

For a good balance between comfort and performance, the yard have gone for hull-steps. And they work very well! ↓



Following the success of their 40, Nautitech has taken their "Open" concept to a larger model. So the nacelle and cockpit become one, but the volume created is a hell of a lot bigger!

Text and photos: Emmanuel van Deth

We were won over by the Open 40 with its huge living space cleverly spread between the nacelle and the cockpit - Nautitech's famous "Open" concept. Early 2015, Nautitech promised us a big brother for the 40. At the time, it was a question of a model topped with a flybridge where the helm station and sail trimming gear was to be found. This flybridge version had its first outing, at the following Cannes boat show. Heavier (by 400kg) and having lost 6.5m² of sail area, it offered a remarkable living space, and responded to the yachtsman demanding a 360° view of the water.

But let's get back to our Open 46. Historically, Nautitech has resolutely promoted the idea of seaworthiness above all for their catamarans - comfort, yes, but performance and sailing pleasure must also be at the top of the list. This objective is plain to see with this new Nautitech. Remaining faithful to their (excellent) values, the first open 46s are available in "traditional" version, with two helms, a standard coachroof and a powerful sailplan. The model seen for the first time at the International Multihull Show at La Grande Motte in France clearly stands out from the first generation - the Dufour-des-

igned Nautitechs and the older 40 and 47. The 46 has much higher freeboard, with fuller hulls... only the upper part though, as a step on each side considerably narrows the beam at the waterline. Also of note is the very sleek rig, with the masthead being 23 meters above the water.

A look at the gelcoat, the stiffness of flat surfaces and the quality of the fittings generally give a measure of the build quality.

INSIDE OR OUT?

Nearing the end of a gloomy day, I could immediately see the appeal of the Open concept: straight away in the cockpit there wasn't a breath of wind or drop of rain. The protection from the bimini surround and the eaves of the coachroof was brilliant. And the cleverly designed combination of inside and outside gives an unrivalled feeling of space, when in reality, the nacelle is actually pretty compact. So, as with the Open 40, the salon is set back into the cockpit. Around the big table (1.76m x 79cm) there is enough space to seat ten, using the three stools found on board. This can also be transformed, as an option, into a "lounger" bed. The very wide entrance - 1.76m - and the sweep of the seats around the table which blend into the lounge contribute to erase any division between outside and inside. Inside the saloon, there is a big refrigerator to port. On our test boat this also served as the chart table, though a more traditional nav station is available as an option. As for the galley, this doesn't try and encroach on the cockpit, something which you do find on most of the 46's competitors. On the contrary, the worktop almost joins the trampoline. The U-shaped configuration gives a good surface area, plenty of storage and the cook is out of the way of the comings and goings of the crew. The extra six feet compared to the Open 40 have allowed for a mini-saloon to be introduced to starboard. An option, it transforms in just a few seconds into a spare double bunk. Or for long passages, it would make an ideal watch-keepers bunk.

FULL OF LIGHT

The salon, surrounded by impressive lateral and overhead hatches is incredibly full of light. The view across the sea is breathtaking, obviously... The flipside of this many openings: it can quickly become hot inside if the blinds aren't lowered when the sun is blazing. The yard offers two layouts - either three or four cabins. We're testing the owner's version: the captain has the whole port hull, with a large bunk aft which measures 2m by 1.60m, a desk and a full bathroom. As with the exterior finish, that of the interior is also nicely done, with leather-covered handrails, indirect, dimmable LED lighting, 220V sockets almost everywhere, and a perfect balance of woodwork and headlinings. In the starboard hull, two good-sized cabins. The bathroom and head are connected via a clever set of doors - direct access from one to the other and two entries to the passage-way.

LONG-TERM SPEED MODE

Thanks to the rig being moved slightly and made sleeker, the Open 46 manages to establish a sail area to weight ration just over 10m²/t - a benchmark for catamarans dedicated above all to comfort and ones where performance is important. Just to complete the picture, for our Nautitech this figure climbs to 11.5m²/t with the optional overlapping genoa (the standard boat is offered with a self-tacking solent). Which would give good daily averages when passage-making.

