ABSOlute
NAVetTA 58

A trawler in disguise, Absolute has cherry-picked the best bits and added its own twist, creating a modern marvel in the process.

Text: Jack Haines
Don't mention the "T" word on board the latest model from Absolute Yachts. Absolute insists that the new 58 is not a trawler but a motoryacht. The reason behind sending the trawler monitor is that for Absolute, the word trawler brings with it certain connotations. Traditional lines, varnished teak, chugging along, shafts, a high bow but a low top speed — nothing wrong with any of this, but it's not what Absolute was going for with the 58.

In fact, the 58 couldn't be further away from these trawler core values. It uses Volvo Penta's IPS pods (IP500) and our test boat had (IS580 meaning 625hp per side), but a very slender, vertical bow. Absolute's typically striking hull gliding and, oh yes, a hull colour so punchy Strictly Centre Line's customers department may consider it a little too loud. This can be swapped for something more sober but hull number one was designed to catch eyes at the Cannes Boat Show, so it's all that mission accomplished.

What does it look like in the flesh? As a person who spends his life in jeans and deck shoes, I am no style guru but for what it's worth, the 58 isn't exactly dramatically beautiful. She is a tall boat with upright toplines, a vertical windscreen and a tidy, forward-facing hardtop. All of those features combine to give the 58 a towering, stately presence and a somewhat top-heavy stance. The mint hull colour doesn't help here as it makes the side roughly half; a more neutral tone is likely to soften the effect a touch.

I actually think it's quite a handsome craft, but one that is going to divide opinion in a love/hate sort of fashion rather than trying to appeal to everybody. Absolute has always been a yard that pushes design boundaries — for better or worse — and, actually, this attitude makes a lot of sense on a boat that is as different as the Nautica.

**ROOM TO SWING A CAT**

The flagship of that tall exterior is the sheer amount of space there is on board. Headroom throughout is excellent, even in the impressively spacious crew cabin (with its two berths and small shower room, plus every cabin gets its own bathroom. Even the twin guest cabin is treated to an ensuite that has a separate shower cubicle with a large, opening port. The VIP cabin has hull windows nearly as large as the master cabin's, something that Absolute has been mulling over for years. The three large, square portholes on each side, plus a round opening port, mean that the cabin is brightening with natural light. The absence of big steps up to the bed is a welcome touch and having the space for a proper dressing table and large mirror will make your guests feel very much at home.

It's a small boat to have a crew quarters so if you are an owner/operator that case little cabin — complete with transom glazing — can be assigned to a couple of kids, who will love the fun of entering their cabin via the chunky transom door.

The salon, the heart of the boat's living spaces, is another beneficiary of the life external design because the long wheelhouse means Absolute had lots of room to play with. The aft end of the saloon is the main living area with a long U-shaped seating area, starboard and a wide bench opposite. Massive, one-piece panes of glass either slide deliver exceptional views out from those rails and make for a great spot for drinks with friends or simply use a place to when it's a bit chilly on the other side of the cockpit doors. On a practical note, to see a square of recessed and backlit handrails in the ceiling in this area is commendable, especially with the lack of any cabinetry to mount a handrail on.

This seating area also pushes the galley to a raised position up a couple of steps amidships. For me, this is a great spot for the galley on a boat, not so well-connected to the outdoor spaces as an all galley but very much in the action for the person preparing food and drinks and with free views out of the surrounding windows. This positioning of the galley also allows space for a full-height fridge/freezer and eye-level lockers without them dominating the space, like they can do in galley located by the salon doors.

In a prime location opposite the galley is the internal directo, which is just about big enough to cater for a full complement of guests, but is also the best place for guests to sit on passage to keep the skipper and navigator company.

Our old friend, headroom, makes itself known at the lower helm where you can stand in front of the wheel with a superb view out of the v racks. Really like being able to
Absolute says that the Navetta should provide the best of both worlds' cruising.

stand up properly at a lower helm station and, although the two locker sets are there, found myself doing so for most of the sea trial. I like the view it gives you and the closeness to the helm and various controls and that, when you're engaging a marine, you can open the side door and pop your head out to communicate with crew or check proximity to a pontoon.

While we’re at the lower helm, I think it looks really good, too. Okay, the heads of the screws holding the mock carbon facia on are exposed, but the leather lining looks and feels smart, as do the Mercedes-style air vents patterned on either side, and the traditional wooden steering wheel feels great to the touch.

