BASE PRICE	\$1,712,500

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Going forward, there are two steps up to the teak-planked galley and pilothouse level, a flooring choice I would specify over the high quality carpet in the saloon, but that's just my preference. To starboard, opposite the galley and under the stairs leading from the pilothouse to the flybridge, there's a large pantry and a full-size GE Profile refrigerator-freezer. I first saw this feature on the OR 65 belonging to the Copes, and it works well in this layout, too.

Countertops were marble (Corian is standard), with ample backsplashes where appropriate. The cabinetry overhead doesn't hang down so low as to obstruct the view of the saloon from the galley—a nice feature that lets the chef and guests converse. Storage cabinets all around are expertly installed and decorated with quartersawn and inlaid panels. Against the port side and beneath a good-size window is a

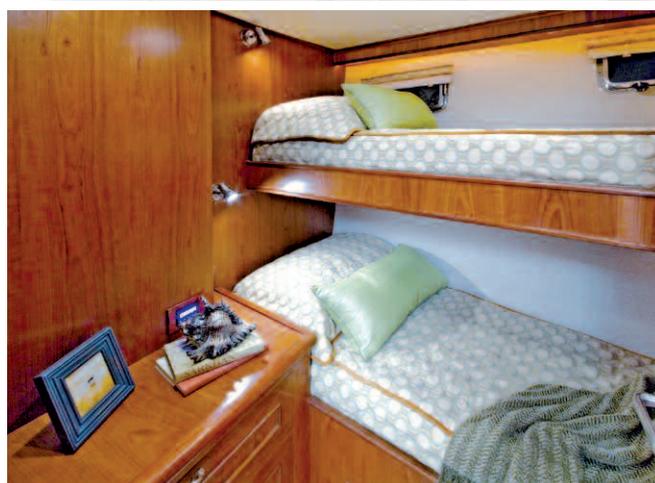


Top: The pilothouse has excellent raised seating, and the large console provides room for charts, guides, and the occasional snack. Above: Teak, leather, and contemporary fabrics grace the saloon, which is contiguous with the galley for dishing with the chef.



deep and enormous stainless steel sink. All of the appliances—garbage disposal, five-burner electric range, trash compactor, dishwasher, microwave—are full-size General Electric units just like the ones found in fine homes everywhere, and easy to replace if ever required.

Walking forward into the pilothouse, I found a wonderful view of the ocean through more than 180 degrees. A raised bench aft gives guests and crew a view of the waters ahead equal to that from the helm,



Above left: Meticulously crafted cabinetry, custom marble counters with backsplashes, and full-size appliances are found in the galley. Top right: Shoji-style screens add privacy to the master stateroom, where the island queen berth invites a restful night's sleep. Above right: The portside guest stateroom has over-and-under singles, perfect when grandchildren come for a visit.

where a single Stidd helm seat is specified to help make long days run shorter. Twin watertight doors allow easy access to the wide side decks on both sides. A full suite of Raymarine electronics was installed on this boat by Concord Marine in Ft. Lauderdale (they also installed the optional Bose home-theater system). They regularly work with Outer Reef customers to select and preplan the installation of wiring and electronics at the factory. There are good chases and conduits, should you ever want to update or add more electronics in the future, but it is more efficient to get it done ahead of time. Concord makes the final adjustments and ensures operational reliability during the final commissioning.

The stairway to starboard leading down to the accommodations level has a nice safety rail for the quarter-turn stairs. In the locker to starboard, there's a

built-in vacuum system, and to port behind a louvered door, a stacked Bosch Axxis washer and dryer set. Turn aft and open the solid teak door, and you'll enter the master stateroom. A queen-size bed set athwartships from portside has wonderful access along both sides; flanking nightstands offer three drawers each. Over the padded headboard in this boat, sliding shoji screens add style and privacy when desired, or open to allow natural ventilation and light from opening portlights. To starboard, Outer Reef has included an enormous walk-in hanging locker with two hanging racks, perfect for living aboard for long periods. There are more storage lockers on the aft bulkhead, as well as drawer storage under the berth. The master head stretches along the starboard side and has a separate shower compartment large enough for adults.



