

# Yachting World

November 2009

## SUPER 60S: PART 1 – MID-60S

Part 2 next month features the Swan 60 and Contest 60

# X FOR XEMPLARY

*X-Yachts have been building boats for over 30 years but, other than three semi-custom yachts, had never built above 60ft – until now. Toby Hodges went aboard their new ‘mini-superyacht’*

To keep that smooth, uninterrupted run from coachroof to cockpit the sprayhood folds flush, a refined and clever system in which a pull string releases spring buttons that hold the glassfibre covers in place to enable the generous sprayhood to rise. These covers then fasten back down to maintain the clean look

**T**his yacht is created with generous lashings of Baltic solidity, flavoured with Niels Jeppesen's powerful lines and finished with a Scandinavian unwavering attention to detail. But that's where the X-65's bloodline ceases: for she's unashamedly a millionaire's plaything, targeted at the warm, hospitable conditions of the Mediterranean.

The first X-65 owner may well be North European, but he lives in the United States and will keep the yacht in the South of France, and the six sold so far are all headed for the Med.

This market demands a clean and sexy design, with flush deck areas and plentiful sunbathing space, a head-turner that dazzles with looks and impresses with performance. For their flagship, X-Yachts have drawn from three years' experience with the 55, creating a larger sister that also taps concepts they developed for their semi-custom X-73 and the five-year-old one-off IMX-70.

### Keeping it clean

The repetition of the word 'clean' became noticeable as I read through my notes. In typical X fashion, the 65 has been given a long, lean, but ultra-low coachroof, which creates

those wide side decks, accentuating her beam. Tinted flush hatches, a retractable bow roller and winch and folding cleats keep it clutter-free. The turnbuckles are hidden below the rail, deck fillers are low-profile and side decks blend to topsides, with only a 5cm teak toerail to separate them.

But X have gone one step further and developed a handful of key concepts, such as frameless windows and a clever recessed sprayhood, to maintain these aesthetics, while making her efficient and manageable enough for the company to push the 'mini-superyacht' ethos.

The downside? The modern Med look of open side decks and transom doesn't offer much protection and a coaming backrest barely 30cm high fails to offer much comfort – X say the cushions, with integrated back support, address this. The sheer length of this low coaming area is accentuated on this first boat, as the owner had specified a layout without the designed bridgedeck that serves to separate the area into two cockpits – a concept we feel would look and work better.

The working area aft, however, is the business. Five powered Harkens happily deal with all lines and loads (clever beasts too – if you put a winch handle into one, it disengages the motor) and the area is set up for efficient sail-handling.

A Park Avenue carbon wing boom is standard, but hull no 1 sported an in-boom furler, made by Danish company Furlerboom, which was a first for them on this scale



Mast lines run underdeck to the bank of clutches each side, recessed into the aft end of the coaming. The tails of these can then store in alcoves below the side deck which have flip-down Perspex doors – a much tidier solution than bags

With her U-shaped transom it's hard to understand how X have squeezed in a tender garage, but lowering the teak bathing platform reveals a vast area beneath the wheels. A V-bed for a 3.2m RIB is built in at an angle to port, leaving room not only for steering systems, but also an abundance of stowage space to starboard



# ON TEST X-65



Leading genoa sheets underdeck may not be new, but X use recesses incorporated into the deck mould with a laminated liner, a laborious procedure that ensures there's no water ingress below

Take a look at the six coachroof windows and you'll notice that they're missing something – frames. For years Jeppesen says they have been trying to find a better solution to coachroof windows. By using a glassfibre support all around the inside, they are able to present a neat surface to mount the aluminum frames. And, yes, they can all open should their clients tire of the aircon below



**To my disbelief we instantly started to slip along at an astonishing 5 knots in just 3 knots of wind!**

## Slippery customer

It's not often you get windless conditions in Denmark, but I managed to find a morning when not even a ripple stirred the mirror smooth Baltic. But by late morning some clouds brought hope, encouraging us to hoist the main (one finger required) and unfurl the Code 0 (ditto). And to my disbelief we instantly started to slip along at an astonishing 5 knots in just 3 knots of wind!

As the breeze 'filled' over 5 knots we were up to 6.5, leaving me reluctant to put any more than a little finger on the wheel lest I instigate some sort of human error or drag into this dynamic, aquatic performance.

Designer Niels Jeppesen and the builders aboard glowed with pride as they witnessed the fruits of their labour – and even they looked surprised to see the 65 top 8.7 knots in just 6.3, with the Code 0 generating an apparent wind angle of under 45°. Remember this is a 28-tonne machine on only her third outing.

