Island Packet is still owned, designed and built in the USA by quality yacht craftsmen averaging over 2 decades of experience building Island Packet Yachts.
The new Island Packet 349 is a uniquely qualified and capable yacht that showcases an unparalleled combination of features that further Island Packet’s unwavering commitment to meeting the needs and desires of the cruising sailor. The renowned Island Packet reputation of superb seakeeping and safety, exceptional comfort and livability, outstanding build quality, award-winning value and customer satisfaction remain well intact. In addition, this NEXT GENERATION Island Packet offers today’s discerning buyer innovation, higher product standards and customization options not available in past models.

There are many customizable seating options available on the starboard side of the salon:
- 2 captain’s chairs with table in the middle
- 1 captain chair with 1 settee and table in the middle
- Solid settee
- 2 settees with adjustable table in the middle

Additionally, there are 2 different berth and hanging locker options for the forward cabin.
You can also choose your Corian countertop colors, sink materials and sizes and there are many other interior features never seen on past Island Packets.
Fundamental to Island Packet’s legendary status among the sailing/cruising community is our exclusive Full Foil Keel, which provides exceptional seakeeping, safety, strength, stability, performance and a moderate draft that is unmatched by any other keel configuration. The Full Foil Keel design also allows all tankage to be centrally located below the cabin sole, significantly increasing usable storage areas throughout the interior, minimizing changes in trim with varied tank levels and keeping weight low.

Among the exterior updates and changes to this model are the scoop transom with steps and handrails for safety and ease of boarding from the dock, a dinghy or the water. There are also hull side ports for increased light below.

With this model, Island Packet is now offering the Solent-style rig as standard, featuring a mainsail with a working jib and an optional lightweight 170% reacher or asymmetrical that mounts on the integral bow platform and furled with Harken systems. The working jib is fitted with a Hoyt Boom that is self-tending and improves performance with its close sheeting and self-vanging feature, while the large optional reacher or asymmetrical boost performance in light air or when off the wind. The fully battened mainsail is equipped with a low friction Battcar system and drops easily into a stack pack with an integral cover and lazy jack system. This rigging offers ease of use and versatility in varied wind or sea conditions and increased speed and manueverability. (Of course, the cutter rig is available as an option.) All sheets lead to the cockpit primary winches at the helm for short-handed convenience. She has more than ample horsepower with the Yanmar 45 HP Common Rail diesel engine.
With classic good looks inside and out that blend the modern and traditional, spirited sailing performance, premium materials and the best warranty coverage in the industry, the new 349 continues Island Packet’s reputation as a benchmark for excellence.
# ISLAND PACKET 349

## Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOA (incl. bow pulpit)</td>
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<td>LOD</td>
<td>36'5&quot;</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Max Headroom</td>
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**Designer**: Bob Johnson, N.A. and the Island Packet Design Team

*Range approximate and subject to speed and conditions all specifications subject to change without notice*

## Dealer:

ISLAND PACKET YACHTS * 1979 WILD ACRES ROAD * LARGO, FLORIDA 33771 * PHONE +1 (727) 535-6431 * WWW.IPY.COM * INFO@IPY.COM
Hail to the Chiefs

Monohulls, catamarans and a trimaran too! In a fleet dominated by some of the world’s largest high volume production boatbuilders, 22 boats from six nations gathered along the shores and on the waters of Chesapeake Bay to compete in the model year 2019 edition of Cruising World’s coveted Boat of the Year awards. When the spray had settled after sea trials conducted in breezes both light and boisterous, a worthy selection of winners in eight separate categories were crowned. Topping the list of champions was a pair of overall winners for 2019: The Island Packet 349 is the Domestic Boat of the Year, and the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 490 is the Import Boat of the Year.

Story by Herb McCormick, Photos by Jon Whittle

Every year, it seems, the list of nominees for our annual Boat of the Year competition takes on a collective identity of its own. In the years following the great financial crisis of nearly a decade ago, there was a rash of imports from all points on the international compass rushing to fill a vacuum left by many U.S. builders that were either outright casualties of the distressed economy or scaling back operations until the smoke cleared. It was difficult to tell what the future held.

Then, for the several editions of Boat of the Year, the big stories were often the big cats — specifically the huge influx of catamarans that seemed to dominate the newboat market as well as the docks of the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, where BOTY judging takes place on a relatively limited run of high-quality hearthoom yachts (though the Hylas 48 will certainly play that role for a select few lucky owners, as will the Tartan 355 and Wauquiez Pilot Saloon 42), not by a herd of stampeding cats.

No, 2019 will be remembered as a year for an influx of production boats from some of the planet’s largest high-volume builders. And their aim, in a couple of notable instances, was much more to make a splash in the market, but to take no prisoners while doing so.

How else would you explain the very similar strategies of the massive German boatyard Hanse, and the aggressive approach of the French builder Jeanneau, both of which covered all the bases with fresh launches in the 30-foot sector (the Hanse 368 and the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 39i, or the 40-foot range (Hanse 418 and Sun Odyssey 44i) and even the 50-foot category (Hanse 548 and Sun Odyssey 490)?

