

SUNNY

In the mid-60s

LOOKING FOR A MOTORYACHT WITH SMART USE OF SPACE, LOADS OF AMENITIES, A GOOD TURN OF SPEED, AND SHARP DESIGN? DON'T MAKE A FINAL DECISION UNTIL YOU CHECK OUT THE ABSOLUTE 64 FLY. BY MIKE ELLIS



JOYSTICK control can be invaluable for a couple cruising on a larger yacht. Systems such as the Volvo Penta IPS offer simple intuitive control and optional dynamic positioning systems (DPS) that simplify operation and reduce stress.

LOA: 64'4"
BEAM: 16'11"
DRAFT: 5'4"
DISPL.: 74,700 lb. (loaded)
FUEL: 793 gal.
WATER: 172 gal.

TEST POWER: 2/900-hp Volvo Penta IPS1200s
OPTIONAL POWER: 2/725-hp Volvo Penta IPS950s
TRANSMISSION: Volvo Penta IPS w/ 1.88:1 gear ratio
PROPELLERS: Volvo Penta IPS Q4 propset
GENERATOR: 20-kW Kohler
PRICE, U.S. SPECIFICATION: \$2,944,300



► See more photos of the Absolute 64 Fly @ www.pmymag.com

The seating aft is spacious and comfortable and a more formal dining area forward is handily located adjacent to the galley, making it easy to pass food over. I would have liked to see a small bench adjacent to the helm replaced with an area to stow and study paper charts.

There's only the four-cabin layout available, which isn't an issue, but some rivals offer a more spacious three-cabin layout. Thankfully, the master cabin on the 64 is already gigantic. There's enough headroom to host an NBA team meeting and good stowage includes a large hanging locker, low-level cupboard stowage, and a compact vanity unit. The test boat had a small sofa beneath the port hull window but I would specify the small two-person dinette as seen on the smaller 56 Fly because I love the idea of a quiet spot for a couple to have breakfast away from guests, especially as this cabin has its own fridge.

The VIP cabin stands out thanks to its offset berth, which means you can walk around the bed easily, and the area where the head of the bed would normally be is a spacious vanity unit. This bow stateroom seems to have more hull section given over to it than I've seen on other boats, and Absolute does a lot with the space.

The crew cabin certainly deserves a mention because thanks to its twin berths (single is an option), good en suite, and generous amounts of light via a transom window it could actually be considered another (very private) guest cabin.

The flying bridge is accessed via sturdy steps with large, safe treads and a handy railing at the top to clutch on the way through. A secondary, alfresco galley including grill, fridge, sink, and ice maker is opposite the main seating area and a three-person forward-facing bench, which converts quickly into a sunpad, is opposite the twin helm.

Aft, our test boat had clear space for a pair of sunpads but this area can hold the tender if you don't want it on the optional hi-lo swim platform. I really liked the large showerhead built in to the radar arch and there's even a proper drainage grate below to whip the water away. It's good to see two large dedicated stowage bins here too, invaluable for securing canvas and other odds and ends on the top deck.

Absolute is a big advocate of Volvo's IPS pod-drive system and has

The 65-foot cruiser could be seen as a cornerstone of any European boatbuilder's range. It's a crucial rung in a yard's ladder—a boat of this size has the space, comfort, and technology for long stints onboard yet can still be handled by just two people.

Absolute Yachts has added its 64 Fly to the mix but she's got a bit of competition with a number of British and Italian yards all building seriously impressive rivals. We got onboard in Genoa, Italy, to see exactly what serves to set the new Absolute apart in a crowded marketplace.

Design and styling are always key points when it comes to yachts in this class and with the 64 Fly we may have hit a critical mass when it comes to windows. If they managed to fit any more glass into the hull and superstructure, you would essentially be cruising around in a Volvo Penta IPS-propelled greenhouse. All kidding aside, engineering these windows into the structure and ending up with such a solid feel is an impressive feat. Built in the company's state-of-the-art facility in Piacenza, Italy, the hand-laid solid-fiberglass hull is reinforced with the company's proprietary Integrated Structural System grid glassed in place over its entire length and breadth.