Using the electric-powered Reckman Code 0 padeye, we had that sail away and the 3DL 106 per cent genoa unfurled within a minute without anyone having to leave the cockpit. Heading upwind, we still made between 6.5 and 7.3 knots in just 5 knots of wind at just under 50°T. Speed would drop if we tried to get any closer, but I have been informed that on trials they had seen her in winds up to 30 knots, with positive pointing angles reported, tacking through 70-75°.

Beautiful balance like this can be a little boring on the helm, as you really don't need to do anything! The main is sheeted directly to a dedicated powered central winch in easy reach, but clear of the cockpit. A self-tacking jib is offered, but with powered winches there's little point as it's so easy to see the boat through tacks.

The X-65 has been designed to maximise this foresail area. A T-keel has been chosen over the traditional L-shape, both for obvious performance benefits and to bring the mast back to accommodate the maximum 106 per cent her fractional triple-spreader rig will allow.

Under engine she slips along deceptively quickly. It's about an hour's motor out through a channel from X- Yachts' Haderslev yard and we barely stirred up a wake while making 8.5 knots. Formidable insulation keeps the noise to an inoffensive hum. With the optional Gori prop in overdrive mode, we made 9.7 knots at only 1,850rpm.

And as the breeze filled on our return, we were able simply to unfurl the main and genny again to outdo engine speed – touching 10 knots close reaching in 9.5 knots of wind.



## Stiff stuff

There is an integral hydraulic mast jack to boost tension in the rig and when moored up the builders lowered the mast, removing three support blocks, taking four inches off the height to allow work on the forestay – you could feel the whole boat physically sink down and relax a little with pressure out of the mast and rigging.

Stiffness is integral to the X philosophy – from steel support grid to stringers, sandwich bulkheads, vacuum-infused hulls and discontinuous rod rigging. Every puff is designed to be converted directly into performance, like a tuned note from a guitar string. Navtec hydraulics are fitted to tune the backstay, vang and forestay.

# ON TEST X-65

## A sailor's boat

There is nothing radical below. X-Yachts like everything just so – hence no big departure from previous models. But with 10ft more to play with, they have an array of interior options, largely abaft the saloon.

The main decision is whether to have a forward master cabin, with a choice of central or port berths, and whether to choose an enclosed galley, preferred by those carrying professional crew, or go for the usual aft master cabin option, with space enough for its own seating area and table, desk and steps to the aft cockpit.

A relatively open interior is enhanced by X's traditional satin teak finish. This matching horizontally grained wood is superbly crafted, but while it gives this modern boat an air of gentility and a reminder of her roots, there's an argument that it looks a little dated (options are offered).

Each cabin has an ensuite, with separate shower, and a boutique feel thanks to Corian and a square basin (which, rather like the cockpit, looks good, but is a bit shallow!)

She's still a sailor's boat below. Weight distribution is well thought out, with water and fuel tanks, engine, generator and huge bank of batteries all kept low and central. And there's masses of headroom throughout. All lockers are ventilated, shelves fiddled, corners rounded and lights on dimmers. Berths have sprung mattresses on slats. And there's a large, practical navstation.



**Forward cabin: Were the yacht not destined for the Med, this high central berth would leave rather too much room to fall out each side. Comfortable and smart, however, with a sofa and small vanity table. The ample ensuite has over 7ft headroom and a separate shower is cleverly fitted into the corner**



**A linear galley along the port passageway is both large and secure, including Force 10 stove, abundant cold storage and optional dishwasher**

