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MEET YOU AT THE OUTERREEF

PHOTOS: ELLEN DEWAR

DAVID LOCKWOOD has a dinner date with the wonderful Outer Reef 63, reeling in the sea miles in comfort before tucking into the calms — and local seafood — of the Hawkesbury River.

The Outer Reef 63 has been conceived to stir the adventurous spirit, to lure the homebody from the lounge to the wide blue yonder, and get the creative juices of the galleying gourmand flowing. In what we're told is a marine-industry first, appliance manufacturing giant LG jumped aboard with a purpose-designed fitout. Gleaming stainless steel and titanium facias grace the side-by-side

fridge and freezer, pyrolytic self-clean oven and grill, four-burner induction cooktop with range hood, and convection microwave oven.

Deploy the stabilisers and whip up a meal en route to your next port of call. And when you and the crew are sated, a full-sized dishwasher, central vacuuming system and separate washer and dryer mop up. Then there are the three plush cabins with big beds

and heads replete with granite counters and man-sized showers. Believe me, you can spend time aboard this far-reaching boat.

After casting the lines and tweaking the joystick for the 16hp engine-driven ABT hydraulic bow and sternthrusters, we sallied forth for a sea trial of the first Outer Reef to sail Down Under. The 63 was craned off the ship only four days beforehand, with around-the-clock tradesfolk and hired hands making

her shipshape. Carpet was laid, grease splodges removed from the decks, and away we went in the big shiny white girl.

A semi-displacement cruiser designed for going places, the Outer Reef 63 leaves nothing much to chance. But with lots of boxes ticked by the new local Outer Reef agent, Andrew Coffey, the boat was something else, with pretty much everything but provisions were packed aboard. So we decided to make a meal of it.

Mid-ocean, as the bow rose and fell off the building easterly swell, Coffey muttered something about "local Hawkesbury River calamari on a fresh pea risotto". The wheel was suddenly yanked to port, the Outer Reef banked through the easterly swell and we were making haste back through Broken Bay for our dinner date.

Quid pro quo? Hardly, try squid risotto.

But more on that waterfront feast later. You're asking: who is Outer Reef?

BANKING ON OUTER REEF

A relative new player in the expanding pilothouse motoryacht market, Outer Reef builds a range of 58 to 115-foot semi-custom boats pitched chiefly at the American market, with various cockpit and layout, plus enclosed-bridge options. The factory is in Kaohsiung, the major manufacturing and shipbuilding centre of Taiwan. But where other more established boatbuilders go about modernising old designs, Outer Reef starts with a *carte blanche* and creates what could be considered modern classics with all the latest cool kit.

The Outer Reef shipyard is ISO 9001 certified. Parent company, American Global Yacht Group, also builds Newport Yachts,

which are sleek Euro-styled entertainers, plus Molokai Straits, which are serious private expedition yachts built from steel and GRP at various yards.

Outer Reef president and CEO, Jeff Drucek, will be in Australia gracing the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show with his presence this year. It's there that this 63 will make its official debut. Drucek built his first boat when he was 13 years-old but these days prides himself on meeting the call and lofty expectations of experienced boaters seeking their ultimate craft.

Meantime, Coffey on Pittwater is a good choice for local representation. He has been around boats for many years including maintaining the gorgeous classic *Cambria*, supporting an America's Cup Campaign, and working as a successful broker. These days, he runs the brokerage out of The Keys



Opposite: A long L-shaped lounge and two tub chairs front a large flatscreen TV in the saloon. Clockwise from left: Full-height bulwarks and sidedecks make for a safe boat, even for the pet pooch to scamper around; Dine or do watersports from the cockpit; Flybridge amenities centre with combo fridge and icemaker; Stateroom has an athwartships king-size bed and screened portlights.

Marina at Church Point, where the Outer Reef office is established. Plans are afoot to open another office in Queensland.

