

GO BOATING

AUSTRALIA'S BOATING LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

BOAT REVIEW



Lady

in Red
BENETEAU FLYER 12

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THE FRENCH HAVE ALWAYS been renowned for their addiction to style and it is therefore not surprising that one of the most stylish, if not the most stylish sports cruiser to hit the Australian market is uniquely French in design.

The all new Beneteau Flyer 12, a sleek hardtop sports cruiser with its attractive red and white hull and white top sides, turns heads. Whether underway or at anchor, this boat will always command a second look.

But beauty isn't just skin deep. From a design and engineering perspective, this is a completely new approach to sports cruiser construction. Although our test boat was fitted with shaft drives, this evolutionary V shaped planing hull was designed to accommodate the new Volvo IPS propulsion system. Its full length chines and unique forefoot allow the Flyer 12 to simply cut through even the roughest of conditions with steadfast ease and excellent spray deflection.

We have reviewed a few of the Beneteau power range over the last 12 months and they have all impressed with the quality of their design and construction. The Flyer 12 is however quite different in design and layout and has certainly thrown down the gauntlet to other manufacturers in the increasingly popular sports cruiser market.

This is a 12 metre cruiser and it has diesel shaft drives or for an additional \$50,000, you can have the latest Volvo IPS propulsion system. For my money though, the power plant in our test boat was perfectly adequate and in many respects, impressive.

Conditions outside the Gold Coast Seaway on the day of our test were less than friendly but the twin D6 Volvo 370hp diesels provided ample power for the conditions and at 2200 rpm, we were able to run comfortably both up and down wind at 20 knots. The dynamics of the hull were obvious in such conditions giving a stable, dry ride and requiring very little trim to have the boat running flat and in complete control of the conditions.

Back inside the Seaway in calmer conditions, the six cylinder Volvos spinning four blade bronze 600 x 780mm props topped out at 3400 rpm showing a



little over 30 knots on the GPS. The hull design provides effortless acceleration, nose lift is non-existent and manoeuvrability is excellent. Cavitation and vibration are also not evident.

Almost every aspect of this 12 metre cruiser requires a reassessment of expectations of a sports cruiser. For example, the Beneteau Flyer has what I would term 'real' walk around decks and the safety rails taper fully aft to the saloon superstructure. The hardtop and sunroof have been aerodynamically designed to allow for good air flow either when underway or at anchor. The stylish laminated glass side windows are not fixed. They open so you can enjoy the sea air and when closed, they don't leak!

The dash and helm position are so different that you have to discard your expectation that you must stand when driving the boat. In fact, due to the low profile of the hard top and the slightly raised helm seating to give complete and uninterrupted forward vision, it is a little difficult to stand. But why would you want to stand when you can sit at the helm and be seated in complete comfort? The seats offer good back support and the sports steering wheel is fully adjustable.

Further, this sports cruiser has two separate cabins, both with ensuite bathrooms and as mentioned earlier, it is shaft driven - all this in a 12 metre cruiser. In terms of living area, the saloon, cockpit and swim platform are all one level. Quite astonishing really!



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: In sizeable swells outside the Seaway, the Flyer 12 ran very well | Spacious walk-around side decks | The sporty dash with large screen GPS | Twin bench helm seat.

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Ship's horn mounted on the targa | Stylish analogue gauges | Utility unit with BBQ and ice maker | The convertible cockpit lounge.



The integrated swim platform with teak deck has an electrically operated swim ladder and a storage locker. The transom houses a boot as well as a hot and cold deck shower. A cantilevered transom door allows for portside boarding. The self draining cockpit has a full teak deck with starboard side lounge, teak gunwales and a portside entertainment unit featuring an electric barbeque with stainless steel mirror finished splash back and ice maker. A storage locker is located to starboard of the saloon entry.

Cleverly, Beneteau have designed the cockpit lounge to quickly and easily convert into a large sun lounge or double bed. Complete with drink holders, the convertible lounge is a great addition and adds to the innovative qualities of the cruiser.

