

Black Beauty

The Alen 68 is what you get when you combine a fastidious Turkish shipyard and a legendary English architecture firm. With its modern lines, elegant spaces, meticulous finishes and high-tech engineering, this is a motorboat that deserves to be taken seriously.





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The first of the Alen 68s to be completed, Iguazu, will be on display at the Monaco Yacht Show in September. She’s likely to cause quite a stir among potential buyers for the diversity that she can offer on the water, whether as a chase boat to a much larger yacht, a stunning standalone day boat or a comfortable overnight cruiser.

The debut of this 20-metre motorboat has been hotly anticipated since Sir Norman Foster’s architecture firm first released renderings of her design in 2012. But her story began a few years before that, when Foster+Partners was commissioned by the owners of Iguazu to create a modern and clean interior design for their 56-metre Perini Navi ketch, Panthalassa, which was launched in 2010.

So happy were the owners with this experience that they brought in the same team to work on their next project, a much smaller vessel, with a Turkish shipyard, Alen Yachts. The brief was to work closely with the yard to create a whole new vessel, one that combines the elegant social spaces of a cruising yacht with the fun of a day boat. Also, and rather unusually, this boat would set a semi-custom template upon which Alen could create additional reproductions, highly tailorable to customers’ demands, while still maintaining cost advantages and reduced delivery times compared to entirely bespoke orders.

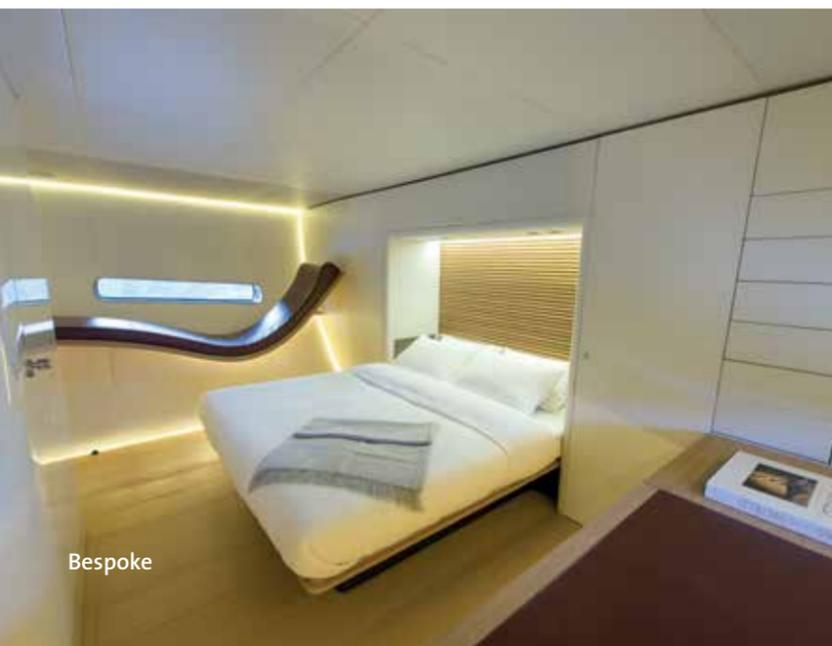
Efficiency of design is evident

everywhere. The exterior maximises social spaces for lounging, dining and relaxing, resulting in 20 per cent extra space compared with similarly sized vessels. The modular sunpad to the rear of the deck can be arranged to give total outdoor seating for up to 12 and there are two black fabric recliners forward of the console. For those who enjoy adding bells and whistles, there’s a range of entertainment options, including a wet bar, grill, barbecue and a Teppanyaki hotplate - perfect for a relaxed meal after a day at sea.

Water sports junkies will be kept happy with the surprisingly roomy allocation for toys: a 3.2m jet tender, two Seabob underwater sea scooters, a pair of stand-up paddleboards and a jet ski can be stowed to the aft of the yacht, which has been designed with a dramatic and elegant full-beam staircase to the swim platform at the stern.