Unusually, the 63 Raised Pilot House seen here is a stock boat as well as the harbinger for the range Down Under. Working closely with the American head office, Coffey created the aforesaid industry-first custom galley fitout. However, the high-volume boat is a lot more than that. There are serious upgrades and options that turn it into a turnkey home-away-from-home.

ENGINEERING FIRST

Engineering is commensurate with a boat built to CE standards for Category A, meaning open ocean wave heights up to six metres and sustained winds to more than 40kts. Peer behind the dash and you will see all the wiring is numbered and coded, with schematics provided within the tome of manuals that include sea trial results of each particular Outer Reef. Some competing boats from Chinese yards arrive here without sea trials, leaving room for error. Not Outer Reefs.

The hull is all handlaid GRP and I'm told a keel protects the running gear — though, as ever, the stabilisers are vulnerable — with vacuum-bagged Divinycell foam-cored sides and decks. Shafts sizes are 2.5in, coupled to a small jackshaft to create clearance for the hydraulic PTOs, while the ZF gearboxes have a 2.431:1 reduction. The four-blade ZF Faster props are 32.5in by 27in pitch and line cutters were fitted in case you run over a

fish trap at night.

With all this good gear, the boat runs smoothly, much like the 12kW and 16kW Northern Lights generators mounted back aft in the engineroom, away from the accommodation plan. In fact, I will go so far as to say this is a boat where you could sleep with the generators running. That said, an inverter and battery banks allow you to go into sleep mode sans such power needs.

Interestingly, all Outer Reefs come with a comprehensive spare parts kit, as well as the SeaKits Marine Maintenance System as standard. The spare parts and maintenance management solution, developed for cruising yachts and workboats in the 40 to 100ft range, allows self-reliant owners and operators to order individual parts or cruising kits online for worldwide delivery, backed by 24/7 service through Coffey at the local Outer Reef offices.

The watertight engineroom on the 63 has standing height for sub-six-footers and access from the owner's stateroom or, for tradespeople, via watertight doors leading off the aft utility room, which you reach from the rearmost deck of the cockpit. The engines breath clean air thanks to inboard vents in the sidedecks and a Delta blower system, plus there are opening portlights for ventilation when servicing the boat at rest.

The boat came with a Cablemaster shorepower lead spool.

Stainless steel work rails trace each Caterpillar engine, along with a surfeit of servicing room, while the engine bearers

HIGHS

- A mover and shaker in the pilothouse market
- Well-received by demanding American long-range boaters
- Custom build with all kinds of options, layouts and finishes
- The best of everything aboard in respect of brands and kit
- Fully loaded and ready to cruise The Reef
- Superb mouldings and finish
- Well-respected local representation
- Impressive factory support system
- Watersports cockpit is perfect for fishing and diving
- Trick galley fitout and great accommodation
- Still within the realms of an owner/driver boat
- Excellent motion and economy at sea
- Dry boat

LOWS

- Big-ticket pilothouse
- New brand on the market
- Split cockpit won't suit everyone
- Vertical ladder to bridge in cockpit
- Mind your noggin when descending the ladder to the utility space
- Underwater exhausts occasionally pop out of the water when running down sea
- Lots of white fibreglass to maintain



are full-length and beefy. There are twin or redundant Racor fuel filters for each engine, an impressive fuel manifold and transfer system with small fuel polisher and sight gauges, rubber-backed lining underfoot and soft panels overhead so you can crane out an engine. The boat comes with a Fireboy system and Reverso oil-changer, too.

The utility space back aft — mind your head as you descend from the cockpit — houses the tropical-strength Cruisair air-con system, the 3000W inverter and 60A/24V and 20A/12V chargers from Victron, as well as the additional long-range fuel tanks. The boat is predominantly 24V on the DC side and the batteries are the AGM type

from Lifeline. Room remains for mounting freezers and storing victuals in the lazarette, where I note a common plumbing manifold for a host of overboard drains, thereby reducing the need for excessive skin fittings.