The upper helm doesn’t fare quite so well in that the multi-function screens are a long stretch from the helm seat and the IPS joystick is located down to the wheel than the throttles when it is the latter that you want to be able to grab hold of easily. And the steering wheel in a chase and move offish, like something you would get on a 160hp hire boat in Taiwan. It just feels wrong.

Having said that, there are some smart touches, such as the Plioglas screen that does in directly behind the helm to aid the fixed windscreen in diverting the breeze over the skipper’s head and the back-absorbing helm seat. I would argue that actually you would want the back-absorbing chair at the lower helm where you’re closer to the action and more likely to be seated when things cut up rough. However, as I fed in the power and left the 50 rise into an easy 32-knot cooker, the seat gently bobbing up and down with the motion of the boat made for very relaxing passages.

ON THE THROTTLES

Driving the Navetta is beautifully easy thanks largely to IPS and its super-light steering but also thanks to the Auto Trim system. Like the best driver side, the beauty of this system is that you don’t even notice when it’s doing its work. Using the familiar interceptor trim blades, the system acts automatically to adjust the running attitude depending on how the boat is being driven. Plop the throttles and the blades deploys to get the boat on to the plane more quickly, turn hard one way or the other and the system will balance the boat out and flatten the turn to keep the boat level. If the breeze is affecting the running angle the system senses it and deploys the appropriate amount of tab to right the boat.

It’s brilliant and leaves you to play with the throttle and enjoy the ride.

We had the sort of wet weather that makes you want to get a cure for G先把和气也 look back, which is great unless you want to give the hull a decent work out. It left solid casting through the wake of passing ferries but it’s not the first time the driving experience on an Absolute has been punctuated by the squeaking of cabinetry.

The sharp bow makes most work of slicing through chop but it’s so fine that it does tend to send slcks of spray up and on to the deck. I imagine in a big following sea, things could get quite soggy.

Absolute says that the Navetta should provide the best of both worlds’ cruising – where you can comfortably sit up along at 8 knots or blast along at more than three times that if you need to. To that end, our test boat had the 850,000 (cwp) optional Seakeeper NG2 to keep things steady displacement speed. It is more efficient at single digit speeds but not by as much as you’d think. Even at 8 knots the range is only around 660 miles and then once over 10 knots there is only a 0.62mph difference between differing at 11 knots and the 28.6-knot top speed. The message: If you want to get a tick on, you won’t be hardly penalised.

And with such great deck spaces at your disposal, you’re probably going to be in a hurry to get to where you’re going and drop the hook.

The extended flybridge that plays such a big part in the look of the Navetta also grants you a huge amount of usable space. The helm station is flanked by useful, forward-facing benches and in the middle of the deck a spacious dinette and very well spaced wet-bar sit opposite one another. The space all is clear for fine-stained furniture and is crying out for a couple of sun loungers away from the area of a handrail.

There are some thoughtful touches, too, such as the electrical, extending sun shade that comes out from the ast a end of the hatch and a shower head that pulls out from the dinette base so you can cool off on the outsides the decks. This is even a louvered-over in the sole, and it’s all very nicely done.

Then there is the cockpit, which also has a privacy shade that slides down between the two flybridge supports. If you still can’t avoid prying eyes then more to the bow where Absolute has managed to fit a raised stern with flling board and a bench beneath the windscreen. When we were
Boat Report

The Auto Trim system is brilliant and leaves you to play with the throttle and enjoy the ride.

The design will be far from everyone’s cup of double espresso, but the pay off is the phenomenal use of space both externally and below decks. Crucially, the Navetta 58 gives you the motivation to opt for an Absolute over better known rival yards. With its regular flybridge, Absolute has to compete against the big hitters from Britain, Italy and France but with the Navetta it offers something that is as different as it is desirable. Just don’t call it a trawler yacht.

Contact: Absolute; Tel: +39 0321 958481; Web: www.absoluteflyachts.com

The Helm View

Performance

Test Engines: Volvo Penta D6-600 625hp @ 2,450rpm. 8 cylinder, 10.8 litre diesels.

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The Costs & Options

Price from: €1,000 (IPS600)
Price as tested: €1,880,000 (IPS600)
45,000 BTU Mediterranean air-con: €10,500
Bow thruster: €15,000
Passerelle: €23,500
Hi-fi audio system: €15,500
Skylight NGS gyro stabiliser: €35,000
Crew cabin layout: €25,000
Tampone Hull: €35,000
Flybridge top: €23,000
Turn the Pages to Find Out More About the Pantaenius Panopticon

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