

T

hanks to Volvo's IPS system it proves a doddle. Skipper Chris Smith turns the Absolute into the wind, crabs her sideways along the fairway, holds station whilst we adjust the fenders, then glides the 23-ton boat astern to nestle against pontoon as easily as buttering hot toast. I'm seriously impressed.

SPACE & LIGHT

Our brand-new, as-yet unnamed test boat is the Absolute 47 Flybridge (see sidebar). While dockside she's a big, high-sided boat, once onboard the overwhelming impression is of space and light.

The space is a result of both hull volume and height, which provides three distinct levels. The light comes from the humongous cabin and hull windows. And while large cabin windows aren't new, the reason for the hull windows is obvious when going below – without them the sleeping accommodation would be pretty claustrophobic.

From the transom forward, there's a spacious aft cockpit with a roller shade to shield the interior of the boat from the usual Mediterranean stern-to mooring scenario. The galley's located aft just inside the main cabin, adjacent to both the interior dining area and cockpit. Cooking – both oven and hot plate – is electric.

A white Volvo Absolute 47 Flybridge motor yacht is shown from a low angle, floating on clear blue-green water. The boat's sleek design, including its large cabin windows and stainless steel railings, is prominent. In the background, a distant city skyline is visible under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of luxury and modern boating.

Absolute

review

**Absolute
47 Flybridge**

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PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO
BY **ROGER MILLS**

ABSOLUTE 47^{FT}

bliss

We're parking the Absolute 47 back on her Westhaven berth in a 18-knot breeze. The fairway looks awfully small in which to turn the boat around and reverse downwind into the berth. Glad I'm not driving...



The cabin dining table can also convert to a coffee table or extra sleeping as required. The adjacent vertical electric window admits a nice breeze on a hot day.

The forward section of the main cabin has the helm station to starboard with an impressive looking electrical switchboard opposite. Midway between them the companionway provides access to three sleeping cabins and the guest heads/shower, located to port adjacent to the foot of the companionway.

Unquestionably the master cabin is the pièce de résistance of the accommodation. There are massive views either end of the queen-sized bunk, which is cunningly angled to make best use

of the space. There's a generous ensuite aft of this berth, with a separate glass-doored shower.

The twin guest cabins are found deeper in the hull beneath the main cabin. They're configured slightly differently: one has a queen-sized berth, the other twin bunks. All three cabins have ample storage. The only downside with so many different levels is the number of stairs and steps – a little care is required in a seaway.

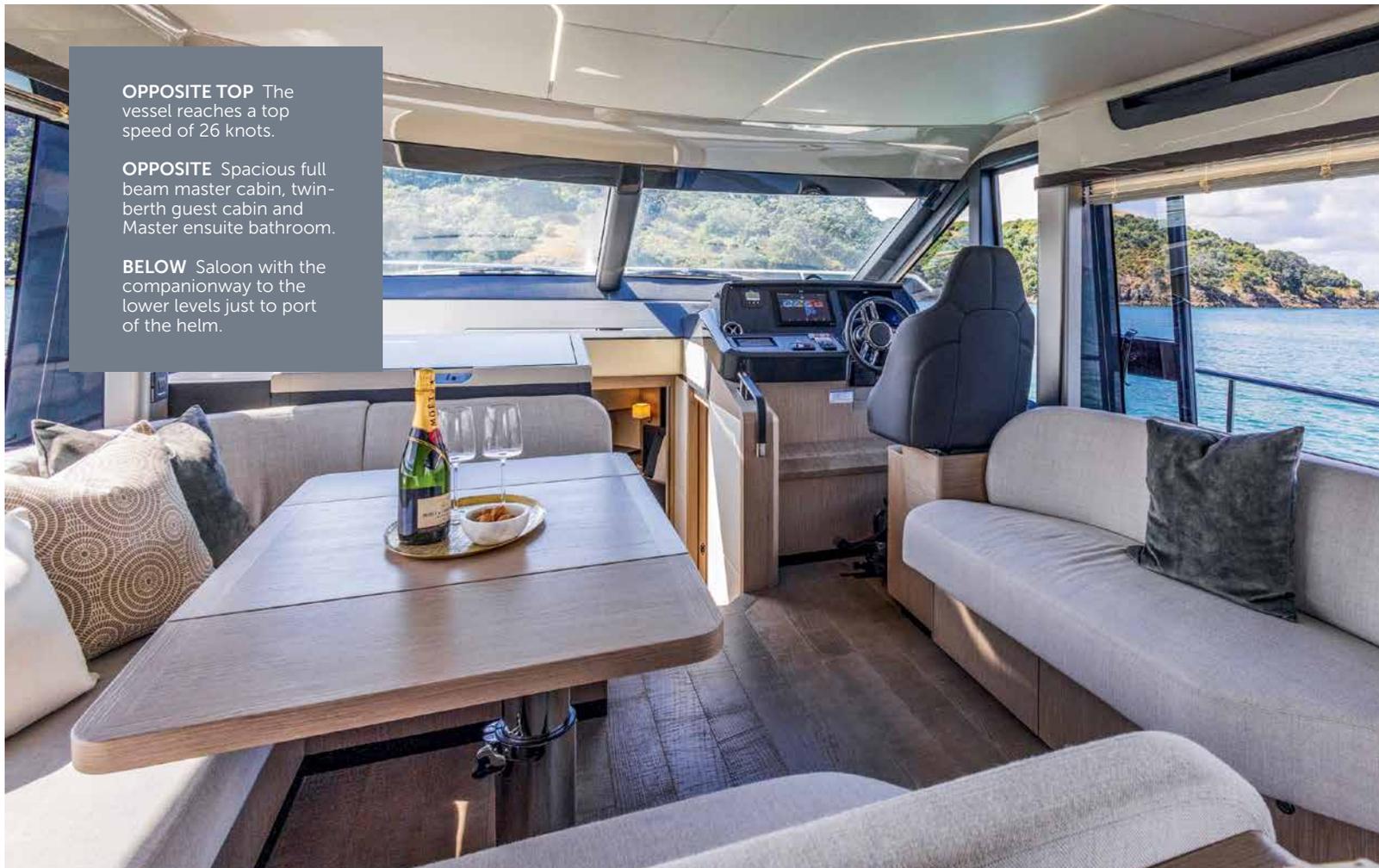
Light and space complement the vessel's luxurious and classy interior. The photos demonstrate the decor far better than any words, but the concealed lighting, switches, colours and fabrics are downright luxurious and wouldn't seem out of place in a top end apartment.