OUTDOOR LIVING

As you can see there's a lot of cool kit — the best of everything brand-wise — on the Outer Reef 63. An extended version on the yard's 58-footer, the 63 (reflecting the boat's waterline length minus a one-foot extension on the swim platform) boasts a cockpit where you can catch dinner, slip overboard for a dive, and hangout between swims. Though it wasn't yet fitted, there is provision

for a watermaker for endless hot showers. Standard water supply of 1100lt should last a while anyway. The swim platform was teak topped but the decks are predominantly easy-clean non-skid, which suits me.

As with all good passagemakers, the 63 is a safe boat for ageing crew, (grand)kids and the pet pouch to prance around inshore or at sea. Full-height bulwarks and sidedecks trace the boat and there's a Portuguese bridge up front to keep green water at bay. Back in the bay or harbour, you can swing open the gate and park guests on the forward-facing lounge while cruising for views.

The anchoring gear was beefed up for worry-free nights behind the reef. There were



both 75lb (34kg) and spare 100lb (50kg) stainless steel anchors. And there were dual hydraulic Maxwell windlasses.

Though it isn't the biggest in its class, the main or upper cockpit back aft will seat up to eight around the table. There are wing doors to keep the weather at bay and with clears on tracks you create an enclosure. There are also gates for taking on guests and provisioning at two different heights.

But for those who like to entertain, the extended flybridge beckons. A rather vertical ladder leads from the cockpit, but by far

Glendinning electronic shifts, rudder indicator, and more.

INDOOR ACTION

With storm clouds rolling in from the east, we made for the pilothouse, the primary helm station on a passagemaker. Twin ships doors lead back out to the decks and with three separate plug-in stations, you can dock this baby shorthanded using the supplied remote. Underway, crew get to ride on an accommodating lounge before a breakfast table, while the captain has another plush

Accommodation is forward of the pilothouse and down a spiral staircase. But the aft stateroom is even more impressive, featuring a king bed with opening portlights for natural ventilation, and an en suite with supersized shower for the American market and girth-challenged owner. Guests get to choose from the VIP cabin forward with queen bed and the twin-bunk cabin, both of which share the second bathroom.

Cantalupi lighting, satellite TV in each cabin, abundant storage space, granite vanity counters and a smart but timeless

bedding package from our own Sheets Ahoy sees this Outer Reef 63 dressed and ready to please. The hull also has a patented Quiet Roll integrated spray rail system with downturned chines designed to reduce running noise and slap at rough anchorages.

SEA TRIAL

In keeping with the passagemaker market, the Outer Reef 63 isn't a gas guzzler. A pair of modest Caterpillar 503hp C9 electronic diesel engines (there are options for bigger CATs but why bother) delivers a claimed top speed of 15kts. But we cracked 17kts with full water and fuel while surfing one particular swell to our lunch table.

The supplied sea-trial numbers look even more appealing when you pull back the throttles and let the hard-chine 42-tonne semi-displacement hull glide through the water. With full fuel and water, hull speed of about 10kts is achieved at 1600rpm and 20 per cent engine load for 42lt/h and a range of more than 1000nm leaving 10 per cent of the upgraded 4921lt fuel supply in reserve. Back off the accelerator some more and you can cruise at 8.3kts for about 22lt/h on both engines and a safe range of more than

1600nm or probably more like 2000nm.

At seven knots, the boat's safe working range is some 2500nm from the extended tanks and, with those ABT stabilisers with 6ft² fins, the motion is surefooted enough to cook dinner as you reel in the sea miles. The exhausts are the underwater type, and thanks to the fully electronic diesel engines, smoke was noticeable by its absence.

With the stabilisers on auto, the motion was surefooted even up top in the bridge while beam-on to the sea. The only thing rumbling were our stomachs. So we cruised back down Broken Bay at 10kts and ranged into Cowan Creek, eventually leaving the Outer Reef 63 within a short tender ride and clear view of our table at Cottage Point Inn.

Coffey was right. The local Hawkesbury squid and pea risotto was to die for. And a fitting accompaniment to an equally well-crafted passagemaker and pair of keels to take to a dinner date.