And not to be outdone over there in the “kitty corner,” how about Lagoon Catamarans saturating the market with a sweet Lagoon 46 and a Lagoon 50? Heck, taken together, these three builders — Hanse, Jeanneau and Lagoon — accounted for nearly half of the 22 brand-new boats introduced in Annapolis last fall. Add in a couple of cool boats from another set of perennial French production builders (the Beneteau 46.1 and the Dufour Grand Large 560), and a pair from Denmark’s prolific X-Yachts (the Xp 39 and X 45) and you’ve got what you might call a juggernaut.

That’s not to say there wasn’t some real innovation and forward thinking, and a bit of that came, perhaps not surprisingly, in the two dedicated multihull classes.

A trimaran, the NIEL 57, was one of the Annapolis show’s real head-turners, and more cats from South Africa (Leopard 46), Vietnam (Seawind 1261) and, naturally, France (Ball 40, Cattana 45, Fountain 50, J/109) ensured that there was plenty of variety for those who enjoy their sailing on more than one hull.

As always, judging took place during and after the show in Annapolis, in a process with two components: deckside visits and sea trials. At the dock, our three man panel of independent judges considered each boat’s layout and design, construction, systems, installations, safety factors and livability. Underway, the judging team performed anchoring and emergency steering tests, and put each boat through its paces under power and on all points of sail. For details on the judging team, sailing conditions, methods, and rating tests, please see pages 96 and 97.

And in the pages that precede that wrap-up, check out the composition of the individual classes and their respective winners. Yes, it was a long year for foreign builders, but with it came a welcome return to the winner’s circle from Island Packet, one of America’s best loved brands. You can call it a win-win situation.

CIRCLE OF WINNERS

78 Domestic Boat of the Year
79 Import Boat of the Year
80 Best Multisail Cruiser Under 38 Feet
81 Best Multisail Cruiser Over 38 Feet
82 Best Power Catamaran Under 48 Feet
83 Best Power Catamaran Over 48 Feet
84 Best Full-Size Cruiser
85 Best Full-Sized Multihull
86 Best Cruising Catamaran Under 50 Feet
87 Best Cruising Catamaran Over 50 Feet
92 Best Cruising Multihull Under 70 Feet
94 Best Cruising Multihull Over 70 Feet
95 Best Cruising Multihull
96 Sport, Price. Judges
Happy Return

Let's get this out of the way right off the bat. In a convincing return to national prominence after a change of ownership that resulted in a few seasons of sitting on the sidelines, Island Packet Yachts has returned, and in a big way. Its comeback boat, the 37-foot-to-inch Island Packet 375, is Cruising World's Domestic Boat of the Year for 2019.

"The firm's new owners, Darrell and Leslie Allen, were longtime Island Packet dealers in San Diego," said Tim Murphy, "They've bought the rights to all the designs, and they've got the molds. This new boat was based on the hull of the old Island Packet 36, with the addition of a seven-speed transmission and a lot of other tweaks, large and small. Say what you will about Island Packet, but they've got a very devoted following, and this feels like a company that's going to stay very well connected to that group. I wouldn't call it a 'cult,' but they're sailors who really identify with each other. It feels like it's going to be a Longtime fans of Island Packet will be glad to see the familiar profile and overline remain (above). The interior plan is extremely welcoming to a cruising couple (below).

continuation of that." What exactly does that mean? Well, not easy. Island Packet fans, original founder and designer Bob Johnson remains a consultant, and his iteration of a full keel will still grace the underbelly of IP's yachts. But the Allens are open to tweaking the interiors of their boats, which is something new, and - holy cow! - your IP no longer needs to have the famous ivory gelcoat. Yes, you can have one any color you wish.

The sail plan is terrific," Murphy said. "It's a really nice rollig rig with an inner headail for short tacking, but when you're on a longer reach, you have a code-zero-style reacher that's right there and very accessible. I think the sail plan makes up for all the wasted surface of the full keel. During our trials, in only about 8 knots of true wind, the boat labored a bit under the jib, but once we put out that reacher, it really lit up. I was pleasantly surprised by how well it tailed." The saloon doors have proper hatch locks that are very clever," said Ahab Simon. "The benches were big enough to sleep on, which cruisers do. The placement of the windows and sheets is good. They have a traveler forward, and a proper banana with a single wheel. The lifelines are high and coated, which is something I always like. Everywhere you go on the boat there's a stout, shiny rail to hang onto; there are no finger smears or knuckle breakers in there. It's all very nicely done. The whole boat will make an elegant, heavy-to-handle, sailboat. It's old fashioned, and I mean that favorably." The deck is cluttered, but in a good way, said Ed Sherman. "Everything there is a useful component. For example, there are a lot of handholds. Looking at the cockpit, I envisioned the mold that had to be created to make it. It has to be one of the most complex molds that I have seen in the world of composite construction. Lots of inlets, lots of curves, but the gelcoat is beautiful. I love the boat. It's very different than anything else we looked at this week, especially compared to all the very contemporary designs with twin helms and wide transoms. But it's among the most well-built boats we inspected for 2019." So, there you have it. Welcome back, Island Packet. We missed you. Nice to have you back on the water.

