

ABSOLUTE *Bliss*

A CHOPPY DAY IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE IS THE PERFECT PROVING GROUND FOR THE FLAGSHIP **NAVETTA 75**.

story **ALAN HARPER**



ABSOLUTE YACHTS



A wing station with bow and stern thrusters, and a Volvo Penta joystick, helps with close-quarters maneuvers. Absolute added a textured surface that plays off the teak soles in the cockpit and the wide side decks, as well as the slope of the bow rails.

IT WAS BLOWING

—not hard, but hard enough. From the shelter of the Vieux Port, where the Cannes Yachting Festival is held, I could see the flag on a bell tower high above, straining in the stiff westerly breeze. Nevertheless, we extricated the Absolute Navetta 75 from its impossibly tight berth, rounded the lighthouse on the end of the breakwater, turned into the wind and loped across the 4- to 5-foot seas.

The hull's fine forefoot sliced through the swells like a razor. The bow barely lifted, and raised hardly any spray as we accelerated toward the lee of the high ground along the western side of the Bay of Cannes. Even quite close to shore, there was still something of a chop as we turned beam-to the waves for our speed runs. I was mentally preparing for a roll-filled ride, since Absolute's flagship Navetta 75 is a big boat in every way: voluminous, beamy and tall. At that moment, I was focused on its tallness, conscious of how much weight was invested in the large salon windows, the substantial flybridge structure and the hardtop on sturdy supports. With the boat's center of gravity so far above the waterline, I took the wheel and glanced around to make sure everyone was sitting down.

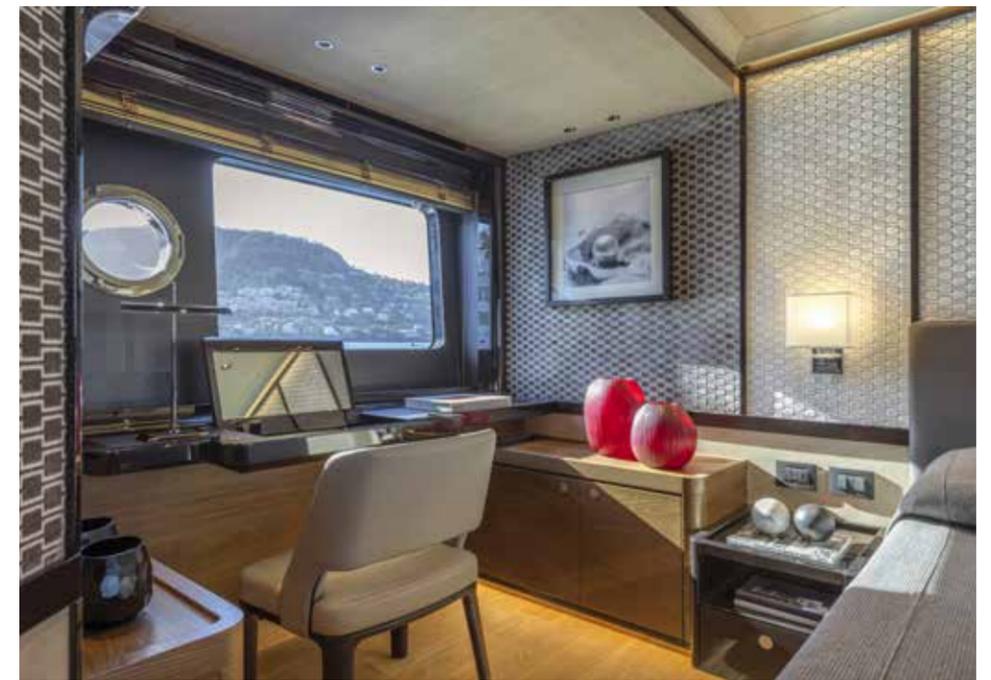
We had the yacht's Seakeeper turned off, which is how I prefer it for a sea trial. And the Volvo Penta trim system, which I normally keep on its automatic setting, wasn't set up yet. So, I spread my feet a little farther apart and eased the helm over. With two 1,000-hp Volvo D13s mated to IPS drives, the 75 thrust itself forward with surprising willingness. Running parallel to the shore and amid the short, steep chop, we reached a maximum of just over 25 knots with very little fuss, and then did the same in the other direction.

