

PALM BEACH 65 FLYBRIDGE

The custom nature of Palm Beach Motor Yachts ensures attention to center of gravity and other features that owners find important.

To Each His Own

THE PALM BEACH 65 FLYBRIDGE SHOWS WHAT A BOATER'S BOAT CAN BE.
BY JASON Y. WOOD





Certain kinds of boaters demand certain kinds of boats. That's the way it should be, and it may not take a world-class yacht-racing skipper like Mark Richards to figure it out. But it certainly doesn't hurt, either.

Among other accomplishments, Richards—now the CEO of Grand Banks Yachts and Palm Beach Motor Yachts—took part in a couple of America's Cup campaigns before going amateur and skipping *Wild Oats XI*, a 100-foot maxi yacht, to an unprecedented eight wins of the Sydney Hobart Race. In that time, his nonprofessional status afforded him the freedom to found Palm Beach Motor Yachts, and to take the helm of Grand Banks Yachts when that company acquired Palm Beach. Throughout his boatbuilding career, Richards has tried to create boats that meet the needs of boaters and are “as close to perfection as humanly possible.” Palm Beach builds a range of Down East-inspired cruisers and flying-bridge motoryachts ranging from 42 to 65 feet, and Richards and his team try to imbue each model with that same philosophy, one that seems to hold its appeal for real boaters such as Mike Sifton.

“If I'm going to have somebody build me a boat, I want someone who truly understands boating—all aspects of boating,” Sifton says, as the owner of the new 65 shown on these pages. “I think there's a lot of sail know-how that needs to go into powerboat building and design.”

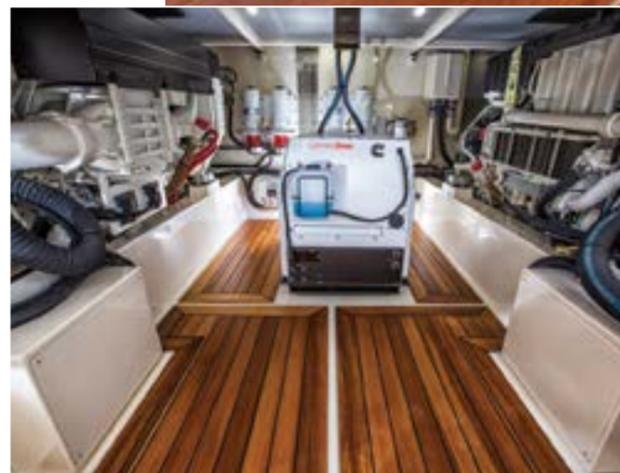
There's a reason why Sifton knows what he wants. “My family has had a place in the Thousand Islands and the St. Lawrence River all my life,” he says. “It's a place that I love to get to in the summers, and I've always loved all aspects of the water, whether I'm boating on it or swimming in it. It wasn't until about a dozen years ago that I started with larger boats—up to that point they were always dayboats and riverboats—and my wife and I decided we would start the adventure of a larger boat.” Sifton and his wife, Julie, owned a couple of Neptunus motoryachts before taking the plunge with a Marlow 78.

They enjoyed the Marlow for many years. As Sifton's professional life began to change, and he was able to spend longer stretches of time in the Bahamas, they decided to simplify their boating, and that meant no longer requiring a captain. “We decided we would sell the Marlow and make life a lot easier still by going a lot smaller,” he says. “We sold the boat quicker than anticipated—in fact we listed it before the Miami show [a few years ago] and ended up selling it the day before the show.” Heading into that show in their boatless condition, they looked at Palm Beach yachts, but the waiting list was too long, so they bought a Vicem 58. And when the time came to get their next boat, they really knew what they were after.

“We did our checklist of things we wanted,” Sifton said. “On the Vicem, we had a galley down, so we knew we wanted the galley up. We wanted to have a flybridge boat, while still maintaining a low center of gravity—we didn't want a hardtop. We wanted a third stateroom, although that was of less value to us. We wanted a third head. I didn't want a swim platform where the tender would sit. I wanted the tender to actually go away, which obviously it does on the 65.” The tender lives in a garage beneath the cockpit sole, where it's deployed and recovered on a carriage built of King StarBoard, using a single winch. Everything from the Siftons' experience with their previous boats led to this moment. From the finish of teak caprails in the cockpit to a sisal rug in the saloon, to a nicely laid-out galley opposite the starboard helm station, they were going to get it right.

The engine room is as good a place as any to start to see how this boat meets both owner and builder expectations, and I knew I was in for a treat when I saw the teak sole. As I stepped onto the ladder down the cockpit hatch, Carvey Iannuzzi of Palm Beach Motor Yachts USA cautioned me that he had not cleaned the engine room yet. Of course the crouching-height space (53-inch overhead) was spotless, with equipment all laid out plain to see, and plenty of room to get around.

A saloon with galley up surrounds the lower helm with family and friends (right). The spacious engine room is inviting and pleasant (below).



Test Notes

THE TENDER garage made sense for several reasons, not least of them being the owners' affinity for watersports. While the tender is important, room for dive gear and other equipment makes the transition to a 65-footer work for them.

ONE FEATURE about the lower helm that I loved: A power window acts as a door to the side deck—perfect for a couple executing their own docking maneuvers.

PALM BEACH offers a little bow cockpit as an option (though it was not fitted on the 65 Flybridge we tested) that would probably be a thrilling place to sit while underway on nice days. Just a bench seat in a recessed space aft of the chain locker. Something different.