Sun Worship

Somedays a boat comes along that does so many things well, and is such a downright joy to sail and maneuver, that its excellence simply cannot be denied. In 2019, one such yacht - a blend of innovation, intelligence and execution - rose to the top over a slew of worthy competitors. In a year when production boats ruled the roost, the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 490 - designed, conceived and built in France - took on all and surpassed all the others, and in doing so, has been named 2019's Import Boat of the Year. That the 490 took the overall prize without winning an individual category is noteworthy. But the Philippe Briand design did its trip to the winner's circle in a devastating display of sailing prowess during Chesapeake Bay sail trials conducted in a still, wonderfully small and windy week. The yacht was comfortable, easily handled and handled the mall. The judging panel agreed unanimously that it was a championship performance. They've done so many really nice things," said Tim Murphy. "It's easy to move around the spite backstays. Going forward, it's the same with the inboard shrouds. And in those very gusty conditions, those twin rudder really worked. The boat answered its twin helms throughout the test sail. It was a real treat to sail. "This series of Jeanneau marks their eighth generation of boats," he continued. "We've built 18,000 boats by now, so this is a big company that's put a lot of boats out there. They're very aware of their market and their competition. And I really think they know what their potential owners are looking for in a yacht."

The Philippe Briand design sealed its trip to the winner's circle with a ripping great sail now, and this is a big company that's put a lot of boats out there. They're very aware of their market and their competition. And I really think they know what their potential owners are looking for in a yacht.

After a cold front passed through, the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey took flight in a fresh northerly (above). The interior is open, modern, light and airy (below).

"The deck access forward from the cockpit to the coachhouse is one of the most revolutionary things I've seen on new sailboats," said Ed Sherman. "The cockpit is spacious and uncrowded. At the helm, it's one of the few boats where you can see the engine instrumentation. This company representative made a big deal during our dockside inspections about how quiet the interior is underway. My decibel tests confirmed that. It wasn't BS. Motoring along, at slow rpm, we recorded 66 decibels and a speed of 5.8 knots. At fast rpm we made 8 knots, which is perfectly adequate, and only recorded 64 decibels. I loved it." "On some boats during powering tests, I threw the helm over and they're immediately unstable," said Ahab Simon. "Not the 490. This thing was a sled; it just turned right on a tack, with authority. And once we raised the sails, just look how it stood up to its canvas. The ergonomies in the cockpit, including the winches, were nothing short of perfect. And I've always been skeptical about the chine on modern boats, but not anymore. They had the courage to take the chine the full length of the waterline where it actually creates more stability and even lateral resistance. Once you build to 10 degrees, it digs in and stays there. I think that's what explains the stability. I'm not sure it would be as effective when scaled down to models with shorter waterlines, but with 49 feet they have the space to make these ideas work. This thing is truly a player. I think they've got a winner here."

Indeed they do, Ahab. Indeed they do.
Island Unto Itself

It’s always good to see the marine industry introduce solid boats in the 35-foot range, an excellent size for a cruising couple to sail, manage and maintain efficiently, and one that sometimes gets short shrift in any given calendar year from builders focused on larger vessels with more lucrative profit margins. For 2019, four entries—the Dufour Grand Large 360, Hanse 348, Island Packet 349 and Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 39i—vied for the title of Best Midsize Cruiser Under 38 Feet.

“I think I have three boats that are natural competitors to each other, and then a fourth boat that’s a little bit apple versus orange, comparatively speaking,” said Tim Murphy. “The Dufour, Hanse and Jeanneau all cost under $200,000, and are very close on their displacement/length ratios, right around 200. That means you can expect similar performance and comfort characteristics. With a price tag of $320,000 and a D/L ratio of 257, the Island Packet is the outlier in this group.”

That’s because the other nominees in the group had passionate defenders. Ed Sherman championed the virtues of the Hanse 348. “I liked it a lot,” Sherman said. “I liked the dual wheels in the cockpit. At first I thought twin wheels on this size boat were kind of ridiculous. But when we sailed it, they were great. The ergonomics in the cockpit area were terrific. I like the fact that it was a three-cabin boat. There was enough room down below to have a good time with a small family, and I think that’s their target market, and it definitely addresses that. The systems installations and the fit and finish were all perfectly acceptable. And it sailed very well. I’m a Hanse 341 fan!”

As it turned out, Sherman and his fellow judges were not quite through with the Hanse (see page 94). Simon countered Sherman’s endorsement with his own strong assessment of the Island Packet 349. “On our test sail, I recorded speeds over 7 knots,” he said. “Island Packets have not always had a great reputation for their sailing prowess, but this boat had beautiful Quantum sails and performed very well. The on-deck flow is good, and so is the non-skid. The pushpit and pulpits with seats and cleats were very well executed. Yes, it costs more than the Hanse, and the Hanse may deliver a slightly faster sail,” he added. “But I think this new iteration of the Island Packet is breaking free from its old mold, the company has evolved and improved. I think this is a builder moving in the right direction, and I’d like to find a way to help them. So, yes, compared to the Hanse it may take a little longer to get there. But when you’re cruising, not racing, what’s important is getting there. When you’re talking about making long boards of 1,000 miles to the Galapagos, or 3,000 miles to the Marquesas, this boat can do that. To me, that’s what makes it a handy little pocket cruiser, although we tried to reserve that term for Pacific Seacraft Plikkas and very small boats. By today’s standards, this is a pocket cruiser, and it’s a very good one. For me, for that reason, it rises right to the top of the stack.”