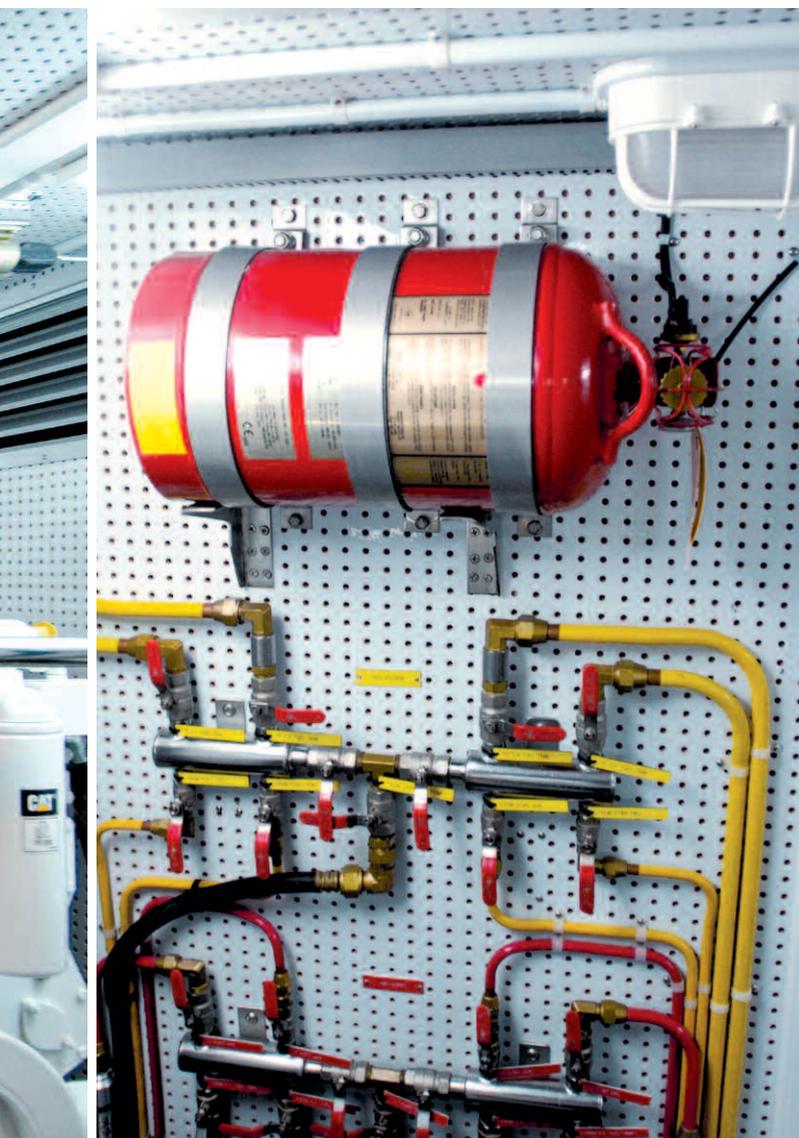
The OR 63's well-lit engine room is laid out for easy access during routine maintenance and is thoroughly insulated to reduce noise.

“There’s flexibility with the layout on this level,” said Fred Azar. “We have clients who want to make the port stateroom into an office, but it could be a walk-in closet or storage locker, too. There is storage everywhere, so that the owners can live aboard for extended periods.”

Aft is the engine room, closed off from the master by a solid teak door and a watertight aluminum door with a viewing port. There’s more than enough room for the one standard and another optional Northern Lights genset, plus the two big C9 Cats. I was able to easily make my way around all sides of the engines, check daily maintenance points, and understand the well-marked fuel management system. Not only were the engine strainers accessible, but there was a freshwater connection nearby for cleanup. To help ensure that the

boat is understandable for the cruising couple, the company includes SeaKits’ Marine Maintenance System program (as well as the SeaKits-compiled owners’ manual), a very complete and thorough reference and action plan for optimal maintenance.

From the motor mounts to the acoustic panels on the engine room overhead, a great deal of attention has been paid to sound attenuation. This paid off under way, as I walked through the interior during our delivery. The lowest sound readings were found in the pilothouse, measuring 63dBA, while the saloon registered 67dBA. Even in the master stateroom, noise levels measured a modest 70dBA, which was impressive, considering that the engine room ventilation and the stabilizers were operating during the entire trip.



Above left: A large Fireboy extinguisher, part of the yacht's automatic fire suppression system, stands ready—just in case. Above right: The aft cockpit on the OR 63 adds versatility and convenience, particularly for those who love water sports.

Leaving the engine room and going forward, there is a guest stateroom to port with upper and lower berths, a hanging locker, and a small nightstand with three large drawers. Across the hall, there's a spacious head compartment with a separate shower and a private entrance for the VIP guest stateroom in the bow. The forward guest stateroom has a double island berth with storage in the base, a large hanging locker to port with louvered vents, and some small drawer storage on both sides beneath the bookshelves.

From the pilothouse, I climbed the starboard interior stairway, with its beautifully carved banister, to the spacious flybridge and boat deck. The deck stretches well aft to cover the aft deck below, and from beam to beam to offer protection for the wide

side decks. There's plenty of seating for guests, a large helm console that will accommodate duplicate electronics, and room left over for an outdoor galley. The boat deck has a davit with a 1,000-lb. lifting capacity and will carry an optional dinghy either fore and aft or athwartships, and there's still space for bikes, kayaks, and other toys.

As we pulled into the harbor at the Hutchinson Island Marriott Resort, I watched with appreciation as Fred and Melanie were able to maneuver the Outer Reef 63 easily in close quarters and tie up with very little fuss. It was the perfect picture of an owner-operator couple making safe harbor at the end of a storm-tossed cruise. From every angle, the Outer Reef 63 had fulfilled her mission marvelously. 🚤