

AUSTRALIAN multihull

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Inspired by AC cat designs, aggressive deck styling and a high overall power to weight ratio should make the MC²60 a potent racer as well as cruiser. Photo courtesy Kevin Green



CRUISING CAT

with America's Cup pedigree



Catamarans have never been cooler, reports KEVIN GREEN, as we can see from the busy international scene, where the Extreme 40's, AC 45's and D35's are taking centre stage amid the backdrop of the upcoming America's Cup cat-fest.

SO IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT these fast boats are inspiring performance cruising catamarans such as McConaghy's MC²60. The Sydney boat builder is forging ahead in its new foray into catamaran building with the announcement of a second MC²60 sold off the plans to an Australian owner. While up in their offshoot yard in China the first boat is underway for a launch in September 2012.

Design brief

Despite being inspired by racing multihulls the MC²60 is not an extreme design says Project Manager Raphael Blot, as it has enough stability to ensure safety margins adequate for a fast cruising catamaran. However speed was the key component, with the cat aimed to perform well in the light airs typical of SE Asian sailing. (McConaghy's are quoting a

target boat speed greater than True Wind Speed when reaching in four knots plus).

Living space

The MC²60 is a semi-custom boat so the interior can be tailored to owners' needs, a major selling point for discerning cruising sailors, I think. Accommodation in this first boat comprises of four double cabins equally sized between the hulls. Interestingly, the forward cabin is set up with bunk beds, with the option of transforming the lower bunk into a 140cm wide double. The saloon is intended as an entertaining space but also built around the navigator. Cleverly the galley up versus galley down debate has been solved by an open plan design emanating from the starboard hull, so the cook doesn't feel isolated while they serve up to eight people seated at the saloon table.

Down in the hulls, the aft cabin offers a double 160cm wide berth, accessed through an entrance area, which has a foldable wardrobe over a seat on the inboard side of the hull and a fixed wardrobe on the outboard side. For those who want a skipper/crew cabin on

Carbon finishes on work surfaces adds panache as well as weight saving in the lightweight boat. (above left)

Galley half way down yet part of the open plan saloon combines function and minimalist design on the MC²60. (above centre and right)

board, the forward storage locker can be transformed into a crew cabin with a 50 x 50cm entrance hatch on deck and a portlight on the inside of the hull for ventilation.

The cockpit has a semi-hardtop bimini to allow clear views of the sails while in race mode yet also offers comfortable weather protection when in cruise mode. Twin carbon wheels with sheet winches nearby and a transom mounted mainsheet track keeps the open plan area clear while giving substantial downforce and twist on the big main.

Construction

The development scale model viewed by *Australian Multihull World* showed a low profile, sleek bridge deck, and reverse angled bow a la *Oracle's*



America's Cup cat, giving an overall aggressive exterior styling guaranteed to stand out in any marina. Down below the external styling brief continues with renderings showing a clean and minimalist interior, ensuring everything is ultra tidy.

Constructed in epoxy from SP Gurit with carbon reinforcing, the resin infused hull is intended to be a hard wearing yet a cruiser-friendly build. Rigidity should be assured thanks to all structural beams being carbon which connect the E-glass/carbon epoxy foam sandwich hull and deck. Windward performance will be enhanced by the use of twin dagger boards and 120-110cm bridge deck clearance should minimise wave friction and allow comfortable sunbathing on the Dyneema net trampoline.

The Lorima carbon rig (on hulls #1 and #2) has a rotating wing mast, intended to enhance performance and facilitate downwind reefing. The square topped fully battened mainsail (from the Incidences sail loft) has three slab reefs. Standing rigging is Kevlar with the option of carbon shrouds. This interesting Renaud Bañuls design also has the mast nearly aligned with the twin carbon asymmetric dagger boards.

Deck gear is Harken with two pairs of 70.3 STA winches controlling the mainsail and headsail sheets with electric 70.3 STEV or carbon 65.3 options as well. Halyards run to the Harken 60.2 STEV electric winch at the mast base which is designed to ensure crew correctly tension the halyards in close proximity to the sails during hoists.

above from left:

Project Manager and inaugural owner Raphael Blot is busy at McConaghy's China yard.