It was up to Tim Murphy to cast the deciding vote, which went to the Island Packet 349, thereby earning it this year’s title of Best Midsize Cruiser Under 38 Feet.
German builder in the 2019 BYTY field, and it also received strong feedback from the judges. In particular, said Simon, “In my notes I wrote that their emergency tiller and emergency steering system was ‘best in show.’ In fact, it was the best I’ve seen in many years. It was light on the helm, the visibility was good and it’s truly a viable way to get yourself home if things go wrong.” Once again, however, the judging team found Jeanneau’s mix of price point, performance and innovative features to be a potent combination. “This Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 410 is another domestic product built in Marion, South Carolina,” said Tim Murphy. “They’ve retained several themes we saw on the 490, including the walkway where you come aft of the helm and then go overboard and up a sloping deck. You still have that almost hip-level pushpit. It’s a very safe transition from the cockpit to the foredeck.”

Simon also found the entire cockpit configuration intriguing. “They’ve done a very middle thing, which is to slightly offset the companionway hatch and the cockpit table, as they’ve sort of created a favored passage forward there as well. Then, on the ‘unfavored’ side, they’ve found a very simple solution. Instead of installing a big 8-foot cushion that’s going to take up the whole corner and blow away, they just put a little head pad up on the cabin bulkhead. It’s a very smart, comfortable space. And I thought, these are simple and beautiful solutions. And you see that kind of thinking throughout the whole boat.”

THE CON-TENDERS SPLIT TACKS IN SEVERAL DIRECTIONS AND GAVE THE JUDGES PLENTY TO CONSIDER.

Finally, Simon also compared the sailing characteristics with that of its larger 49-foot sibling. “The stability is impressive,” he said. “We sailed hard and turned hard, and always stayed under control. We had just total and instant response. We weren’t going to round up at all. It wasn’t a question. So it’s a really nice boat that performed well. In a lot of ways, this was Jeanneau’s year.”

These words couldn’t be spoken. For 2019, the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 410 is CW’s Best Midsize Cruiser Over 38 Feet.
All-Oceans All-Star

As with so many classes in this year's Boat of the Year competition, the judges faced a real quandary in determining Best Full-Size Cruiser Under 48 Feet. All three nominees — the Beneteau 46.1, Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 440 and Hylas 48 — came in within 2 feet in length of one another. The Beneteau and Jeanneau were incredibly similar, with identical price tags ($399,000) and almost identical displacements (sloping around 34,000 pounds). By comparison, the Hylas was considerably heavier (34,000 pounds) and more expensive ($315,000).

"The Beneteau is a straight-up production boat," said Ron Murphy. "The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 440 and Hylas 48 are straight-up production boats," said Tim Murphy. "This Beneteau is very much in keeping with what we expect from that builder; it's a fine boat. But that Jeanneau is an exemplary expression of what modern production yards are capable of, and we ultimately recognized it as such (see page 79)."

Murphy also summarized where the Hylas stood in the marketplace: "It's more of a boutique boat. It won't be produced in the same quantity as the others. And it's definitely aimed more toward the actual bluewater sailor."

"As an example of a long-range veeing vessel, for Murphy and his colleagues, they basically found it irresistible."

"You can feel that extra displacement in the motion of the boat," Murphy said. "It felt very stiff in a good way. There was a lot of traffic on Chesapeake Bay during our sea trials, but there was a very comforting motion as the boat punched through the waves. It felt like kind of an old-school, cruising boat. And the center cockpit is very nicely set up with winches right next to the helm to each side. You could easily go sailing by yourself on this very substantial yacht without any problem. Impressive.

"This is a sort of extra design, a lot of Hylases I've looked at over the years, and that's not a negative comment," said Ed Sherman. "I've always been amazed how well the Queen Long boat does. This was built by a very experienced Taiwanese workforce, and they're artisans. They take what they do very seriously, and they do a very good job. They put metal plates in the laminate as backing for the winches, and they're using stainless steel, not aluminum. I'm feeling really good about that.

"The service access is also great," he continued. "They have hatches and doors that open up and give you easy access to all the parts and the key service points you'll need to get to. And it was terrific sailing it. It's very traditional. Yes, the center cockpit is a little hard to get in and out of, but once you're situated, it's very comfortable. I could see spending a whole lot of hours in this cockpit. All the sail handling controls are right.

