

# SAIL *Just Launched*

## CATANA 431 CARBON CRUISING CAT

Nobody could accuse Catana of following the crowd, either in appearance or from any lack of boatspeed. Optimized for fast ocean cruising, with unique features and extensive use of the latest materials, the design of the Catana 431 is avant garde, the construction a technological tour de force, and the performance *très vite*.

Unlike most cruising cats, the Catana has twin daggerboards for maximum efficiency to windward and the ability to reduce drag off the wind. Catana advocates raising the boards in heavy seas to allow the hull to skid sideways instead of "tripping" and capsizing, much like the traditional way of handling a centerboard monohull in rough conditions offshore. The hulls are asymmetric and canted outward, and the entry is fine for good low-speed performance, with an underwater bulb at the bow for reserve buoyancy. The twin helm stations are out in the open, abaft the huge cockpit.

Waterproof bulkheads create crash zones forward and aft, and the builders claim the boat is unsinkable. Daggerboard trunks and rudder bearings are exceptionally strong, so while a heavy impact may carry



away part of a fin, the hull should remain intact. The factory pays considerable attention to keeping the structure light (a carbon-fiber mast is standard).

The 431's fit and finish are of a high standard, and I found the light-colored interior attractive and comfortable. The molded head units and many of the bulkheads can be moved for customizing the cabins; the boat I sailed had an office space. To reduce solar-heat gain there are

no hatches on deck but ventilation is ample through the numerous opening ports.

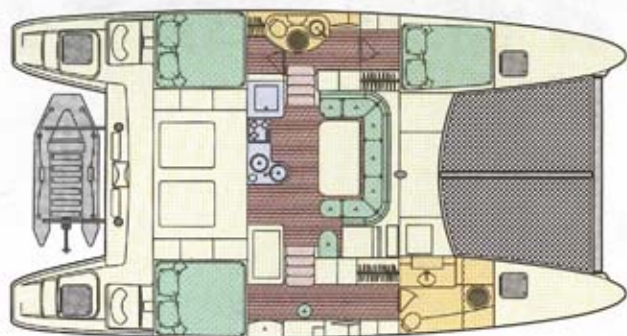
The saloon is large, with seating for eight to ten people around the drop-leaf table. Visibility from the saloon is excellent; an autopilot remote would make this the steering station in bad weather. Bunk supports are springy wood slats—airy and comfortable.

Hoses are neatly routed and tied, fittings are substantial, and the elec-

**Catana 431: Weight-saving construction, fast under sail**

trical system is carefully installed. This is a high-end, semi-custom boat, with extra time invested in the systems. The top-notch soundproofing results in a very low (62-decibel) sound level in the saloon at cruise speed, making this one of the quietest boats I've measured. An engine speed of 2,500 rpm returned  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots through the water; low-speed control is excep-

Catana 431



tional, and docking is a snap. The foredeck trampoline is comfortable for lounging, and the anchor rode leads neatly through a midships support. I wanted some steps to make the trip to the cabintop easier for furling, but the boom was easy to reach once I was up there.

Twenty-five knots of wind sent us charging at 9 knots under single-reefed main and full jib.

*The Catana 431's interior is modern and luxurious*

Our test boat had a shortened mast for an owner who needed to clear some low bridges, but the normal rig would call for a first reef at 25 knots of wind and a second reef at 35. A two-speed electric winch at the aft end of the cockpit handles a manifold of lines led back from the mast. Special compartments handle the line tails graciously, and the double-ended mainsheet is a pleasure to work with.

The helm offers pleas-

ant feedback and positive control. I have mixed feelings about the helm location; it gives excellent visibility and the short linkages make the rudder response precise, but a few hours out there could make one wish for shelter from the elements.

Welcome to the future of high-end cruising cats. These are indeed exciting times in the multihull world, but life at the leading edge is not inexpensive.

—Tom Dove

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#### Construction

Vacuum-bagged, PVC foam-cored hulls and deck, with vinylester resin, and tri-axial Twaron aramid fiber; reinforced bottoms for beaching. Twenty-one structural bulkheads reinforced with carbon fiber; furniture and doors are vacuum-bagged, cored composite for weight saving; 10-year structural limited warranty

LOA/LWL	43'2"/42'
Beam	24'
Draft (boards up/down)	2'7"/7'2"
Displacement	17,633 lbs
Sail area (actual)	857 sq ft
Power	twin Volvo 40-hp diesel
Fuel	106 gal
Water	160 gal
Displ.-length ratio	106
Sail area-displ. ratio	20.2