Two inspection hatches provide access to the spacious lazarette, another feature not readily found on sports cruisers. The lazarette houses twin battery banks, battery charger and a 4kVa Onan genset.

Entry to the engine room is through a centrally located hatch aft of the sliding glass door entry to the saloon. A small ladder assists the descent into the engine bay. The engine room is not overly spacious but it is the quality of the fittings and equipment which is most impressive. All hoses are double clamped, all filters are of good quality and the engine room is insulated with high density foam.

The six cylinder Volvos are mounted virtually amidships giving a good centre of

gravity and to minimise cabin noise, underwater exhausts have been used and fresh air is pushed into the engine room through port and starboard breathers and disguised with clever model badging. A fire retardant system controlled from the helm is also standard. The engine room also houses twin aluminium fuel tanks. Electrical switches and control panels are mounted on the bulkhead separating the engine room and lazarette.

The manufacturers have continued the subtle use of teak on the decks with teak treads on the moulded steps leading forward. Deck drains have been installed in the deck just above the steps to prevent water cascading back into the cockpit. The anti-slip walk-around decks, complete with stainless steel grab rails mounted on the hardtop, are perhaps the best I have seen on any sports cruiser and would put many large flybridge models to shame. The teak toe rail runs from the transom to the bow. The bowsprit and deck area where the windlass is mounted is also finished in teak.

Fuel and water inlets are position below the walk-around deck amidships and have been neatly recessed below the deck and covered by a top opening hatch.

The anchor setup is also impressive. A 20 kg plow anchor with 3/4 inch chain on a heavy duty Lewmar winch is standard and I did like the lock down anchor clamp which stops the anchor moving about in heaving sea conditions, causing damage to the gelcoat.

The foredeck is slightly raised to give extra cabin height below. Stainless steel grab rails complement a sun lounge. Drink holders are also provided for those lucky enough to soak up the sun on the foredeck.

The hardtop has sleek lines and a forward facing targa which extends above the hardtop and sunroof. The targa accommodates a radar dome, anchor light and VHF aerial as well as side mounted air horns. The hardtop extends aft to provide some protection in bad weather for the saloon sliding glass door.

Whilst the exterior lines of the Flyer 12 are stunning, entry to the saloon adds a new dimension to onwater living. Beneteau have excelled in their approach to the



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Convertible dinette | Safety rails run fully aft to the cockpit | The open sunroof provides plenty of natural ventilation to the saloon | The removable table centre piece serves as a tray.

saloon. Visually, the stunning red carpet adds enormously to the ambience of the saloon and contrasts beautifully with the highly polished solid Mukali cabinetry and cream leather and fabric upholstery.

The tapered laminated glass windows are accentuated with cream drapes and tracks which extend forward around the windscreen area for complete privacy at night. The toughened glass windscreen has allowed Beneteau to all but do away with a centre structural support. Only a thin chrome support, centrally mounted, interferes with the forward panorama.

The overall layout is simplistic in design and so very practical. The galley is concealed in a full length portside cabinet while a convertible dinette is set to starboard behind the double helm lounge. I can't emphasise enough, the quality of the joinery and cabinetry work on the Flyer. The dinette table is just superb with raised lip and beautifully rounded edges. The glass centre piece lifts out to become a tray and conceals a useful wine rack.

The U shaped dinette is complemented by two moveable upholstered stools which snap into stainless steel floor locks when not in use or underway.

The portside galley is totally ingenious. All appliances are hidden beneath the highly polished cabinet top when not in use. The galley features a two ring electric acrylic hot plate, complete with stainless steel mirrored splash back. Below the hot plate is a convection microwave. The galley has a twin bowl sink and mixer taps, a fridge,

wine rack, concealed rubbish bin and copious amounts of storage in cupboards and drawers. There is even an overhead cabinet for crockery storage.

The starboard helm is very modern with excellent instrumentation and layout. Instrumentation is exclusively Raymarine with an E120 GPS chartplotter mounted in the centre of the dash. Analogue gauges have been used for engine and tank readouts while the LED Volvo Penta Diagnostic panels provide continuous engine monitoring.