This Pull-Size Cruiser class showcased two outstanding examples of modern production boatbuilding: the Beneteau 46.1 (below left) and the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 440 (below right). But as a true bluewater voyager, the Hylas 48 (opposite) was hard to beat.
Sea trials occurred over the course of four days. On all 12 boats, the judges tried out the anchoring system (above left), and during motoring tests, measured sound levels at two different revolutions per minute.

Tim Murphy takes frequent measurements on each vessel, and deliberations often hinge on the numbers (above right). In the end though, it’s all about the sailing, and Ed Sherman and Alva Simons enjoy a breezy morning sail.

Boat of the Year includes five days’ worth of dockside inspections at the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland (top right). A favorite test for Alva Simons is to gauge the difficulty of reaching the mainsheet winch on the cabin top from the helm (top left). Sea trials following the show take place rain or shine.
"X" Marks the Spot

In 2009, yachts over 28 feet were eligible to compete in the unlimited Full-Size Cruiser class, which drew three entries (including two from the same builder): the X-Yachts Xp 55 and X-Yachts Xp 54, and the Hanse 548. All three could also fall under the classification of performance cruisers, and they provided the judges panel with some of the best pure sailing experiences during this year’s round of sea trials.

In fact, observed Tim Murphy, “The ‘X’ in the X-Yachts Xp 55 stands for performance — the hull forms in the company’s Xp line have less wetted surface compared to the firm’s full-on racing boats. The hull here is epoxy, but the internal grid that X-Yachts is known for is not the usual galvanized steel but carbon. So they’re really making efforts to get the weight out of the boat. Of course, that comes at a cost, and you’re paying a premium.

At $1.6 million this is the most expensive yacht in this year’s fleet.”

Under sail at about 12 knots of wind, the Xp 55 registered solid 8 s of boat speed on and off the breeze — good numbers. But the Hanse 548, in less optimal conditions, also got the panel’s attention.

“We had a pretty darn nice sail,” said Murphy. “In about

“In terms of performance, the helm was just scary how balanced it was.”

6 knots of breeze, our speeds were nearly the same at the wind speed. We were seeing 4 and 5, and the sailing felt really sweet. It’s a very, very pleasant boat to sail. And at $800,000, you get a lot of boat for the money. I think price points are important factors in this class.”

Had the judges completed their sea trials for the week on the Xp 55 and the Xp 54, they would’ve had some fine moments to remember. But — and there’s no other way to put it — nothing compared to the sheer exhilaration they discovered aboard the X-Yachts Xp. We’ll let them describe it in their own words:

“We had a day and a half of light air, and when we stepped aboard, I was afraid we wouldn’t have enough wind to sail,” said Murphy. “But then the breeze filled in a little. True wind was 55 and I scribbled in my notes, ‘Boat speed 5.6.’ We were in not very much wind, and we were exceeding it when we steered above 90 degrees apparent! This boat just lit us up. It was absolutely joyful, and it would be a great passagemaker for that reason.”

“Without question, it was the best-sailing boat we tested this year,” said Ed Sherman. “In terms of actual performance, the helm was just scary how balanced everything was. It was even quick under power — our fast cruise speed was over 8 knots, which I consider pretty good.

It was one of the quietest boats too, below 20 db. People need to understand that a lot of that is indicative of the quality of the build — no vibrating doors or rattling stovetops. That’s just not happening on this boat.”

My impression during the dockside inspection was fairly positive, but sailing the boat reaffirmed those feelings,” said Alva Simon. “It seemed the way we must always test sail the boats. The sailing was just fantastic. It was a joy and I think that’s what people who purchase this boat will be buying into, the joy of sail.”

Perhaps it seems counter-intuitive, but despite the difference in size, and even the difference in cost — the Xp 55 comes in at $1.6 million, or half a million less than its X-Yachts class sibling — the judges felt the smaller offering was the more enjoyable boat to sail, and it wasn’t close.

It made their final decision a simple one. In unanimous fashion, the judging panel proclaimed the X-Yachts Xp the Best Full-Size Cruiser for 2009.
Riding the Wind

With four boats that shared many common characteristics, the Best Cruising Catamaran Under 50 Feet class was one of 2013’s most competitive. The quartet of yachts—the Bali 4.1, Fountain Pajot Astrea 42, Lagoon 40, and Seawind 1260—all came in at under 45 feet and recorded fairly similar displacement/length ratios. Other than the Seawind, in varying percentages each model was destined for duty in the bareboat charter trade. They were all very versatile yachts.

With a spacious layout incorporating a “garage door” that, when opened, transforms the entire living area into a seamless, inviting wide-open floor plan, the Bali 4.1 is an ideal platform for living aboard and entertaining. “I thought that space was fantastic, and I was shocked at how well it sailed,” said Alvin Simon. But safety expert Simon also felt the Lagoon, that represented real value. But out on the water, where opinions are often swayed, the remaining two cats advanced with the judge.

As the deliberations continued, the two-boat battle was on. The Fountain Pajot Astrea 42 is a boat that does a lot of things well, which reflect the dual purpose it will address a boat that will be put in charter in some instance, and serves as a dedicated cruising boat in others. The judge spent a lot of time discussing helm station, like many contemporary cats, the Astrea 42 employs a wheel to starboard that’s raised from the cockpit.