Since Alen Yacht prides itself on supporting style with substance, practicality was fundamental throughout the design and build process. Like the Alen 42 and 55 that came before it, the 68 includes an Alen Yacht-pioneered walk-around deck layout concept that opens up the space, allowing those by the wheel easy movement when not accompanied by crew.

“The pleasure of yachting without crew is so much greater,” explains Alp Ozcan, owner and CEO of Alen Yacht. “To achieve this in these sizes of vessels, you need easy access to the bow and aft without having to ➤



jump over obstacles and keep everything all on one deck level.”

Ozcan says that another signature design feature by Alen Yacht, which was built upon by Foster+Partners, is the sense it gives that passengers are on a “large land-based terrace with a great shading system and interior space”. This shading system is a feature that has been growing in popularity on yachts in recent years, as sun-protection awareness becomes more widespread. The Alen 68 offers a sophisticated retractable Bimini shade system that can provide protection when needed, even underway. According to Ozcan, this was one of the more technically challenging aspects of the build: creating a system that’s easy to remove but also durable when cruising at 40 knots. Testing went through many iterations to find the right materials and shapes capable of withstanding the wind.

And serious speeds are to be expected. Powered by two 1,550hp V12 MAN units, the Alen 68 can reach up to 45 knots with a cruising speed of 41 knots and a range of 315 nautical miles. That being said, the gyro stabiliser on board also offers a comfortable ride both when underway and at anchor, so those who are less in tune with their sea legs aren’t likely to be put off.

Venturing below deck into the interior of the yacht, the talents of Foster+Partners really shine, as their experience designing land-based projects like hotels as well as private jet projects, which need to maximise the use of space, has been put to good use.

The owners wanted to create an unconventional interior with a similarly refined palette of materials as their larger sailing yacht. “All furniture and clutter was removed from the sides of the hull to express the shape of the boat’s interior,” says David Summerfield, a design director at Foster+Partners.

Doing so has also allowed future designs to be modifiable to clients’ tastes and include between one and three cabins

- though Iguazu has a single master cabin (featuring a double-sized bed, a chaise longue and an en-suite bathroom) in addition to a very large lounge towards the bow.

Making this unorthodox and adaptable vision a reality was also a significant challenge for Alen Yacht’s build team, as Mine Aktuna from the company’s architecture team explains. “The boat has a unique layout, built around the concept of a central pod, which we called the nucleus of the boat. The nucleus includes the wet areas such as the galley and the heads [bathrooms]. The lounge area and master cabin are then positioned around this central pod. When you walk inside the boat it is still possible to feel the curved hull shape with smooth leather panels and ceiling, with lines following each other. This is one of the central design principles of the yacht. It can be seen in the floor, the ceiling, the doors and even the master cabinet doors.”

The yacht’s interior finishes are light and contemporary, a monochrome palate with soft concealed LED light sources and backlit onyx, the latter being a first for the company. Bleached oak and lacquer paint are used throughout, while the master and day head are sleek and modern, with stainless steel framing glass cabinets and drawers that are painted white on the rear surface.

“The attention to detail on the boat is unlike that seen on many others,” Ozcan explains. “Each line connects with another, every item has a purpose and reasoning behind it.”

Practicality that also offers a detailed quality of finish is likely to make the Alen 68 a model that’s in demand for many years to come. The flexibility and choice available to owners in how they use the yacht, the simplified onboard operational systems and crew-free layout offer what many yacht and boat enthusiasts are looking for from their time on the water: simplicity and fun without cutting corners on style. 

Model: Alen 68
Length: 20.3 metres
Beam: 6.3 metres
Material: Full composite
Displacement: 45 tonnes
Engines: 2 x 1500HP V12 MAN
Max Speed: 45 knots
Cruising Speed: 41 knots
Range: 315 nautical miles
People on board: 16
Price: 3.78 million USD



Previous: Innovative thinking below deck allows for a one or three bedroom layout. In the case of the former, the saloon wrap-around sofa seats twelve.
Here: Some of the above-deck highlights include a dining table, also for twelve, served by the grill, drinks cabinet and even a teppanyaki hotplate.