The roll I anticipated simply didn't materialize. The hull felt solid and stable when barreling along on plane. Even at low speeds, the movement was more up and down than side to side. I thought I might be able to catch it out downwind, or with the seas on the quarter, but the 75 tracked beautifully and required little helm input to steer a steady course. Downwind, a few drops of spray occasionally showed themselves in front, which is normal with a plumb bow.



The flybridge, which can be accessed from the cockpit or salon, is a massive entertainment space with an outdoor galley (left), an electrically retractable top (below) and enough lounging areas for more than a dozen guests (facing page).





Above: If the chef or owner desires, the amidships galley can be cordoned off or left open to the salon and helm. **Left:** The cockpit is yet another alfresco gathering space on the 75. **Facing page, clockwise from top left:** Large hullside windows allow for ample light in the marble-clad VIP bath; The vanity in the forward, full-beam master stateroom; The salon benefits from unobstructed views thanks to gunwales that swoop downward.

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Inside, this new flagship evolution of Absolute's Navetta 73 also has a lot to like. There's an additional 18 inches of hull length in the Navetta 75, which means more generous crew quarters. Otherwise, the internal bulkheads haven't moved, and the belowdecks layout is identical. There's a VIP stateroom amidships with a smart open-plan arrangement to port (the sink is beneath the hull window, and the head and shower are on either side of the sink in their own compartments). Forward is the owner's stateroom, with a bigger, full-beam head and shower compartment, and a private companionway leading down from the starboard side of the wheelhouse. This stateroom is on its own deck level because the hull's forward sections are narrow; Absolute used the space underneath for stowage that's accessed via the port double-berth stateroom.

Attention to sound is also evident on this yacht, both in the engine room soundproofing and in Absolute's use of rattle-free sliding doors throughout the accommodations. The absence of internal doors swinging to and fro makes a real difference.

The layouts of the deck salon and wheelhouse are also little changed from those of the earlier Navetta 73—which, after due consideration, the designers probably felt couldn't really be improved. The layout includes a seating area and sideboard, an eight-seat dining table, and

the galley conveniently placed for the wheelhouse and the table. Cutaway bulwarks allow for spectacular views through the panoramic windows.

It's outside that the principal design changes can be seen. The gunwales of the 75 now swoop downward, perhaps to make the profile less boxy. The window shapes in the hull have also been modified, although not the windows and portholes themselves.

Meanwhile, up on the flybridge, the only pieces of fixed furniture are the helm seats, the bar aft, the long sideboards flanking the dining table, and the settee by the helm. Owners can choose freestanding furniture for the rest of this space, and Absolute offers modular chairs and tables here and in the cockpit, from Italian outdoor specialists Terraforma. The furniture can be easily rearranged into whatever layout suits the occasion, with powder-coated aluminum frames and rubber feet to keep all the pieces in place. Both the cockpit and flybridge have glass balustrades aft to enhance the view.

Owners with pets and toddlers will need to mind the open spaces in the bulwark gates on each side of the cockpit, but short of that concern, I found everything quite impressive aboard the Absolute Navetta 75. My initial worries about the elevated center of gravity were for naught. Everything turned out to be fine. Absolutely fine. ☼

ABSOLUTE NAVETTA 75

- LOA:** 74ft. 10in.
- Beam:** 18ft. 4in.
- Draft:** 5ft. 5in.
- Construction:** FRP
- Displacement:** 131,371 lbs.
- Fuel:** 1,057 gal.
- Water:** 293 gal.
- Engine:** 2x 1,000-hp Volvo Penta D13-IPS1350
- Info:** absoluteyachts.com

Top left: A hydraulic swim platform makes getting in and out of the water and fetching the dinghy a breeze. Note the retractable awning that shades the cockpit. **Right:** The shore power connections hide away when not in use. **Facing page, clockwise from top left:** Standard power is a pair of 1,000-hp Volvo Pentas mated to IPS drives; The stairwell from the salon to the flybridge; Her lower helm is as stylish as the rest of the vessel.