Tooling is now underway for the MC²60 which will be McConaghy's first sailing catamaran.

Twin helms are essential on this supercat, especially with racing in mind.

pic courtesy McConaghy Boats

Safety looks to be key factor in the MC²60 with an escape hatch in either hull plus the optional Ocean Data System electronic anti-capsize system. Called UpSideUp the system controls heel and loads for automatic or wireless release during times of major stress on the boat and like a lot of the gear on the MC²60 it has been used successfully on big multis such as the 105ft trimaran *Sodebo*.

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The cockpit will have a semi-protected hardtop bimini so that both weather protection and sailing trimming needs are met. (top)

The cat is destined for the tropics so good swim access is important for the owner and his young family. (above left)

Testing the ergonomics of the cockpit which will be a vast entertaining area and kids' playground. (above right)

Navigation systems will be a B&G H3000 base system with four 20/20 HV displays in the cockpit and single FFDs on each helm location. Other notable gear includes the latest Lithium Ion batteries from Mastervolt to maximise the power-to-weight ratio. Entertainment smarts include a wireless digital music and DVD system for distributed media with WiFi headsets.

Owner's perspective

Project manager Raphael Blot, who will own this first boat, spoke to *Australian Multihull World* about turning his dream of a creating a fast cruising cat with the average performance of a TP52 monohull yet still able to be handled comfortably singlehanded. "I started to look for the 'perfect catamaran' for my own use almost two years ago, a boat that would be smart, elegant and fast," he said.

French national Blot, who has raced in SE Asia for the last 15 years, converted to multihulls a few years ago after sailing from Yokohama to Hong Kong on the maxi-trimaran *Geronimo* and from Taiwan to HK on maxi catamaran *Gitana 13*, which strongly whetted his appetite for performance multis.

The Hong Kong based sailor initially looked at high performance boats without bridge decks. "But I could not picture myself spending two weeks cruising in the Philippines or Thailand with my family on an open decked cat – what I was looking for was their elegance and speed but with a bridge deck." His search for a dream boat in the 50-55ft category was thorough and involved discussions with major names in the industry before hitting on Renaud Bañuls, responsible for the naval architecture of America's Cup trimaran *BMW Oracle* and heavily involved in the design of *Banque Populaire V* and *Groupama* trimarans while at VPLP Naval Architects. With a design brief settled quickly Blot had little difficulty approaching McConaghy, even though the Sydney builder had only one multihull to its substantial list of credentials. "After talking with Neville

Crichton aboard *Alfa Romeo 3* and seeing the amazing standard of finish on this McConaghy built super maxi I was very keen to have the work done by them," he said.

McConaghy's second order was placed at this year's Sanctuary Cove Boat Show by an owner with similar needs as Blot – a performance cat that can be enjoyed by the family when not racing.

The businessman is planning an extensive racing calendar mixed with cruising, kicking-off with the Brisbane Gladstone race before the SE Asia odyssey north on the Darwin to Ambon cruising rally. Other races for hull number two will include the Rolex China Sea Race, San Fernando Race, Vietnam Race, Coastal Classic and the Auckland to Muscat Cove.

They both should have fun, thanks to the MC²60's impressive list of specifications, as this boat is clearly aimed at the discerning cruising sailor with the need for speed.

SPECIFICATIONS



Price	POA
LOA	18.28m (60ft)
LWL	18.28m
Beam	8.60m
Draft	1.40/3.20m
Bridgedeck clearance	1.10m
Mast	10m2
Displacement (light)	9.00t
Displacement (max load)	11.5t
Mainsail	118m ²
Solent	56m ²
Staysail	35m ²
Code 0	120m ²
Gennaker	165m ²
Asym Spin	235m ²
Mast Height	24.80m
Engines	2 x Yanmar 4JH5E 53hp
Design	Renaud Bañuls www.banulsdesign.com www.mc2catamarans.com

Suppliers

www.hds-design.com
www.oceandatasystem.com
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