You will need more than \$3 million to buy the Outer Reef 63, but it's loaded with everything including the kitchen sink. Range north to outer reefs, the Ribbons, and hook a coral trout from that watersports cockpit and cook up a storm. What are you waiting for?

"... FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO ENTERTAIN, THE EXTENDED FLYBRIDGE BECKONS"

the best access route is the timber staircase complete with newel post, balusters and handy handrail. Once up top, and with the 4m tender (to be fitted) removed on the upgraded 544kg hydraulic davit, there's a surfeit of floor space. Plenty of handrails and extended moulded toerails provide security.

Amenities include a combo fridge, icemaker and an oversized stainless steel gas-powered barbie. Unlike those token ceramic cooktops the size of a postage stamp on some Euro boats, you can feed a crowd on the Outer Reef's barbie.

The sight lines from the central helm proved unfettered over the bow and the hardtop brought relief from the sun. Guests get an L-shaped lounge, the skipper has a top-shelf Stidd number, and the dash was fitted with an impressive spread of electronics — dual Raymarine E120s, Simrad AP25 autopilot, Trac stabiliser controls, ABT hydraulic bowthrusters,

Stidd chair before twin Raymarine E120 screens revealing GPS chartplotter and 48nm radar pages, and CCTV cameras overlooking the cockpit and engine room. A combo fuel and water is overhead, while the safety glass windscreen is 12.5mm thick and fitted with upgraded wipers with freshwater washers.

Anchor down, the saloon comes into its own. An L-shaped lounge and two tub chairs front a flatscreen TV connected to a Bose Lifestyle system that, with onboard inverter, can be enjoyed without having to run either of the two Northern Lights generators.

There's also a wet bar, high/low dinette or drinks table, and deep picture windows that frame the views. The joinery is all timeless satin-finished teak, with burl highlights here and there. The galley is up two steps on the same level as the pilothouse, thereby allowing for an open-plan layout option. Granite counters traced the U-shaped space but a sliding window is optional.

Clockwise from above: Category A rated, the Outer Reef 63 will handle waves to six metres and winds above 40kts; Flybridge has an L-shaped lounge for guests and a Stidd skipper's seat; A rather vertical ladder leads to the flybridge; U-shaped granite counters trace the galley; Inside the watertight engine room.



Outer Reef 63

PRICE AS TESTED

Approx \$3.64 million at 65¢ w/ twin Caterpillar C9s and fully optioned as a custom boat with all the bells and whistles.

OPTIONS FITTED

ABT 16hp hydraulic thrusters; twin Northern Lights generators; full electronics including Raymarine E120s with GPS chartplotter, radar, radios, Simrad pilot, satellite TV; custom soft furnishings; Bose AV systems; chilled-water Cruisair air-con; Glendinning engine controls; central vacuum system; upgraded Exalto wipers; AGM batteries; stainless steel breast plate on bow; hydraulic windlass; granite counters; long-range fuel tanks; extra anchoring gear; pre-plumb and wire for watermaker; Glendinning handheld remote with three plug-in locations; and lots more.

PRICED FROM

Approx \$3.15 million

GENERAL

Material:Fibreglass w/ vacuum-bagged foam-cored sides and decks
 Type:Hard chine semi-displacement monohull with patented Quiet Roll chine system
 Length overall:19.22m
 Beam:5.23m
 Draft:1.47m
 Deadrise:n/a
 Weight:42,000kg (loaded standard engines and gear)

CAPACITIES

Berths:6+2
 Fuel:4921lt
 Water:1135lt

ENGINE

Make/model:Caterpillar C9
 Type:Four-stroke six-cylinder diesel engine w/ common rail, electronic management, turbocharging and aftercooling
 Rated HP:503 at 2500rpm (continuous)
 Displacement:8.8lt
 Weight:947kg
 Gearboxes (Make/ratio): ..ZF 2.431:1
 Props:Four-blade ZF
 Faster props are 32.5in by 27in

SUPPLIED BY

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