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The Aquila 70 Proves that Bigger is Better



# AQUILA 70

The latest luxury cruising cat from Aquila has all the room you need to plan a summer-long escape.



Catamarans make ideal cruising vessels—they're wide and stable with plenty of liveaboard space, and they offer a smooth ride and excellent seakeeping. If you had to pick one downside to a catamaran, you could say that their wide beam makes it tough to find a berth. The Aquila 70 falls into that realm with a beam just shy of 27 feet. Squeezing her into a crowded marina could be a little hair-raising, but the Aquila 70 was not meant to sit at the dock anyway; she was born to run.

Unfortunately for me, my introduction to Aquila's new flagship came while she was tied to a dock at the Palm Beach boat show. We may not have been moored off of some unnamed key in the middle of a tropical oasis, but it wasn't hard to imagine this vessel in such a surrounding. The boat is built for precisely that kind of use.

Powered with twin 1,000-hp Volvo D13 diesels, the 100,000-pound yacht cruises at a very respectable 21 knots and boasts a quick top end of 27 knots. If you're looking to make a long crossing, you'll want to drop her down to chugging speed to get the max range out of the 1,162 gallons of fuel on board. Aquila claims 3,000-plus nm of range at displacement speed. The engine displays make it easy to monitor the fuel burn and find the ideal speed for long cruises or short hops.

While the engines turn straight shafts, Aquila offers the Volvo Joystick Inboard system, which lets you operate the boat with the turn or push of a joystick by utilizing the electrical steering and variable-speed hydraulic bow thrusters. This system should make close-quarter maneuvering much easier, as you can walk the boat





LOA: 69'6"  
Beam: 26'11"  
Draft: 4'9"  
Displ.: 94,800 lbs. (dry)  
Fuel: 1,162 gal.  
Water: 412 gal.  
Power: 2/1,000-hp D13 Volvo  
Cruise Speed: 21 knots  
Top Speed: 27 knots  
Base Price: \$4 million



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sideways and spin it with just two fingers. Aquila placed a joystick in the armrest on the captain's chair at the helm on the flybridge. There are also joystick wing stations on the gunwales along either side of the flybridge if you need to step outside for a better view. A fourth joystick is located at the salon helm station, which does not have a steering wheel at all. This lower helm is just forward of the galley, so you could literally stir some Bolognese while you spin the boat. A bit too redundant perhaps, but handy to have nonetheless. I prefer the wide sightlines and plush captains' chairs upstairs.

There's really no reason to leave the flybridge on the Aquila 70 while underway, except if you need to use the head. The views up top are unabated, so you won't miss a dolphin surfing the bow wave or a sunrise off the stern. This particular boat was set up perfectly for southern cruising; the bridge is fully climate controlled and protected from the elements, but a canvas bulkhead can be removed if you wanted to open it up. The hardtop has two small manual hatches forward for the captain and two larger skylights aft that open up electrically to let in more air flow.

The centerline helm includes three 22-inch Garmin MFDs and an oversized steering wheel. With guest chairs on either side of the captain and a lounge seat to port, there's plenty of room for everyone to enjoy the journey. You can also entertain upstairs with a large

L-shaped dinette with hi-lo table, a drop-down television and surround sound. The unencumbered aft bridge deck can be used for another table, chaise lounges or a disco ball—there's plenty of room for whatever your mood calls for. There's also an outdoor kitchen with a large grill that even has a griddle—you can make everything from steaks to pancakes, and of course there's plenty of cold storage for beverages.

A watertight hatch in the floor of the bridge opens to a spiral staircase that leads to the salon. However, my favorite feature of the flybridge and something Aquila uses on many of its models is the Portuguese bridge access to the bow. Slide out the starboard door and you'll find wide side decks leading to a set of stairs down to the massive bow area. Complete with a sunpad large enough for the Brady Bunch, two benches and cup holders all over, this is a great spot to enjoy some sun. There's also walk-down storage lockers in the forward sponsons that have 6-plus feet of standing room, plenty of space to provision up for summer-long cruises. And since large catamarans are well-suited for mooring out, Aquila supplies a hydraulic windlass, chain counter, beefy stainless anchor and a second anchor roller for added security on the hook. I also appreciated the stainless retractable cleats and bow rails that run almost all the way astern.

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Since this boat is very happy on the hook, you're going to need a reliable tender. Well, the good folks at Aquila took care of that in spades. They offer a 14-foot catamaran RIB that slides onto a remote-controlled transom ramp, which angles down to the waterline to pull the tender in or flattens out to serve as deck space. The cockpit offers easy water access with recessed ladders on both hulls, removable stainless railings and wash-downs. Moving forward, the bridge deck offers some shade for a large table.

The salon on this boat is a massive open space with an L-shaped sofa to port and a bar and galley on the starboard side. The galley

sports commercial-grade appliances, and there's a screen that lifts up from of the island if the chef wants some privacy. A dining table has room for six to eight, and stools at the bar are ideal for cocktail hour.

Aquila offers the vessel in four-, five- or six-cabin layouts. This particular boat had a full-beam master, two VIP cabins and a crew cabin with a day head, laundry and storage area. This stateroom also offers access to the starboard engine room. The Volvo D13 looks downright small in this large, well-lit space. There's tons of room all around the engine. The boat also has two 21-kW gensets, which monitor one another and will kick on or off as the load warrants. The main fuel tank is located almost midship along the bilge, but the captain can shift fuel to the day tanks, which can be seen in the engine room. All of the filters, wiring and systems are well-labeled and easily accessible.

The king-size island berth in the master is flanked by an en suite to port and a large closet and wardrobe to starboard. The room is well lit with natural light, and there's a sitting area with a workspace for catching up on emails that opens up to reveal a makeup vanity with mirror. While the master is definitely the largest room on the vessel, I think the VIP has the better view thanks to a large hull-side window just above the waterline. You can lay in bed and look for Orion's Belt as you listen to the waves kiss the hull. I can't think of a better way to end a day.

—Charlie Levine