In the cabins on the lower deck, all of those hullside windows have

a transformative effect, allowing copious amounts of light to stream in. The amidships master suite and the en suite VIP each get four and three panes of glass on each side of the cabin respectively plus an opening porthole to provide ventilation. The windows are set quite thoughtfully so when lying in either berth you have a lovely view out over the water from the comfort of your pillow. The effect is greatest in the VIP where an angled berth means the portside window is actually at the foot of the bed.

In the saloon, despite how large the windows looked from the dock, the view out didn't quite meet expectations. Window mullions, galley lockers, a full-size refrigerator, and shelving that I suspect conceals structural members obstruct the view a bit, but light does flood in to brighten the area anyway.

The amidships galley works very well on a boat of this length meaning the person in the galley not only gets an elevated view out but the central location means he can still interact with those relaxing in the saloon. A fridge-freezer and abundant stowage—including individual fiddles for cutlery and crockery and an illuminated glassware cupboard in the lounge area—help the galley work even for longer cruises.

From the forward galley and dinette (above) to the roomy lounge area (below), the saloon on the 64 Fly will help everyone aboard feel at home.





The amidships master stateroom takes advantage of the boat's full beam to offer expansive floor space while hullside windows add an airy feel.

stayed loyal to it on the 64. The standard engines are twin 725-horsepower IPS 950s but we tested the 900-horsepower IPS1200 upgrade.

We started the sea trial from the flying bridge, where I noticed how quiet the 64 is (unfortunately, my sound meter failed on this sea trial). The steering is light and positive, ideal for easy, laid-back cruising.

The driving position is good at both helms but, unlike the lower helm, the upper driving position has the throttles outboard of the IPS joystick and personally I would want that the other way around, as it's a bit of a stretch to adjust the speed.

We managed a healthy top speed of 33.8 knots during our test with the 64 consuming 87 gallons per hour. Throttle back to a lazy cruising speed of 25 knots, and the thirst reduces even further to 59 gallons per hour.

So where does the Absolute fit in to the array of multitasking European 65-foot cruisers? It has four good cabins as standard, a refined and sophisticated ride, a 30-plus-knot top speed, an efficient cruise, and the benefit of joystick control, which is ideal if there will regularly be two of you using the boat. If all that sounds enticing, I'd say the Absolute 64 Fly is worth a closer look. □

Absolute Yachts, 877-500-1686; www.absoluteyachts.com

Better Boat: Engine Access

In addition to the typical cockpit access to the engine room via a hatch in the cockpit sole, there is a watertight door, which also grants entrance through the crew cabin. Very handy for crew to easily monitor the machinery space but also useful for owners and a lot easier than clambering down the ladder between the engines. Once in, the amount of space is a real luxury: Access to the sides of both engines is excellent and the same goes for the service points on the IPS pods. Headroom is impressive with just enough space for a person of 6 feet to walk around with only a slight bend in his neck. Common service items such as the oil dipsticks, fuel-water separators, oil filters, and belts are all very easy to inspect and generous lighting means you're not fumbling around in the dark. It's also really good to see comprehensive labeling of wires and hoses, narrowing down the guesswork when it comes to sorting out any problems that might occur, particularly when underway.



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE
1200	11.3	19.6	411
1400	12.7	30.0	302
1600	17.0	39.6	306
1800	20.3	48.9	296
2000	25.3	59.0	306
2200	30.0	71.3	300
2370	33.8	86.8	278

TEST CONDITIONS: Air temperature: 69.8°F; seas: flat; load: 317 gal. fuel, 85.9 gal. water, 6 persons. Speeds are two-way averages measured w/ Garmin GPS display. GPH taken via Volvo Penta display. Range is based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity.

NOTEWORTHY OPTIONS: Tropical air conditioning (\$6,156); bow thruster (\$11,628); Seakeeper M8000 gyroscopic stabilizer (\$175,104); upgraded 32-kW generator (\$13,953); hydraulic swim platform (\$36,252).