The sporty wheel is chrome and leather and adds to the boat's sporty look and twin heavy duty windscreen wipers propel water away from the screen. There are even demisters for the windscreen. Integrated gear and throttle controls are mounted on the side wall on the skipper's starboard hand.

A rudder indicator is centrally positioned between the analogues gauges and the compass, curiously, is set to port of the dash.

Rocker mounted system's switches and autopilot are located on the portside of the dash while the bow thruster joystick is mounted opposite. The forward console also accommodates the DVD sound system control.

Speakers are mounted above shoulder height on either side of the saloon while Mukali timber panels have been used subtly on the roof to accentuate the saloon lines.

Below decks is reserved exclusively for accommodation although the ship's electrical control panel is mounted in the companionway wall leading below deck. The companionway curves gently to starboard with a portside entry. Three polished timber steps lead below and these actually lift up to reveal a massive storage area below the saloon floor. The quite large area houses ship's plumbing and hot water system. An optional washer/dryer can also be mounted here and accessed from the starboard cabin through a removable panel.

The starboard cabin features full head height on entry. The cabin has cream leather walls and its own ensuite. The queen size bed extends aft under the

saloon floor while twin portholes provide plenty of light and ventilation. The cabin has a hanging locker, complete with courtesy light, book shelves and adjustable reading lights.

The ensuite isn't one of those poky little addendums. It is spacious, has quality fittings including a frosted aqua vanity bowl with hand held shower, oval mirror, porthole, manual toilet and two storage units, above and below the vanity.

The master stateroom occupies the bow of the cruiser and as with the starboard cabin, the finish and furnishings are of exceptionally high quality. The island queen size bed has a mirror bed head and deep storage drawers under. There are book shelves either side of the cabin as well as overhead lockers. Two portholes and an overhead hatch, fully screen, provide light and ventilation.

A large hanging cabinet with courtesy light is located on the portside while the entry to the absolutely huge ensuite is to port and aft of the entry to the cabin.

The ensuite is beautifully contoured with polished timber bench top, frosted aqua vanity bowl with an oval mirror mounted on the side wall behind the vanity. A separate shower with matching frosted blue acrylic shower doors is set further aft of the vanity and electric toilet.

There are overhead lockers and storage below the vanity basin and side portholes in both the shower and vanity area provide adequate ventilation removing

the necessity for extractors. Both portholes have privacy screens and the shower has teak non slip treads.

The fittings such as soap and toothbrush holders, towel rails and clothes hooks are of high quality making this an exceptional wet area. The floor below decks is finished in polished Mukali timber as are the companionway walls. Downlights have been used throughout the cabins and ensuites.

Overall the standard of accommodation on the Beneteau Flyer 12 is brilliant and their use of space below decks is exceptional. There is more storage on this 12 metre cruiser than I have seen on much larger vessels. And of course, the Flyer is fully air-conditioned.

This is a true sports cruiser, designed for the most discerning owner and will not in any way disappoint. This 'Lady in Red' is a class act and obviously benefits from Beneteau's long history in building ocean going yachts and power boats.

However, there is much more to buying a Beneteau than simply acquiring a stylish cruiser. Upon taking delivery, Australian distributors JW Marine provide a 'Sailing for Pleasure' contract which is signed yearly and ensures three years parts and labour warranty. It is an industry leading warranty backed by the manufacturer and offers great peace of mind to the studious owner. The toughest decision when deciding to buy one of these innovative cruisers is whether to choose a red or steel blue hull. Personally, red is the winner!

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: Spacious master ensuite | Quality wet area fittings and frosted aqua vanity bowl | Two little Teddys relaxing on the queen size bed in the master cabin.



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	12.62 metres
LWL	11.98 metres
Beam	3.99 metres
Draft	1.16 metres
Displacement	9,257 kg
Fuel capacity	1,200 litres
Fresh water	320 litres
Holding tank	135 litres
Accommodation	6 people
Engines	Twin D6 370 hp Volvo turbo diesels with shaft driven four blade props
Warranty	5 years structural hull
Price as tested	\$577,167.00

Test boat supplied by JW Marine, Gold Coast
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FLYER 12

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