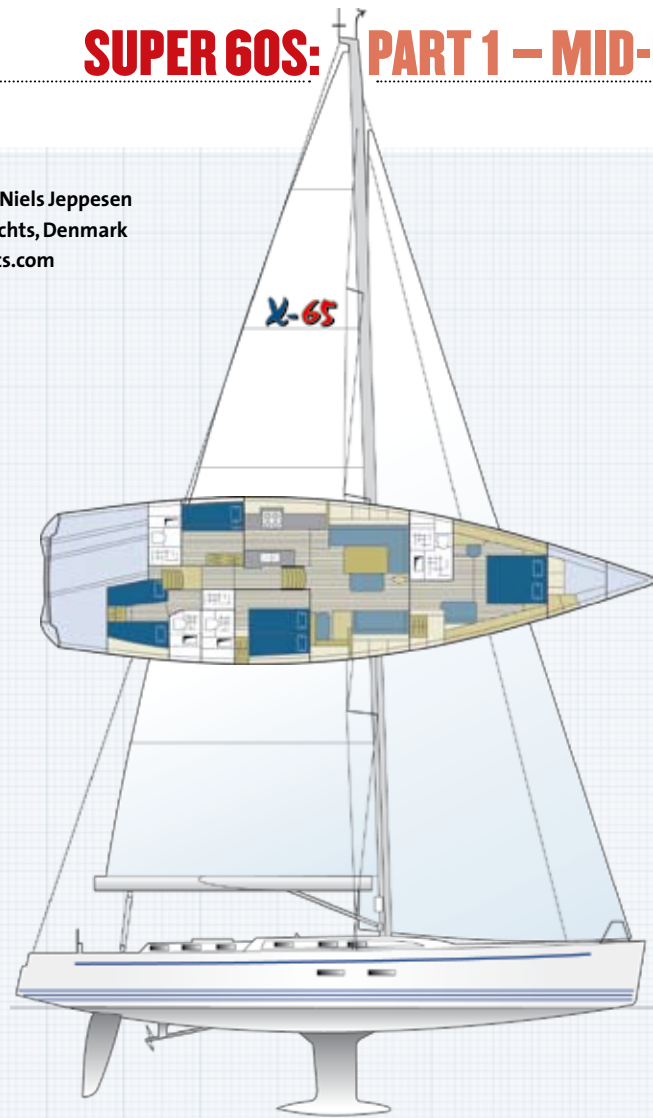
# SUPER 60S: PART 1 – MID-60S



**Aft cabins:** Excellent sailor's cabins, comfortable and secure, with natural light, headroom and stowage aplenty – plus roomy ensuites. The Pullman (pictured) to port next to the galley makes good sense for a paid crew.

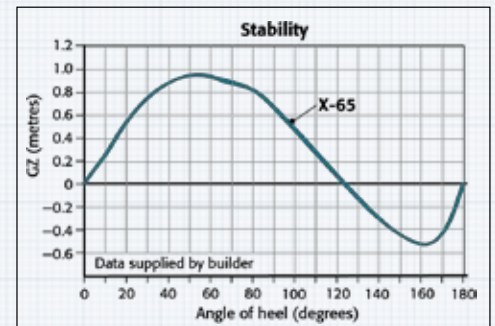
Our layout was a little strange with miniature doors in each aft cabin leading to emergency cockpit access steps. With the more usual bridgedeck, however, you'd have slanted step access to lead to a choice of two dayheads from the aft cockpit

Designed by: Niels Jeppesen  
 Built by: X-Yachts, Denmark  
[www.x-yachts.com](http://www.x-yachts.com)



## SPECIFICATIONS X-65

LOA	20.01m	65ft 8in
LWL	17.68m	58ft 0in
BEAM (MAX)	5.36m	17ft 7in
DRAUGHT	3.40m	11ft 2in
DISP (LIGHTSHIP)	27,800kg	61,288lb
BALLAST	10,095kg	22,255lb
SAIL AREA (100% FORETRIANGLE)	225.1m <sup>2</sup>	2,423ft <sup>2</sup>
BERTHS	8	
ENGINE	Volvo D3-150 saildrive	
POWER	112kW	150hp
WATER	900lt	198gal
FUEL	700lt	154gal
SAIL AREA: DISP	24.9	
DISP: LWL	140	
PRICE (EX VAT)	£1,995,000	



Note: GZ x Displacement gives actual Righting Moment (kg.m)

## Conclusion

'Own an X-Yacht and discover the meaning of pride' is one of this company's slogans – and a brave one unless you are supremely confident in your craftsmanship.

But it should ring true to anyone who opts for the X-65, for a fearful amount of pride has gone into her design and construction.

We are used to X yachts being quick, but the performance of this boat was electric. This means new owners should be

able to embarrass most other 65-70ft yacht owners in a showdown. And there's no doubt she'd knock off seamiles offshore ruthlessly too, although as a crew I'd prefer to be safer and more comfortable on deck if that were the case.

But that's a trade-off for looks and aesthetics which is becoming the norm in this market. Flush, low and sleek, in an emerging super-league of sexy 60-footers, she excites and is sure to give clients of similar-sized Swans a dilemma.

**Saloon:** Hull windows at the perfect height to view the horizon while seated combine with a multitude of portlights and overhead hatches to allow abundant daylight into a spacious, smart area, with a table for six (including large island seat) and a triple sofa to starboard.