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Marlow Explorer 70E

DETAILED DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION DISTINGUISH AN OCEANGOING YACHT

BY MATT GURNSEY

AS I WAS TOURING THE MARLOW EXPLORER 70E COMMAND BRIDGE, I started thinking about the many considerations that go into the decision to purchase a new yacht. Many of today's large, luxury yachts offer similar standard features, optional upgrades, quality construction and seakindly hull shapes. Walk the docks of almost any boat show, and you'll find dozens upon dozens of masterfully constructed, superbly designed and beautifully outfitted multimillion-dollar yachts.

Perhaps the selling point in the luxury-line class comes down to whether an affinity is felt toward the builder's creative vision and/or operational philosophy. If so, then buyers who include on their list of personal values concepts such as "green building," "fair market trade" and "environmentally friendly" may in particular be impressed by and respond to a yacht maker that incorporates these values as part of doing business.

David Marlow's desire to build world-class yachts, and in doing so, help preserve a pristine environment, led to the environmentally conscious development of the Norseman Shipyard facility in the mainland China coastal city of Xiamen, located about 500 miles north of Hong Kong along the China Sea.

The Norseman Shipyard boasts a park-like setting. The facility sits atop a 24-inch layer of crushed granite that is part of an elaborate drainage system. All on-site liquids are captured and filtered to be sure no accidental toxic spillage escapes the site. Should any one of the three cisterns become contaminated, it can be isolated and cleaned, and any effluent disposed of properly.

Beyond the environmental controls, the factory has earned an ISO 14001 rating, which means that it has implemented full environmental controls over the entire manufacturing process. Emergency plans are in place for any accidental spills of hazardous materials, and all products that can be are recycled. Rainwater captured by the cisterns is used for irrigation and fire control systems.

With environmentally friendly practices in place, the shipyard turned its attention to training local workers to become fine boat builders. They first were given the task of constructing buildings. In the course of constructing the shipyard's facilities, the workmen revealed their aptitudes in specific boat-building crafts. Plumbers were separated from electricians, and carpenters were further narrowed into rough assemblers and detailers.

An **Inside** Look

TESTER'S OPINION

"Everywhere we looked, we were impressed with the workmanship and quality on this vessel. Aft doors were sliders that fit into the bulkhead, and drawers in the master had curved faces that lined up perfectly. You can feel good about the quality and strength, as well as the Earth-friendly attitude of the company."

The view from the helm (left) is excellent, and the doors and oversized hatch above allow in plenty of fresh air. The 70E's unique command bridge layout skips a lower station; instead, an oversized dinette allows seating for eight on the same level as the galley, which is in the traditional U-shape in the aft part of the pilothouse (top and above left). The master stateroom's high-gloss teak-veneer cabinetry gleams under recessed lights (above).

The detailers produce the fine-furniture-quality woodwork on Marlow vessels. The best of the craftsmen were chosen from a competition to build a desk. Given only vague parameters, the craftsmen created different designs that far surpassed the minimal expectations. The desks, considered minor works of art, were donated to local schools. After more than three years of development and training in boat building, the first hull was laid up. Given the investment of time and training and paying a workforce, this Marlow line couldn't be anything but world-class.

So, what sets the Marlow 70E apart? To answer that, one must get to the core of what makes a Marlow, well, a Marlow. And talking about the core is the best place to start. It's not the hull

Marlow Explorer 70E

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	71 ft., 3 in.
Beam	18 ft., 4 in.
Draft	4 ft., 5 in.
Weight (dry)	82,000 lbs.
Fuel capacity	1,900 gals.
Water capacity	500 gals.
Propellers	5-blade CNC-cut Nibral
Maximum power	Twin C12 Cat 715 hp
Base price (with standard power)	$1,915,000

PERFORMANCE SPECS

Top speed	24 knots
Fuel burn @ 21 knot cruise	60 gph
Range @ 21 knot cruise	710 statute miles

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

A long list, including Portuguese bridge, dual windlass with 300 feet of chain each, entertainment electronics and flat-screen TVs, water chest, single-drain system, cockpit controls, 4,000-watt pure sine wave inverter, Glendinning Cablemaster (2), Aquadrive drive coupling, 220v high-volume engine room blowers, separate drinking and domestic water tanks, underwater exhaust, air conditioning, custom décor, English beveled mirrors, Grohe faucets and granite counters

OPTIONS ON TEST BOAT

Electronics package, including Furuno radar/plotter and Simrad autopilot

CONSTRUCTION

Lloyds GMBH-certified, ABS-certified and ISO 9001-certified construction using three major molds, Kevlar-reinforced vinylester resins and SAN-based foam coring. Vacuum-bagged and resin-infusion techniques used where appropriate.