Colour and fabrics choices? Sorry, no. Apart from choosing between fabric and leather, everything else is decided by Absolute's interior designers. According to Absolute's New Zealand agent Gary Erceg, this improves factory efficiency and hence the price. The only interior options are bolt-on items such as air conditioning or extra galley screening.

EASY ACCESS OUTSIDE

One particularly neat feature of the substantial boarding platform is that it can be hydraulically lowered to any depth up to knee-height underwater. This will appeal to divers, swimmers or those paddling young children. The tender could be driven straight onto the platform when fitted with a suitable keel support, then raised for passage making.

The expansive flybridge accessed from the cockpit features a second helm station to starboard, and BBQ, ice maker and



OPPOSITE TOP The vessel reaches a top speed of 26 knots.

OPPOSITE Spacious full beam master cabin, twin-berth guest cabin and Master ensuite bathroom.

BELOW Saloon with the companionway to the lower levels just to port of the helm.



fridge to port. There's wraparound seating aft with a large sunbathing daybed to the front. Weather permitting, the flybridge is the best location to drive the boat from, the height and 360° views giving considerably better situational awareness.

On the front deck just abaft the anchor locker is another seating area, with a table that lowers to make a large daybed.

Apart from the hardtop options mentioned below, there are limited exterior options: a sliding door adjacent to the helm – essential in my opinion – and Mitsubishi hull stabilisers.

ENGINEERING

Fully fuelled and watered, the Absolute 47 Flybridge tops the scales at 23,000kg, and with its three-level windage, it requires some serious horsepower for performance.

This is provided by a pair of Volvo Penta IPS650 units. These consist of D6 six-cylinder, 5.5-litre, turbo-charged, common rail diesels developing 480hp each. These are direct coupled to Volvo's latest generation IPS10 units, each swinging a pair of counter-rotating, forward facing propellers.

The IPS units rotate 22° either side of midships to provide steering. The compact IPS650 units keep all the engineering inside the aft third of the hull, freeing the remaining two-thirds for accommodation.

The spacious engine room is accessed through a hatch and ladder in the aft cockpit floor. There's a nice, wide passage between the engines, an Onan



17.5KWh genset located midships against the transom and twin 800-litre alloy fuel tanks mounted forward of the engines against the bulkhead. On the other side of them are the twin guest cabins.

While the maze of colour-coded pipes, wiring and connections initially seems overwhelming, it's beautifully laid out and a professional technician will have no issue deciphering what's what.

Which raises an important point: the classy interior and simple manoeuvring controls – more on these later – mask the complexity of engine and drivetrain technologies. As with all modern vessels, a scheduled professional maintenance programme should be encouraged for trouble-free boating. Fortunately, IPS is now proven, reliable technology that's well understood by local technicians.

SEA TRIAL

We had a glorious late summer's day for our test – plenty of sun, a few clouds for visual interest and a building nor'east sea breeze. Perfect weather for this style of boat.

The Absolute's hull has been designed specifically to suit Volvo Penta's IPS system and it showed throughout in the boat's easy handling and performance.