“On the Astrea, we have a kind of modified bulkhead helm station that’s split into two, so you’re sitting behind a wheel with engine controls on one level, then you step around a pedestal, and there’s a walkway through to all the sail controls,” said Tim Murphy, who found the arrangement well-thought-out and efficient. It separates the two functions—driving and sailhandling—and keeps them in close proximity even for a solo sailor. Everyone agreed it was a smart solution, coupled with a good layout and solid performance.

So, the question became: Did the Astrea meet its stated purpose, for private ownership and for chartering, as well as the Seawind? At that point, its design brief, as installed and proven, was the same. It had no charter aspirations?

It was a question that elicited spirited remarks from all the judges. “Let me start with the Fountain Pajot,” said Ed Sherman. “They did a lot of things really right. In terms of systems and wire labeling, all the workmanship was top-notch. I thought the glued-in deck concept was excellent. It made a lot of sense to me. “But the one thing about the Seawind that I loved was the dual helm, as opposed to the Astrea’s single wheel,” he added. “It’s the whole visibility thing that we see on many cats, where the helmman’s view is compromised on one tack or the other. That wasn’t an issue on the Seawind. And the builder is doing a great job. You look at the stainless steel and the polished teak everywhere on the boat, it’s just mind-boggling.”

“My biggest bugbear is the 1260 is a boat that can take people pretty much anywhere in the world. I think it’s the clear winner in the Best Cruising Catamaran Under 50 Feet.”

So did his mate.
One Cool Cat

T o determine the best Cruising Multihull Over 50 Feet, it soon became apparent that the contenders were nicely split between two sets of quite similar vessels. On one hand, you had two 50-foot catamarans: the Catana 53 and the Leopard 50. On the other was a pair of 50-foot trimarans, each of which crested the million-dollar price tag: the Leopard 50 and the Catana 53. The two “Ls” are produced by a couple of the world’s largest catamaran builders—France’s Lagoon and South Africa’s Robertson and Caine. Both produce hundreds of cats each year, many of them bound for the world’s largest charters in the Mediterranean, while Lagoon says a solid 40 percent of its new 50’s production run will be charter boats. Finding much to like about all four boats, and recognizing they were all conceived with different purposes in mind, the judging teams decided to consider the Lagoon 50 and the Leopard 50 in a separate category: Best Charter Boat (see page 56).

That left the big cat and the big trimaran, dedicated long-range cruisers that Tim Murphy said squared up against each other very well. I think the Neel and the Catana are very fast competitors against each other, he said. “They’re not billed as 20-plus knot boats, but they’re very quick. They’re promising to be fast, but day after day I think they’ll both achieve that. They both do a lot of really good things where their sail plan can be set up to knock out those ocean miles. They really make-per-day boats, where you’re going to see those 25-mile daily runs. I think pretty regularly.”

“WITH THE NEEL 51 AND THE CATANA 53, 240-MILE DAILY RUNS WILL HAPPEN REGULARLY.”

Through most of the boat, then, they use carbon at structural points along the way. They’ve got good placements of碳 bulkheads. I think it’s a nice use of technology without being extreme. “We had a whole lot of fun sailing this boat,” he continued. “We saw 20 knots with the spinnaker up, and it was pretty sweet. Visibility from the helm, a topic we’ve been visiting with all the multihulls, was excellent. There were some nice things about the way the mainstay was set up, with double-triangulated blocks and tackles on soft shackles that can be moved outboard so you basically end up with a really beautiful rig built right into it. I can just imagine doing lots of ocean miles that would be really lovely!”

In the end, it was little things that tilted the scales. For instance, said Ed Sherman, the Catana was “very quiet with the engines running. With 3,000 rpm we were under 70 db in the main salon.” For the Catana 53, that relative silence was golden, and a reason it’s 2009’s Best Cruising Multihull Over 50 Feet.
Compact Cruiser

**Value.** How does one determine it? Price is certainly a factor. In the case of new boats, and our Boat of the Year competition, it means something more. As sailors, we wish to recognize good boats that not only are affordable but offer other, tangible rewards. The ability to get couples and families out on the water, to have a weekend escape, to take them on coastal voyages and even maybe a sabbatical to the islands, all without breaking the bank. For 2019, the judging panel determined that one boat had the potential to do these things better than the rest, which is why they awarded the Best Value prize to the Hanse 348.

One of three boats with a price tag under $200,000, the others being the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 349 and the Dufour Grand Large 560, during sea trials the Hanse 348 won the judging team from the get-go. "In only 4 knots of breeze, we were seeing 5.7 knots upwind and pointing very nicely, and even registered 6.5 knots once we cracked off," said Tim Murphy. "It's a pretty sweet little boat." Abdol Simons agreed. "When we looked at it on the deck, I put a star next to it in my notebook and wrote, "Good first impression, nice interior, fairly good layout." That continued when we went sailing. The winches were well-placed. The basic cockpit ergonomics made things nice. It's a relatively light boat with twin helms. At first I thought there wasn't room for them, but on a boat like this with a wide beam aft, they actually create space rather than take it up. They divide the working area up from the social area in a smart, fast way Hanse isn't the only builder to do this, but it's a concept that's been developed, and their take on it is quite good. It's just a winning idea."

