

# Feel the rush

With her chunky bulwarks and complex curves, it's easy to underestimate the Alen 55, says **Tim Thomas** – but open the throttles and you'll be smitten

Photographs by – Nicolas Claris

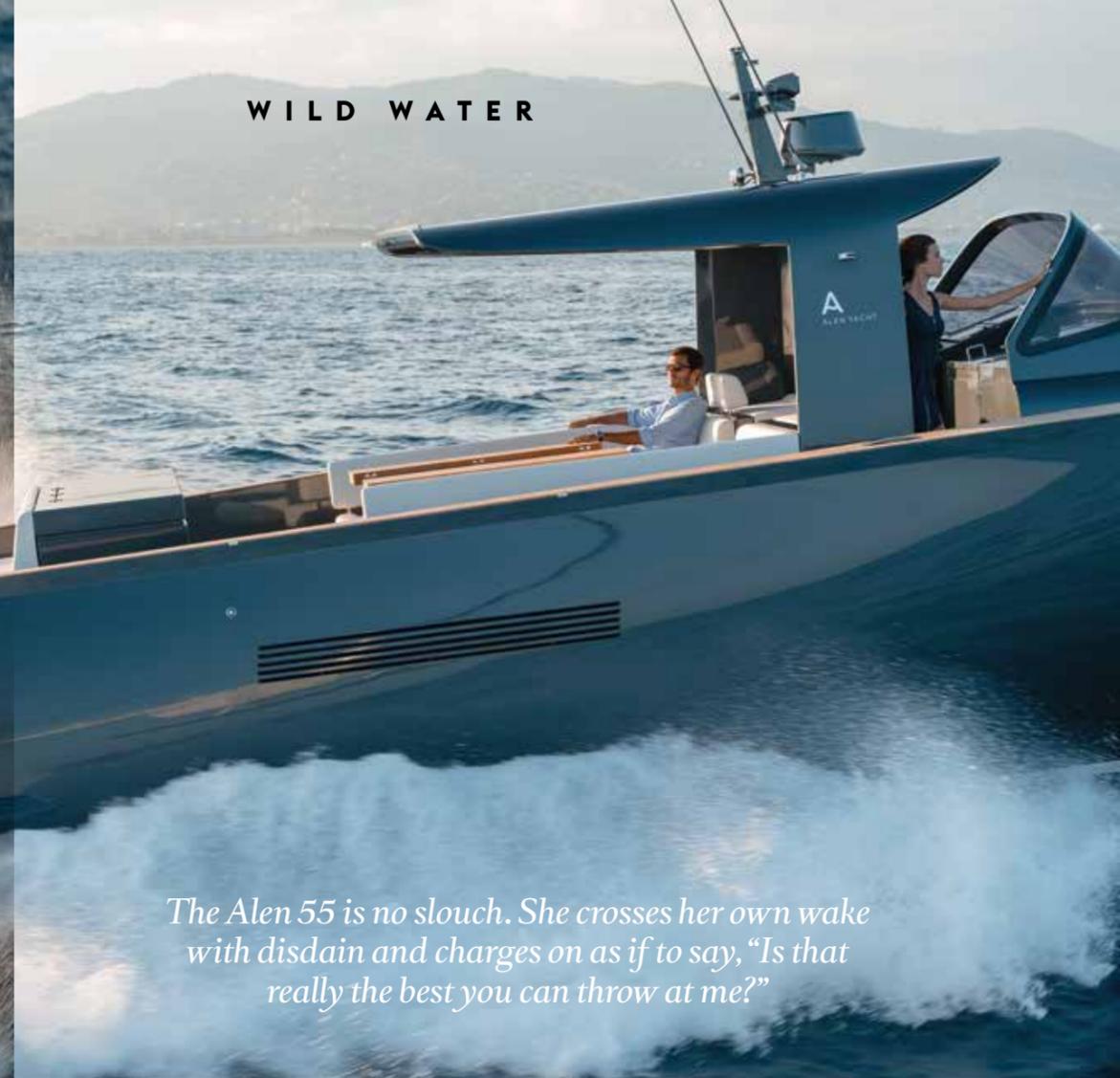
In a bay just north of Bodrum, Turkey, a pair of Volvo 800s roar and the wind whips what's left of my hair across what's left of my face. My ride is an Alen 55, and she's charging purposefully into the blue yonder at close to 32 knots. At first glance, standing at the bow and peering over the teak-clad foredeck, she might not seem the most svelte and swift of the braying pack, but looks can be deceptive. Moreover, she offers the sort of luxurious comfort that her more skeletal sisters can only dream of.