There're two distinct control systems, duplicated on the flybridge: your typical wheel and twin throttle/gear levers, plus a discrete joystick. The joystick is the control system of choice in confined spaces and has two movements. Pushing it in any horizontal direction throughout 360° causes the boat to move in that direction. Straight ahead, astern, sideways –



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OPPOSITE Well-appointed second helm station on the flybridge and a neatly laid out, spacious engine room.

LEFT The flybridge on this Absolute 47 was fitted with the optional hardtop.

anywhere you like. Additionally, the top of the joystick rotates, changing the boat's heading correspondingly. The joystick's touch sensitive in either mode – more pressure equals more boat movement.

However, with 23 tons to move, there's a bit of a lag between operating the joystick and any corresponding boat movement, especially in a breeze. One has to anticipate what's required before any wayward tendencies can develop.

The IPS system incorporates Volvo's Dynamic Positioning System (DPS) which, at the push of a button, holds the boat in that exact spot, which we found more than useful when launching and retrieving our photography drone.

Separate to the IPS system, the Absolute has a dedicated bow thruster, however as the IPS gives such good low-speed manoeuvring, it may not get much use.

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CZONE
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RIGHT The Absolute 47 at 20-plus knots making easy work of Motuihe Channel.

BELOW The vessel is a pleasure to helm, upstairs or down.



The Italian designers have done outstandingly well in this respect with the Absolute 47...

Once in open water, the joystick's disconnected at the push of another button, shifting control to the normal wheel and twin throttle/gear levers.

The size and weight of the Absolute meant heading upwind into the 10-knot breeze and 0.5m chop was barely noticeable. I tried a few high-speed turns and the boat responded predictably and majestically. The electric steering is quite low geared and easy to turn.



By the time we headed for home the breeze had climbed to 15 knots and with more to come. It was interesting establishing how hard to drive the boat downwind – 20 knots (SOG) saw us overtaking waves with the boat slowing noticeably as it overtook each one. Buttoning the speed back to 14 knots proved a trifle slow and felt like the transom was dragging. We settled on 16/17 knots, which seemed perfect for the conditions.

According to the onboard instrumentation, 3,600rpm on the



ABSOLUTE YACHTS

Absolute boats are relatively rare in New Zealand, our test boat being one of only nine in the country. However Absolute is a well-established Italian boatbuilding company and local broker Gary Erceg of Yachtfinders Global has been its local agent since 2015. According to Erceg there are four Absolutes on back order and the factory's next available building slot is 2024.

Absolute offers a comprehensive range of boats from 14.63m to 22.35m long. There are three distinct styles – Flybridge, Sedan and Navetta – all aimed squarely at the luxury end of the market. The Flybridge and Sedan models are self-explanatory, whilst the Navetta is a trawler style with a turn of speed.

The Flybridge is available in four styles – open, radar arch, bimini or hard top, our test boat being the latter. Given our harsh sun, that's probably the wisest option.

engines gave a top speed of 26 knots and a fuel burn of 190lph. Easing back to 3,250rpm gave 20 knots and 120lphr, with 3,000rpm giving 16 knots and 110lphr.

Looking at the factory fuel consumption graph shows a fairly steep curve between eight and 13 knots, flattening off after that. Like most hulls of this type, the Absolute is not particularly efficient while transitioning from displacement to planing speeds.

Our docking back at Westhaven graphically illustrated how the IPS system gives the freedom to do things – travelling sideways, for example – that even 15 years ago only the most skilful professional could pull off. Unquestionably, it's a game changer for owners and removes the most terrifying aspect of handling a big launch: docking and undocking.

COMFORT, EASY HANDLING

The Absolute 47 is aimed squarely at customers

seeking luxurious comfort, space and light, along with ease of handling.

The increasing cost of marinas worldwide has been a major driver behind powerboat design for many years. Understandably, buyers want the most boat for the least marina berth length.

The Italian designers have done outstandingly well in this respect with the Absolute 47 – the sense of light and space throughout the boat is highly impressive. To anyone questioning its aesthetics, I say go onboard before you judge.

Likewise, Volvo Penta's IPS system makes operating this style of boat immeasurably easier than vessels fitted with traditional propulsion systems. Yes, there may be a slight servicing penalty due to its complexity, but that's unlikely to be an issue for the boat's target market. Again, I suggest you operate the boat before you judge.

It's only fair to evaluate any boat against its design criteria. This one's Absolutely Magnifico. **BNZ**



Absolute 47 Flybridge

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HIGHLIGHTS

Easy, positive manoeuvring at close quarters

Spacious, light-filled luxury accommodation

Voluminous hull offers great living space yet still fits a 15m marina berth

SPECIFICATIONS

loa 14.63m
lwl 11.55m
beam 4.48m
draft 1.25m
displacement (loaded) 23 tons
drivetrain 2 x Volvo Penta IPS10
horsepower 2 x 480hp (at the crankshaft)
fuel 1,600 litres
water 500 litres
cruising speed 18-22 knots
max speed 26 knots

WATCH IT