Despite the significant windage, the team at the



The designers voluntarily decided on a relatively low boom above the bimini, to maintain a large sail area. ↑

Under sail, the Nautitech Open 46 shows itself to be fun and performs well. A real offshore cruiser for setting off for the other side of the world. ↓



A new flybridge version of the Open 46 has just come out, but our test boat had Nautitech's traditional double helm station. ↓



yard, all experienced sailors let's remember, pull off the dock and away from the mooring buoys with ease, simply by playing the throttles. The motors on our test boat are 55hp instead of the standard 40hp: at cruising revs of 2,200, the boat is making 8 knots. Flat out, the GPS is showing 9 knots. So the 40hp should be sufficient. The extra power on this boat might be appreciated on those (hopefully rare) occasions when you have to motor into the wind and the sea.

A DECK LAYOUT FOR SAIL TRIMMING... AND RELAXING!

Our test seemed to be off to a bad start coming out of the harbor: despite the sea breeze which had been gently blowing all day, the weather was starting to look menacing and the wind had dropped. So we made the most of this to check out the deck layout! In the cockpit, there are three big lockers and two spots for stowing liferafts (80 x 30 x 52cm). All sail-handling lines come back to the helm station. The lines coming from the mastfoot as well as the bimini - for the mainsheet and the traveler - are cleverly led by conduits and blocks. At the helm there is relatively good protection. But the nacelle blocks the view of the opposite bow. You get used to looking through the windows to see this area. Three steps lead to the side-decks, which are particularly wide. The non-slip deck is effective, and the handholds good, making it excellent for moving around on deck. Forward of the nacelle, the anchor locker and the windlass are set back to keep the weight better centered. So the chain runs in a channel between the two trampolines. Very practical, except that it doesn't have a drain for mud or sand which will undoubtedly

build up here. This is a detail which perhaps needs looking at, otherwise the gear will need to be rinsed every time the anchor is used. The yard has allowed for a great relaxation area on the trampolines, with comfortable cushions and a table with folding leaves. To climb up on the coachroof, there is a ladder. Up here, it's important to try and avoid slipping in wet conditions on the overhead hatches mentioned previously. One nice surprise: the boom is fixed sufficiently low that no acrobatics are requi-

From the helm, there is a good view of the water and particularly the sails, for adjustments.



The foredeck is well-equipped for sunbathing underway or for aperitifs at anchor.



The "Open" concept! The coachroof and bimini's long overhangs give great protection to the cockpit, even in bad weather. Also, the boundary between inside and outside is almost indiscernible.

SPECIFICATIONS

Builder	Bavaria Catamarans
Naval Architect	Marc Lombard
Overall length	13.79 m
Waterline length	13.79 m
Beam	7.54 m
Draft	1.45 m
Displacement	10.8 t
Upwind sail area	112 m ²
Self-tacking solent	38 m ²
Mainsail	74 m ²
Gennaker	98 m ²
Assymetric spi	150 m ²
Motors	Yanmar 2 x 40 hp diesel
Fuel tanks	2 x 300 l
Fresh water tanks	2 x 300 l
Construction	PVC polyester foam sandwich
CE Certification	A for 12 persons
Price 3-cabin version	starting from €393,700 ex-tax
Price 3-cabin flybridge version	starting from €401,900 ex-tax
Main options: (all prices ex-tax)	
Holiday Pack	€13,700; Safety Pack: €10,900; Blue Water Pack: €17,500; Exclusive Pack: €12,499;
55hp motors	€3,900; Code 0: €4,750; Gennaker: €6,140;
Assymmetric spi	€5,500; forward upholstery: €5,400,
Air-con	starting from €18,100

red for dealing with the lazy bag or reefing lines. Neat!

ASKING FOR LONGER STRIDES!

