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MIAMI BOAT SHOW
PREVIEW

64 MUST-SEE
MODELS

Marlow 49E
BUILT FOR ADVENTURE

The Drake Passage
HERE THERE BE MONSTERS



Exceeding Expectations

David Marlow's newest and smallest Explorer offers an excellent platform for those whose cruising desires have no bounds.

By Ken Kreisler | Photography by John Lambert

As with the man, the yachts that bear his name have a tenacious quality to them. Even while sitting at the dock, with all her lines secured to cleats as the most gentle of urgings occasionally create a barely perceptible tug on them now and then, the Marlow 49E seems to be saying, "C'mon! Kick those engines over and let's get out of here and go places!"

The smallest of any of the Marlow Yachts to slip down the ways at the factory near Xiamen, China, the 49E embodies all the qualities, heritage and horizon-chasing DNA of her larger sistership predecessors.

Indeed, one step aboard confirms her well-built and sturdy construction. "Here, grab a hold," said the resolute David Marlow, the man behind the brand, as he wrapped both hands around the shiny, stainless steel, transom railing and gave it a good push and

tug. I followed his lead—there wasn't the slightest give in the robust rail. A quick examination of its almost artistic crafting—the way its oval shape conformed to my hands and the almost non-existent weld seam—had already piqued my interest as to what else I would discover during my visit.

That sturdy construction is a hallmark of the Marlow Explorer series. Built to ISO, ABYC, Unrestricted Navigation, Lloyd's, and Det Norske Veritas standards, the hull is Kevlar infused using vinylester resins and sandwiched with ATC Core Cell. Below the waterline, the 49E offers twin Velocijet strut keels for a more stable, steady ride and added protection for the running gear. Designed and handmade by Marlow workers, all doors close with authority. All the hardware, including every hinge and latch, is of superior quality. The proprietary, frameless, tempered and laminated windows are

overbuilt, and there is absolutely no flexing of any decking or sole throughout. "You can't put a price on quality," said Marlow. "It is something that goes into each and every boat we build, without compromise."

To attain that goal, Marlow and his crew set rigorous standards for everything aboard the 49E, and that includes the fine and exacting fit and finishes of all the woodwork with, for example, the grain on the rope locker matching that of the cap rail. In fact, looking at the way all the repetitive veneers line up and how my eye followed the pattern of the as-perfect-as-can-be valences in the main salon and the very impressive hand crafted wheel at the main deck's helm station, I had to ask him how it was done. "We made the investment in our own mill and do not buy any finished lumber," replied Marlow as he described how he and factory supervisor

Michael Huang travel to Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar to find just what they are looking for. "We had to pull those fallen logs, and only the best ones, out of the forest with elephants. It's the only way to do it," he said. "Imagine that, helping to build boats with elephants!"

Roominess is a priority aboard the 49E; after all, she is a boat built and designed to travel. Whether enjoying the ample space outdoors up on the Portuguese bridge, in the generous dimensions afforded the lower helm station, having an alfresco meal at the aft deck's finely finished table, being topsides on the bridge deck, or traversing the boat's wide walkways, you are going to find that these areas take full advantage of every inch of available space.

"Having to adapt all that we usually provide on our larger boats, especially in the living accommodations and engine room areas, was something we kept in mind when designing and planning



Previous pages: The 49E, a boat built and designed to travel, cruises with grace and stability thanks to her twin Velocijet strut keels.

Clockwise from top left: Shoji-inspired overhead storage in the master stateroom reflects the Asian influence. Roominess is a priority aboard with generous dimensions afforded at the lower helm—note the hand-crafted wheel—and casual dining area that doubles as a work space. The open galley is ideal for socializing yet can be closed off from the salon.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 57' 3"

Beam: 17' 3"

Draft: 4' 6"

Weight: 61,600 lbs.

Fuel/Water: 1,000/250 U.S. gals.

Power: Cummins QSM11 715-hp (as tested); 2x Cummins 6.7 QSB 480-hp (standard)

Cruise/Top speed: 22/25 knots

MSRP: Contact builder

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the 49E," he said. Whether you opt for either the two or three stateroom layout, you will find generous space is provided for both comfort and for extended time away from your home port and plenty of essential storage areas.

Attention to detail is evident in the little things such as those recessed interior handrails leading down to the staterooms; the distinctive overhead design found in the main salon; and the stainless steel engraved bell up on the bridge deck. It can also be seen in the thought given to the honeycombed and veneered granite tops for added weight saving as well as in the fuel fill stations located on both port and starboard sides with special catch basins for spill protection and readily accessible shut offs. It just reinforces the notion that if the right kind of attention is paid to a lot of little things, they add up to big ones. As far as her engine room goes, well, I'm a hands-on kind of guy and I found all the critical maintenance areas, including pumps, switches, equipment spaces, sea chest—and any other place I would need to access—to be free and clear, thus eliminating any knuckle-busting, elbow-slamming, head-jamming situations.

That aforementioned factory is also part of the Marlow success story, and one that can be seen not only in this build, but also in all the Marlow boats. When he first laid out the property, there was nothing there. Now, it's a state-of-the-art, green facility whose prime directive is to manufacture the best product he and his staff can imagine. In fact, back in 2006, the plant was honored with a World Superyacht award for the dedication shown in protecting the environment. "For example," he said, "we take the shavings from our lumber mill, put them in our oven and use the heat generated to provide warm water to the factory. In addition, the leftover ash is used to fertilize the surrounding land."

It took four years to bring the 49E to fruition and by all indications, it was time well spent and worth waiting for. "It's the pride of ownership that all of us here at Marlow have, from the designers and dreamers to the people on the line. It is what we put into the 49E and into each and every other vessel that bears our name," he shared.

In a boat this size, you can't afford to miss a step. By all indications, the 49E, with its sturdy build, proven seaworthiness, redundant systems, and enormous capability to travel, will be seen in ports far and wide. Indeed, before Marlow stepped aside to entertain some prospective owners, he told me of a 49E now traveling to Australia via the North Atlantic route to Iceland and Greenland, then over to the Mediterranean for the winter. After that, the plan is to travel to the western coast of South America.

If a long-legged, extended trip is on your life's bucket list—or even something not so lofty—you will want to give the Marlow 49E more than just a cursory look. It will be worth your while. 🐦

Ten Bucks for a Tin Canoe

"I had my first burgeoning boatbuilding business at the age of 13 or 14 when I was building canoes out of old tin from chicken barn roofs that had blown off during storms," remarked David Marlow in a smooth baritone voice as he and I sat aboard the 49E. He smiled broadly, recalling his formative years, ones that would lead him to become the driving force behind Marlow Yachts.



"I guess I just had an eye for it," he said of those early times, growing up on the west coast of Florida that became crucial to shaping his nautical career. Years later and firmly entrenched in the marine industry, he took note of the marine architecture of many designers including Donald Blount, Michael Peters and especially that of Doug Zurn.

Marlow's vision of a no-nonsense, comfortable yacht design with the ability to provide outstanding creature comforts, dependable and redundant systems for extended time away from the dock, as well as excellent sea-keeping characteristics—all wrapped up in eye-pleasing, well-built packages—came to fruition when the first Marlow Explorer, the 65C, with marine architecture by Zurn, made her debut at the 2001 Miami International Boat Show.