



The TS 52', a catamaran which breathes performance...

Since it was presented at the 2005 Grand Pavois, the TS 50' has given the impression of being 'the bogey' and has created a stir in the heart of the watersports village. The launch of the TS 52 during the 2011 Grande Motte show revealed this ultra-fast machine to enthusiasts. Here are our impressions after a strong wind test in the company of the architect, Christophe Barreau.

CHASING PERFORMANCE ON THE WATER

Since their rediscovery in the 50s, multihulls have been constantly in the news with inordinate ambitions for speed. KAI-MILOA (CSK), Arthur Piver's Victresses before many others; each tried to transpose the innovations, with varying degrees of

success. Newick, Kelsall, Schionning, White, Spronk, Crowther left thrilling evidence, but their creative lead came up prematurely against the technology of the time, which was not always capable of interpreting the music. The infatuation with the catamaran platform has been confirmed over these last

decades and can easily be explained by its size/liveable volume efficiency and better acceptance in the marinas. The marketing positionings have become clearer and allow everyone to develop in differentiated, complementary compartments. The comfortable boats are today advancing with no

complexes; the fast cruising models offer sometimes remarkable compromises, but the (very?) sporty cruising boat niche is still looking for the Grail, it is defining its own criteria with boats like the TS 52', the Sig 45' or the extravagant Gunboats...and others, without a doubt!

TS 52' **A catamaran which fulfils its promise**



Aboard the TS52, 400 miles a day is not a fantasy, but a reality...

machine is very sport-oriented: impressive freeboard, XXL bows, short, fluid bridgedeck and above all, superlative 'ground clearance'. The very slim forward sections favour subtle penetration in the water; the flaring offers exceptional progressivity, with the aim of limiting hydrodynamic drag whilst surfing. Combined with the height of the hull, this geometry guarantees the safety of an effective bow and a volume which prevents it digging in (almost!) unflinching. The design of the hull sections is remarkable; just as in the competition world, the notion of the hull above/below the waterline becomes blurred with an overall dynamic view. The beam and the reasonable sail plan limit the power and are perfectly linked to the pro-

**CHRISTOPHE BARREAU:
A COMMITTED, ECLECTIC
ARCHITECT**

Designer of the Catanas in the post Lock Crowther era, Christophe has created a few masterpieces, such as the emblematic 471, which is today having a second childhood in a lightened carbon version, or the excellent Outremer 49. The architect is also a keen sailor, who, with his One Off 45' has roamed the South Atlantic and Patagonia, after having taken the Catana 40' DIABOLO beyond Spitsbergen! Alpine and Himalayan treks have kept alive his taste for the extreme and independence in the heart of unspoilt natural areas. The TS 52's radical philosophy stems directly from this synthesis and the whole of his experience: a

search for performance with no compromises, aboard a simple, modern, liveable catamaran of the latest generation.

**FROM LORIENT TO
CANET-EN-ROUSSILLON**

The TS was firstly chosen by

(experienced) charter customers! More surprisingly, a third boat accommodates the nautical project of a disabled persons' association. Thierry Goyard (co-founder of Catana, with J.P. Prades!) bought the moulds from Marsaudon Composites to

« 17,19, often 20 then 22, 23 knots, the beast followed its trail and forgot the coast for this wild reach, putting a huge smile on the crew's faces. »

Francis Joyon for his private use (inevitably wild). Régis Guillemot operated a second example in the West Indies, and now entrusts it without hesitation to

relaunch the marketing and entrusted the construction to Seatec. Jean-François Gonzalez carried out the composite phases of the Phisas. He has the expertise and the tooling suitable for this level of requirement. Several examples are being produced; our test boat was the first of this series.

**A PERTINENT CHOICE OF
TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL**

Infusion allows meticulous preparation of the tissues and PVC foams, as well as good control of the fibre/resin ratio. The choice of vinylester and polyester, the use of carbon for the master bulkhead, the aft crossbeam and the numerous reinforcements – all this gives 'muscle' where it is necessary, without leading to a technological escalation liable to complicate maintenance.

ARCHITECTURE: A SPECIALISED CHASSIS FOR SPEED AND PASSING THROUGH THE WAVES

A glance from the pontoon is enough to convince you that this

gramme. The wish to obtain and withstand high average performance in all circumstances without requiring too much sail area determines the TS 52's parameters: 16.10m / 8.5t laden / 20m mast / 135m² to windward!

A REFINED, MODERN RIG

Our test TS 52 was equipped with a rotating, self-tensioned carbon mast, an aluminium forward crossbeam and an aft crossbeam in polyester composite. The cutter rig, with jib/staysail furlers on textile forestays and Hydranet sails is a good basic approach; the version equipped with carbon beams (1 transversal, 1 compression and 1 aft) with membrane sails would make a more successful package (about a hundred kilos of poorly positioned weight eliminated!). If we add to this the possibility offered by the builder of centering the engines, we can imagine the margin for manoeuvre still available. disponible.

WELCOME ABOARD

The 2011 development offers a



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more attractive interpretation of the interior accommodation. The volumes are the same, of course, and remain convincing, but the bridgedeck has become brighter. The granite-like floor paint is a success (direct draining into the sea via interior scuppers makes maintenance and draining foul weather gear easier). The saloon is spacious, and is extended on either side by two big double berths/tatamis. The ergonomics and the lighting in the 4 double cabins

has been the subject of a lot of work; the heads are spartan, with no embellishments, and well-suited to their use. Despite sober choices by its owners, this model is comfortable and gives a good idea of what will be possible on the following boats.

OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY PERFORMANCE

The TS 52's athletic silhouette is elegant; the slimness of the connections hides an internal physiology which is muscular.



A little snack, whilst cruising at...20 knots!



The tiller and bucket seats: a real pleasure for the helmsman!

There are many bulkheads and reinforcements, and the abundance of this bracing gives the catamaran a rigidity which can be felt underfoot. The platform's rigorous geometry facilitates the support of the rigging arcs; this can moreover be felt from the first few metres covered. Manoeuvring under power remains exactly the same as aboard equivalent cats. A special mention for the positioning of the interior control panels, but,

as for the electronics in the coachroof façade, a clever cover would avoid untimely operation. Under 1 reef and the staysail, we set off to windward in the last of a Tramontane; in the time it took me to get my bearings in the pivoting bucket seats, the wakes were already telling an unusual story! The 15 – 25 knot breeze was varying in both strength and direction, but the sail choice was perfect for a start. The firm precision of the

A sporty catamaran, which knows how to behave itself with an experienced family crew.



« For leisure sailing, in the hands of experienced family crews, this bundle of nerves (in velvet soft furnishings) is perfectly controllable. »

rudders showed up the limits of the long laminated tillers...their essential carbon opposite numbers were aboard, soon to be fitted. Even with perfectible sail trim (the TS was being 'run in'), the speed and pointing ability immediately spoke for themselves: between 11 and 14 knots at 40° to the apparent wind! The machine just wanted to accelerate by increasing the pressure, at 50° it stabilised at 15 – 16 knots with perfect trim and a supple way of passing through the waves which allowed us to re-luff whilst conserving the extra speed. The general hydrodynamic and aerodynamic finesse and the penetration force became palpable. The feel of the chassis is quite direct and you have to get used to the lateral (directional effect of the rudders) and longitudinal (accelerations) shearing movements. We didn't slam in the waves once,

despite them being quite big! Out to sea, the swell was warping the horizon. We wanted more, so furled the staysail (Velcro fastenings on a textile stay) and unrolled the jib (all or nothing). We gybed and sailed downwind on starboard tack; the wind started to die near the coast but was still blowing out at sea. We kept the reef in and luffed and bore away nicely at between 15 and 18 knots with an easy to handle and stable boat. Ahead of us, a blue and white panorama full of promise; we gybed again and placed the TS's bows in the ruts in the water. The wind freshened progressively during the lunch break; the hulls started to take the tops off the slowest waves, whilst the sterns left powder trails behind them. 17,19, often 20 then 22, 23 knots, the beast followed its trail and forgot the coast for this wild reach, putting a huge smile on the crew's faces. The point of sailing remained comfortable, almost serene. Forward, I admired the hulls' majestic ease, whilst being wary of their powerful, vertical thrusts. Their capacity for passing through the waves was remarkable; we were not even using 50% of their possibilities! Béar and Creus were fading in the west; alas, we had to interrupt this festival of speed... Far out at sea, the return trip against 20 knots

of NW promised to be laborious! Not at all, the TS's versatility became apparent, and in less than 1h30, on very close reach, we returned from a long way out at an average of 15 knots (!). The insolent boat gave us a final demonstration of its strength as we returned: on this tricky leg, having a hard time with the wind from the Pyrenees mountains, we had included an allowance for leeway, but actually arrived 15° higher than our familiarity with the area had led us to believe...

CONCLUSION

The TS52 is an exceptional multihull. It floats like a trimaran and has a rare balance. Its geometric characteristics open the doors to an area of performance which is inaccessible to fast cruising catamarans. Pushed to the limits by professionals it is capable of keeping up with 2nd generation 50' multihulls, and speeding along at a continuous 28 knots in good record conditions, or covering 400 miles per day in ocean races! For leisure sailing, in the hands of experienced family crews, this bundle of nerves (in velvet soft furnishings) is perfectly controllable. Proof of the maturity of its construction and design: the TS is not hard to sail and is not at all a wild, unpredictable machine. This superb multihull is intended for experienced, reasonable amateurs who will be able to use its potential advisedly.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Architect: Christophe Barreau
Builder: XLight Catamarans
Length: 16.10m or 15.24m (TS50)
Waterline length: 16m or 15m (TS50)
Beam: 8m
Unladen displacement: 6.95t or 7.45t (TS50)
Laden displacement: 9.3t or 9.85t (TS50)
Maximum depth: 0.45m
Draft: 1.20/2.80m
Mast: 20m, rotating carbon or fixed aluminium (TS50)
Rigging: Textile or single strand (TS50)
Mainsail area: 87m² square headed or 82m² classic
Genoa: 51m²
Staysail: 22m²
Gennaker: 94m²
Asymmetric spinnaker: 160m²
Engines: 2 x 39hp inboards
Fuel: 2 x 215L
Water: 2 x 170L
Material: foam/glass/polyester-vinylester sandwich. Mast bulkhead – aft crossbeam – compression strut – martingale: carbon.
Price: 739,000 euros exc. VAT excluding sails and safety equipment / 626,000 euros exc. VAT for the TS50.

THE PLUSSES

- An exceptional cruiser-racer compromise
- Inspired, rigorous geometry
- Very high level performance and handling

THE MINUSES

- You have to know how to live at an average of 15 knots!
- Needs a little more effort concerning presentation
- The sails' Hydranet module is under-sized



A superb central volume, two double berths/tatamis on the same level, a large saloon for eight guests – comfort at an average of 15 knots!



Cabins with simple, bright, comfortable accommodation, which lend themselves well to customised decoration.