The 16.8m Alen 55 is no slouch. At base RPM she saunters and purrs at around eight knots. By 1,200rpm she's at 12.5 knots and shortly after she creeps smoothly over the hump and settles into a canter at 15. Tickle the throttles to 1,800rpm and she'll dance at 24 knots; push through to 2,000 revs and she'll hit the gallop at 27. Open the taps fully and she'll roar – and reward you with a 33-knot thrill ride.

Although our path ahead is smoother than a politician on election night, still she feels solid as we throw her through tight turns. She bleeds a bit of speed on the tightest of corners – only by three or four knots – but she crosses her own wake with disdain and charges on as if to say, "Is that really the best you can throw at me?"

Perhaps it's her Seakeeper gyro stabiliser system that helps keep her true (stabilisers on a tender? Yes, please), or perhaps it's her carefully considered underwater lines that work so well. She feels solid, dependable and stable, and her relatively full bow suggests she could be quite dry in a seaway, too.

When I say she's not the most svelte of creatures, I am being rather unkind: it is perhaps an illusion cast by her chunky bulwarks and her forward-carried beam – which contributes to the generous cabin space below. In fact, her lines are graceful, with that touch of tumblehome aft and some complex curves that hint at a lobster boat, but with an all-black finish and angled cheekbones that scream contemporary. Her design – from naval architecture to styling and interior design – comes from the Alen Yacht in-house team, although this particular one is modelled somewhat after the interior scheme of her parent, the 56 metre Perini Navi *Panthalassa*.



*The Alen 55 is no slouch. She crosses her own wake with disdain and charges on as if to say, "Is that really the best you can throw at me?"*



*The Alen 55 is no throw-you-around toy – her substantial lines and stabiliser system mean a smooth ride even at high speeds*

## WILD WATER



*Below, the Alen 55's finish is simple and elegant; on this version one cabin stretches towards the bow, but a two-cabin option is available. Even at full pelt, the ride is a smooth one*

Below decks, she features one large open cabin stretching towards the bow, illuminated by a coachroof strip skylight, with wraparound seating (a two-cabin option can also be specified, offering a full double berth) and a head to port. Amidships, under the cockpit, is a snug secondary cabin with transverse single berths, a second head with – surprisingly – full standing headroom, a couple of hanging lockers and its own climate-control system.

Her finish is simple and elegant, yet well crafted; hidden behind her seamless panels are controls for air-conditioning and heating, a top-notch audio system, a fridge and WiFi. Even running at speed, below there is a feeling of calm and relative quiet: her hull form mitigates the crunch and hammer often present when planing yachts are at full pelt.

The owning family use her as a luxury cruising dayboat, and as such she has been finished not only to mirror the scheme of *Panthalassa* but also with a specific goal in mind. The beauty of this lady, though, is that you can more or less mould her exactly how you want her: the hull and machinery are fixed, but everything else is fully customisable.

On deck, her console hides behind a protective windscreen with the wheel to port and controls easily at hand. Her L-shaped seating nestles either side of an expanding table; aft is the cook station with fridge and hob. The hardtop lends shade and shelter, and awnings can be added to extend the coverage. An inviting sunpad serves also as the hatch for a generous lazarette, capable of hiding not only the genset but a couple of SeaBobs, too.

Her engine room, below the cockpit, holds the twin Volvo 800s and the Seakeeper system, yet still offers space to move around, which is also true of the deck areas themselves. Those high and chunky bulwarks run all the way around, creating a perfect, safe environment for families and children. They will also enjoy jumping off the swim platform, with its Besenconi passerelle-cum-swim steps and a hidden deck shower with hot water.

The Alen 55, then, is an accomplished performer. Her composite, AIREX-cored construction gives her a displacement of 21 tonnes, and her tanks hold enough fuel for a 250-mile range at 28 knots – her ideal cruise speed. The attention to detail is evident everywhere, from the drop-in trays that sit between the cushions below to the fender-hook holes in the bulwark tops.

As we head back to harbour at the end of a sun-soaked yet chilly morning, I notice something else about this lady. Not only does she crack astern at a fair pace without wetting her swim platform but, with a nudge on her electric bowthruster, she proves very well behaved in tight spaces.

Accommodating, well finished, sturdy, attractive, with curves in all the right places, she's fast and loose with a throaty roar when you're alone on the seas and yet elegant and perfectly mannered when in port. What more could you ask for? ■

**TEMPTED?**  
The Alen 55 ([alenyacht.com](http://alenyacht.com)) is customisable to the owner's requirements: crew cabin or an extra bedroom can be included, while the lounge sofa converts into a double berth. Top speed is 35 knots and range is 280nm.