But nobody on the judging panel was more impressed than Ed Sherman. "I really loved this boat," he said. "It had the most room of any boat in the Multihull segment of 38-Foot category. This boat area is just terrific. I think the cockpit table and the multimedia displays are just a hit of class. It was really nice, with a compass right there in the middle. There were good, sturdy stainless-steel rails to rest your feet on. I like the fact that it has a three-cabin layout and a single head. Pretty terrific, in my opinion. They use some composite through-bolt fittings that we've seen on larger boats. I'm in love with those, just from a maintenance perspective."

"It was just a lot of fun to sail too," he added. "I think it represents huge value for a young family that's starting out in sailing and wants a nice, competent coastal cruiser. I'll leave it at that." And that was more than enough.

The self-stacking jib on the Hanse 348 makes upwind sail handling a breeze (above). There are plenty of natural light flooding into the clean, contemporary saloon (below).
besides the obvious numbers used to describe a sailboat — length, beam, draft and sail area — "CPW" of the Year judges sometimes rely on sail area displacement and displacement/length ratios, as well as decals for sound while motoring, to compare similar vessels. One caveat, because sailboat design and building materials change over time. The design ratios work best when looking at boats of a similar era rather than comparing, say, a 1935 cruiser to a modern boat of similar size.

Let's start with displacement/length. Displacement is a measure of how much water a particular hull can displace, and length is, well, length. In general terms, the lower the TDL ratio, the less water is being displaced for a given length, which would indicate better performance. Though, often reflects speed, but not necessarily comfort underway. Long-distance cruisers might get there fast on a boat with a very low TDL ratio, but they might not get much sleep along the way because of the boat's lively movement in a seaway.

Sail area/displacement is a ratio that affects how much horsepower a particular sail plan has to push a vessel. Most cruising boats today will have an S/AD ratio in the high teens, with the higher the ratio indicating more powerful rig. Again, the numbers can deceive. The trend today is toward sail plans with non-overlapping jibs. Sail ports just flip upward, but sometimes you have to bear away the relatively small jib quickly becomes ineffective. This, in turn, has been a boon for the suppliers of colored sails, such as code zero and cruising spinnakers.

Lastly, our BOTY judges measure sound and decibel levels aboard every boat when motoring. Why? First, it's hard to sleep on a loud boat, and the crew can't stop talking, it can lead to all sorts of other problems. Second, silence doesn't come cheap. Besides a lack of proper sound insulation, rattles and cracks caused by poor connection can all contribute to the din. To put things in perspective, 60 dB is equivalent to a quiet conversation at home, and 90 dB is the background music at a restaurant. Noise in the upper 70 dB range can be considered annoying. Above 80 dB, noise can become harmful after long exposure.

B

Ed Sherman is the vice president of educational programing for the American Boat and Yacht Council and is the former chairman of the marine technology department at the New England Institute of Technology in Warwick, Rhode Island. An experienced racer and cruiser and Boat of the Year judge, Sherman is the author of four technical marine books, a frequent contributor to "CPW" and other boating publications, and often works with boatbuilders, marine surveyors, service staff personnel and engineering staffs in the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.
Island Packet 349
A nimble new take on a rock-solid cruiser
By Adam Cort

After years of quietude in the wake of the Great Recession, iconic Island Packet is back with its new 349, a re-boot of the old Estero that not only looks great, but takes the Island Packet style of sailing performance to a new level.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
First among the many changes made to the 349 is the fact that the mast step has been moved aft, which in turn makes it possible for Island Packet to offer a Solent rig option in addition to the standard IP cutter configuration.

The Solent rig features a self-tacking headsail trimmed with a Hoyt jib boom flying on an inner stay up in the bow and a Code Zero tacked to the anchor roller/spirt. The cutter rig dispenses with the Code Zero in favor of a genoa flying from the same stay as the Solent rig's self-tacker, with a staisail set inside it. The thinking here is that since Island Packet's offshore bona fides, owners are going to encounter far more calm seas than they are the storms in which a staisail really shines. More on that later.

Other changes include a scoop transom and a set of hull portlights, which, in concert with the plethora of cabin trunk ports and hatches overhead admit a wealth of ambient light belowdecks. Island Packet went with the scoop transom approach, as opposed to a drop-down swim step, in the interest of safety in extreme weather—something that makes sense given the boat is built with bluewater passagemaking in mind.

As always with IP, the 346 carries a sturdy "Full Foil" full keel with attached rudder and encapsulate lead ballast—as safe and sturdy a setup as you'll find anywhere. The hull is hand laminated in solid fiberglass, and the deck is vacuum-bagged with a Divinycell core in the interest of lowering the boat's center of gravity. The keel-stepped, aluminum Sparkcraft single-spreader rig is supported by stainless steel wire shrouds.