COMPANY PROFILE

Years in business:	7
Number of employees:	210
Boat lines:	Marlow Explorer, Marlow Prowler

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we're talking about, but the bulkheads in the boat. Traditionally, bulkheads are made from plywood panels covered in either a wood or fabric finish and assembled inside the boat.

Marlow doesn't use plywood for bulkheads. Anywhere. The bulkheads are made of a foam-core material and molded into the shape and size needed. This makes the boat quieter and allows better temperature control of the spaces inside the boat. It also makes it easier to create curved bulkheads in hallways, eliminating sharp corners, and creating a more luxurious look.

Teak veneers and other materials are then applied to the walls to finish them. Doorways have radius openings at the top, and the doors themselves are cored for superior stability. Teak veneers cover the doors. The decks also are laminated constructions, and so strong that the main salon deck (at nearly 20 feet long) has no supporting posts.

While many manufacturers talk about the number of molded components they have, Marlow makes the vessel out of three molds. This adds strength, reduces potential leak points and makes for a longer-lasting vessel.

Vacuum-bagging construction techniques, Kevlar and other engineered fabrics, closed-cell foams and vinylester resins assure a state-of-the-art structure that is strong and safe. Vacuum bagging and resin-infusion techniques, where appropriate, reduce vapor emissions into the air (another environmentally friendly step in Marlow's production process).

The vessel's structure is so strong that the Marlow 70E comes with Lloyds Certification Ocean Class Category One, a level achieved by no other yacht of this style, according to David Marlow. The classification means the yacht can operate in deep ocean water far from port and is capable in force nine winds and in seas exceeding 18 feet.

In addition, the Marlow hull shape is a patented design with twin Velocijet strut keels. Much has been written about this unique hull shape; in short, it provides extra protection for the running gear, including the ability to maintain the vessel at a level attitude if grounded. It also alters the vessel's wake, reducing it in size, and increasing vessel speed.

Most important is the added stability the strut keels provide, dampening rolling motion, increasing directional stability and making the vessel more comfortable in rougher seas.

The technical aspects of hull design and the environmentally friendly construction characteristics are significant milestones in the Marlow line, but for many potential buyers, looks matter more (or at least as much). The 70E Command Bridge is an attractive vessel, whether on its moorings, under way or at rest.

The high level of detail carries through in the 70E's interior design and construction. The finely appointed interior is functional and attractive, with abundant teak paneling and trim. Particular attention was paid throughout to ensure grain matching was achieved. The two-tone joiner work on the fiddle rails, for instance, is set off by corners in a darker tone for contrast.

The high level of detail is possible because all the teak in the vessel comes from one tree. Not the same species of tree, but one single log. Selecting the appropriate tree to turn into a vessel's interior is an art form entrusted to one individual, as is the sharpening of the blades used to cut the veneers for the interior doors. A dull knife can result in splits in the veneer, and a ruined door.

One of the Marlow workers suggested that only a woman possesses the attention to detail necessary to ensure that the blades used for the process were as sharp as they needed to be. As a result, a female worker is given the responsibility of fashioning the interior doors.

The layout of the Marlow 70E's command bridge is unique in that there is no pilothouse helm. Instead, an oversized dinette sits on the same level as the galley. It will accommodate as many as eight people comfortably, and the view out the "pilothouse" windshield at breakfast is a wonderful way to start the day.

The helm is on the bridge level. It is fully enclosed with sliding doors aft and optional watertight doors to port and starboard. The view from the helm is excellent, and the doors and oversized hatch above allow in plenty of fresh air.

Well laid out, attractively finished and loaded with equipment, the Marlow 70E Command Bridge lives up to, and in many areas exceeds, the expectations of what an oceangoing yacht can achieve.