Our professional crew is itching to get under sail. Timing is good, since following our short trip under motor, the wind kindly starts to fill in again from the west northwest. The Mistral predicted by the forecasters is starting to appear... and the sky conformed, to allow through a few rays of sunshine. Straight away we hoisted the big asymmetric spi - an operation made easy using the sock. 7 knots of wind on the wind instrument, 5 knots by the GPS... we were almost rejoicing when we reached 3 knots upwind with the self-tacking solent. This sail is great for attacking without needing to touch the sheets, especially when you are sailing short or single-handed, but the extra 12m² of the genoa would be better all the same with the window a little less than force 3. One good thing about the skeg keels on this boat, in case you were suddenly to touch the bottom, they serve as a sacrificial fuse and so maintain a watertight integrity of the hulls. Being deeper on the Open 46 than her main competitors (1.45m as opposed to 1.30m for the Lagoon 450, 1.22m for the Bali 4.5 and 1.15m for the Hélià 44),



The living area is really nice, and everyone will easily find their own space on board.



We thoroughly approve of the cockpit lounge, at anchor and under way. You're well-protected from wind and spray. Awesome!

THE COMPETITION

Model	Leopard 48	Bali 4.5	Hélià 44 E	Lagoon 450 S
Builder	Leopard	Catana	Fountain Pajot	Lagoon
Sail area in m ²	144,5	121	115	130
Weight in t:	14,46	11,8	10,8	15
Price in € ex-tax:	489 000	375 500	382 660	365 750



The U-shaped galley is forward, allowing the cook to have a view and work in peace.

Clever: the refrigerator doubles up as a chart table.



The Nautitech Open 46 is available in a 3- or 4-cabin version. They are all very airy and have generous stowage.



There is great attention to detail, such as here, the leather-covered handrails.

Relaxation: the forward sunbathing area and its table are lighter than a forward cockpit and don't impede sail handling maneuvers. On that point, the lines all come back to the helm station thanks to clever and discreet deck organizers.

Coachroof ladder. Making for easy access.

Dorade vents: they are well-protected by their strong stainless steel arches.

Boom. It is low enough to make it easy to open or close the lazy bag.



Downwind sails. The yard offers a 58m² Code 0, a 98m² gennaker and an asymmetric spi of 150m²

Forward cabin. The berths measure 2m by 1.60m at the head and still 1.40 at the feet. There is an option to fit the forepeaks with bunks as well.

Aft cabin(s). The bunks measure 2m by 1.60m. Light and ventilation are provided by two panels in the hull and one opening hatch.

Technical area. The builders have allowed for excellent engine access and the possibility to install other equipment.

Bows. They are slightly inverted above the step, giving a welcome modern touch.

Anchor gear channel. Set further aft, it's good that the anchor helps center the weight, but the polyester channel will quickly fill with mud.

access to some shallower areas is restricted, but they allow for maintaining a better course. In fact our plotter showed us tacking through 100-110° with almost negligible leeway. We were starting to get a bit bored when at last the wind decided to come back. That's the way it is in the Mediterranean... Suddenly 14 knots of wind out of nowhere, blowing across a sea that was still very flat. Under gennaker with the wind on the beam, our cat set off on a long run at nine knots, and the helmsman was really enjoying looking for the optimum angle to get the best out of the boat. Upwind, the self-tacking

solent took over again and this time we were making seven knots. The crew of the Open 46 were not at all surprised: on their first delivery in the Bay of Biscay they topped 16.4 knots. There was 30 knots of wind and the boats progressed at 105° under a double-reefed main and half genoa.

CONCLUSION

This Open 46 is very convincing! Comfortable and yet lively under sail, it offers great on board comfort with the cockpit directly connected to the salon. Certainly an excellent choice for long-term family cruising.

- ◆ The Open concept is appealing whether at sea or at anchor
- ◆ Good quality finish
- ◆ Hull performs well with over 6 knots of wind

- ◆ Chart table is optional
- ◆ Coachroof hatches can be slippery when wet
- ◆ Spi sheet is a trip hazard downwind