The main is controlled via a mid-boom sheeting arrangement and a number of sail options are available, including standard Dacron sails, a Quantum performance laminate package and in-mast turling. Overall build quality is outstanding, from the fiberglass work to the caliber of the hardware, which includes Harken winches and furlers. Those rock-solid ports found aboard every Island Packet are not just for show, but speak to the company's overall commitment to quality. In another fun change, Island Packet is now offering the boat in colors besides the company's signature tan. The boat's PolyClad3 gelcoat provides protection against blisters and comes with a 10-year limited warranty.

ON DECK
Topside, the cockpit is large, deep and equipped with sturdy coamings, large drains, a single Edson wheel, a Raymarine chartplotter and a pair of magnificently burly strong points for clipping on a tether. There is an instrument display spanning the companionway—right where you want it when helming—and recessed LED lighting in the scoop aft for getting on and off a dinghy in the dark. The helm seat hinges up to reveal a propane locker, and the swim step includes an integral telescoping swim ladder. There are also stainless steel handholds in the pair of steps/seats outboard on the swim step, a great idea.

Moving forward, robust combination toerails/bulwarks combine with grippy anti-slip and high double lifelines. Outboard, a stainless steel rubbing strip will undoubtedly prove itself invaluable during tricky approaches to the dock, and the double anchor roller/spirt is vintage IP with plenty of room for leaning out over the bow pulpit to see what's going on below when retrieving the hook.
Rock-solid stainless steel handrails running the entire length of the cabintrunk should serve as an object lesson for the industry as a whole. The two large Dorades—yes, Dorades, adequately sized event—come complete with their own stainless steel cages that also serve as fantastic handholds. The list of nice touches aboard the Island Packet 349 goes on and on. This is a true “sailor’s boat” throughout, and it shows.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Belowdecks, the quality of the workmanship is right up there with that on deck. Aboard our test boat, the joinerywork was all in a cedar veneer with an L-shaped galley to starboard of the companionway that included a Force 10 stove and top and bottom front-opening Vitrifrigo fridges. Immediately forward of that were a pair of swiveling bucket seats divided by a small table facing a more conventional settee to port. A breaker panel located alongside the aft-most of the two swiveling seats, makes it a good place to navigate and conduct the ship’s business.

The forepeak cabin aboard our test boat was located just forward of a wonderfully spacious head to port, and included an offset double berth to starboard, with other berth options available. Speaking of options, one of the hallmarks of the new Island Packet business model is that the company regards all of its new builds as being "semi-custom projects." This means customers can specify everything from the layout to the seats in the saloon to the countertop material.

Two things you get no matter what layout you choose are LED lighting throughout and a plethora of well-placed handholds. Aboard our test boat, there was also a nice big storage area aft of the galley across from the sizeable quarterberth to port—yet another nice touch given how vital storage space is aboard pretty much any cruising boat.

**UNDER SAIL**

As fate would have it, there was little if any wind on the day our test sail—perfect conditions for the Island Packet 349. What’s that? You say. Island Packets are not exactly renowned for their light-air performance. Ah, yes. But that was before the advent of the new Solent rig.

Hoisting sail—which aboard our test boat consisted of the Quantum laminated performance canvas, complete with full-batten main—we immediately uncorked our Code Zero and were soon doing 5.5 knots at a 50 degree apparent wind angle, generating all of 9 knots of apparent wind out of seemingly nothing. The boat also came about without hesitation, despite our having to roll up the Code Zero in order to get it over to the other side of the boat as we passed through the eye of the wind.

At one point we actually found ourselves drag-racing a similarly sized lightweight European model (whose identity shall remain unknown) and coming out the winner. Granted our competitor was handicapped by an insufficient fueling main and blade jet. But hey, that’s exactly why Island Packet decided to go with this new rig in the first place, so that the boat could keep moving in a drifter—one of the more satisfying experiences there is, especially aboard a cruiser with a D/L of 278 and 19.300lb of displacement.

Of course, being an Island Packet, the boat will also not only stand up to a blow, but provide a nice seakindly motion as it does so—the mark of a true seagoing cruiser. Kudos to the folks at IP for making their new 349 a boat that sails equally well in all conditions.

**UNDER POWER**

Motoring back to the marina, our test boat managed 5 knots into a slight headwind with its Yanmar 45hp common-rail diesel turning over at 1,500 rpm. Revving up to 2,000 rpm brought us up to a nice passage speed of 6 knots, with plenty of engine power to spare.

One of the often overlooked plusses of a heavier-displacement boat is the fact that it can also make for nice, predictable close-quarters maneuvering, since windage is less of a factor. Aboard the Island Packet 349, this close-quarters maneuvering was made easier still thanks to its having a Jet Thruster up in the bow—a variant on a conventional bow thruster that, among other benefits, requires a much smaller aperture.

**CONCLUSION**

By now, it should come as no surprise that I liked this boat a lot. Belowdecks, topside, on the hook or under sail, the IP 349 is a pleasure to be aboard in every sense of the word. It’s good to see Island Packet back in action again: all the more so, since given the amount of interest the boat generated at last fall’s Annapolis, we’ll likely be seeing a lot more of the company in the years to come.