PALM BEACH 65

LOA: 70'0"
 BEAM: 19'0"
 DRAFT: 3'6"
 DISPL.: 50,700 lb.
 FUEL: 1,585 gal.
 WATER: 317 gal.
 STANDARD POWER: 2/700-hp
 Volvo Penta IPS900s
 POWER OPTIONS: 2/800-hp
 Volvo Penta D13s;
 TEST POWER: 2/900-hp Volvo Penta D13
 TRANSMISSIONS: Twin Disc 1GX5096A,
 2.34:1 gear ratio
 PROPELLERS: 40 x 39 Teignbridge Nibril
 GENSET: 1/27-kW or 2/15-kW Fischer Pandas
 WARRANTY: 5 years hull and structural,
 5 years complete propulsion system,
 2 years all else
 BASE PRICE: \$3.4 million

The cockpit (left) will be well used on Bahamas excursions, but that soft awning and the flying-bridge bimini are designed to reduce weight up high and windage (opposite below).

The flying bridge has three Stidd seats serving a centerline helm, and the breeze and the fun of driving the boat from there is terrific. With a destroyer-style wheel and simplified helm arrangement, it's got everything I would need to spend hours up there.

One thing that gave me pause was the setup of the lower helm. The helm dash is laid out beautifully, with a couple of Garmin 8617 multi-function displays, along with Volvo Penta engine control units, Side-Power bow and stern thruster controls, Lenco trim-tab controls, and more. But the seat was situated on a platform, two steps up with just 60 inches of space from sole to overhead. I like to stand to drive, at least some of the time. The 64-inch-wide bench is comfortable and offers good sightlines. Of course, it's not my boat, and the Siftons prefer what this tradeoff got them.

The companionway from the saloon and galley is offset to port. The boat has a master situated to starboard, an en suite that makes sense with the profile of the boat, and has plenty of space and a cambered, 80-inch overhead that feels like it's on a boat—that's a good thing. The master has a true king-size berth and offers a walk-in locker three steps down at its aft end that owes its headroom to that helm platform.

The en suite guest stateroom in the forepeak has a queen berth and plenty of locker space as well. The third stateroom is situated beneath the galley, and has a 77-inch berth and 4-foot, 2-inch overhead. There's also a third head, which can double as a dayhead, and a laundry area.

Now this layout may not work for every boater, but it's definitely what the Siftons knew they wanted. "I love boats," Sifton says. "I love learning about them and I love running them. This one just happens to fit our requirements." □

Palm Beach Motor Yachts, 877-291-4220; www.pbmotoryachts.com

PALM BEACH 65



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE	dB(A)
600	7.4	2.5	4,280	66
1000	11.9	11.0	1,543	68
1500	18.8	30	894	74
2000	26.8	66	579	78
2250	29.7	87	487	81

TEST CONDITIONS: Air temperature: 78°F; humidity: 76%; wind: 7 knots; seas: 1-3'; load: 350 gal. fuel, 220 gal. water, 4 persons, 100 lb. gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured with Garmin GPS. Fuel burn is taken from Volvo Penta display. Range is based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity. Sound levels are measured at the lower helm. 65 dB(A) is the level of normal conversation.

NOTEWORTHY OPTIONS: Upgrade to 900-hp Volvo Penta IPS1200s; remote docking station; Opacmare Transformer swim platform; crew's quarters; Seakeeper 9 gyro stabilizer; KVH Satellite TV system. Prices available upon request.



"I don't want to pay somebody else to do these things," Sifton says of maintenance and upkeep tasks. "I want to get in there and be hands-on and do these things myself. It's not the dollars and cents, but rather it's my personal enjoyment. It may sound odd, but I don't have an issue at all mucking out the bilges. I enjoy all that stuff."

The space is built around a pair of Volvo Penta D13 diesels placed 58 inches apart, with a 21.5-kilowatt genset between them, and 15 inches of space between the genset and each engine. The Volvo Pentas are matched up to Twin Disc transmissions, and from there the power goes through a Seatorque system that turns the propshaft in an oil-filled tube. The Seatorque allows for softer engine mounts, reducing the effects of engine vibration, and also improves the flow of clean water to the props for an altogether smoother propulsion system.

And smooth is the key with this boat. She's not a go-fast, but she's not a trawler, either, topping out right around 30 knots. The speed just fits, and 1900 rpm gets you a 25-knot cruise that burns just about 58 gallons per hour. The hull is sharp at the forefoot, with 37 degrees of

deadrise, and then it flattens out to 6 degrees of deadrise at the transom, great for stability. The boat feels solid and singular, without a squeak or rattle to be heard. The hull is handlaid using e-glass and vinylester resin cored with Corecell. All interior bulkheads, soles, and decks—including galley joinery—are structural. Decks are infused for lightweight strength. It's like "general quarters" for every component of the boat: If it's on board, it's helping to lend strength to the build.

With a light breeze on Long Island Sound off Rowayton, Connecticut, and little in the way of seas, we tried a few different points of sail, cutting the wheel hard at a fast cruise to see what she would do. She was stable and graceful, with great response and a forgiving nature. In those easy conditions, this boat is a peach to drive, from both helms. On this warm, late-summer day, the flying bridge was the spot for me; Editor-in-Chief Larry Burke and I enjoyed talking about the process of the build with Iannuzzi and Dave Northrop, VP of sales and marketing and director of operations for the Americas for Palm Beach Motor Yachts.