

ON TEST: ADVANCED 80

TOBY HODGES IS IMPRESSED WITH THE POWER AND POISE OF THIS WONDERFULLY SLIPPERY NEW ITALIAN DESIGN

A multitude of shiny new yachts drifted across the Bay of Cannes, like a painting of a seascape reflected in the mid-morning calm. It was early September, the day after the Cannes Yachting Festival, and a prime time for trials for prospective owners and press. But the Advanced Yachts 80 was the only yacht visibly moving under sail.

I had gone aboard the A80 with little expectation of being able to sail; I hoped for a tour of the bay under motor at most. But we proceeded to spend a couple of hours actually sailing in apparently lifeless conditions and that is a testament to

the potential of this mile-eating cruiser. I was given a commanding demonstration of why a relatively light and slippery performance yacht is a good option for sailors who will inhabit waters where the wind doesn't always whip the salt off your face.

First impressions may lead you to think this is a showpiece yacht designed for performance cruising between glitzy Med ports. Actually Advanced Yachts creates thoroughbred cruisers designed to tackle the world's oceans at speed. 'Easy handling, sailing performance and distinguished design are the key



FACTS

Test Editor **TOBY HODGES**

- ▶ **Where we tested:** Cannes, south of France
- ▶ **Wind:** 3-5 knots
- ▶ **Model:** Standard specification with owner cabin aft and galley and crew area forward



Photos by **CARLO BORLENGHI**



ON TEST

The A80 has powerful lines culminating in a fixed bowsprit



elements of the Advanced bluewater yacht,' states the Milan-based firm. This first A80 is quickly living up to these promises.

Apsaras launched in the summer of 2015. Following the Monaco Yacht Show she went directly to Las Palmas to take part in the ARC, where she won line honours in the cruising division. Her Asian owners, who did the crossing, were delighted.

The plan is to sail east via South Africa and across the Indian Ocean (see panel, right). She will then make her way to her home port of Hong Kong in 2018 after crossing the Pacific Ocean and sailing up the western seaboard of North and South America.

Her performance has raised awareness of the Advanced brand, which is now being represented by Berthon International. The second A80 is in build for an English client.

Form and function first

A Reichel Pugh design built in glassfibre-carbon composite with engineering by Gurit equates to a yacht centred around performance. The A80 has beamy, modern generation hull lines for speed combined with generous interior volume and deck space.

Build quality is excellent. Hull and deck are made from CNC-lathed female moulds at Advanced's 3,000m² shipyard near Fano, Italy. The glassfibre sandwich hulls have carbon reinforcement, the deck is in carbon and glassfibre composite that is vacuum-infused with epoxy. Unidirectional carbon fibre reinforcements are added in the keel, chainplates and other high load areas, plus longitudinal stiffeners line the hull. The furniture is mostly made from a sandwich of foam core with teak veneer.

Apsaras is a relatively standard boat – in so much as an 80-footer can be. Her owners wanted tried and tested basic

systems and hardware to make servicing easy in Asia.

We were aboard a 40-tonne yacht sailing upwind in just 3.5 to 5 knots of breeze under main and genoa, yet the log consistently showed our boatspeed to be one knot faster than the true wind. In a demonstration of her performance potential, we peaked at 6 knots in 4.2 knots of wind at 60° TWA.

Generating wind

Those are impressive figures for what is promoted as a cruising yacht. A glance at the dimensions and ratios illustrates a potent, powerful yacht, one that carries stacks of sail for her relatively light displacement – indeed her sail area-to-displacement ratio is nudging that of the all-carbon Swan 60. The polars confirm she'll hit double figures in anything over 7 knots true wind and she has clocked 25 knots in the Atlantic.

This is also a sailor's yacht. When helming, I was surprised just how light and communicative *Apsaras* was for such a large boat, with finger-light movements all that was required. Reichel Pugh was reportedly against the concept of twin rudders for this model and drew the A80 with a deep 3.2m single spade rudder.

The use of a central, hydraulic-powered mainsheet winch, maxi-style, works well, and is something Advanced employed on its first model, the A66. The traveller is recessed neatly into the deck and operated via a remote line driver.

Together, the winch and track make for an effective way to trim and tame the powerful mainsail. The hydraulics are powered by both DC and a power take-off drive on the generator, allowing a choice of silent sailing or extra grunt when required. I would like to see some form of stowage designed in for the sheet tails – the pin-on bags look like the afterthought they obviously were.

Under engine, we made 10 knots



The stern tender garage is big enough for a 3m RIB. The guest cockpit is very shallow.



Tim Wright/photoaction.com

Apsaras around the world

Since our trial in Cannes, *Apsaras* sailed from the Med back across the Atlantic to Brazil and then onto Cape Town. On the leg to Brazil they reached in 15-knot winds under Code 0, covering 800 nautical miles in three days.

"From Brazil to Cape Town, we covered 3,800 miles on open seas, sailing as far as the 30th parallel south and then on to the 34th parallel towards Cape Town to avoid the high pressure area of Saint Helena," reported skipper Fabio Beccatini. "We encountered winds of between 40 and 45 knots sailing with triple reefing and staysail, achieving speeds of up to 25 knots.

"The boat always behaved well. We managed to use sails all the time, running the engine for only 30 hours on the stretch between the Canary Islands and Cape Verde. To date, *Apsaras* has covered 21,000 nautical miles," Beccatini declared on arrival in Cape Town at Christmas.

The plan for *Apsaras* this year is to cross the Indian Ocean, including Madagascar, the Seychelles, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and the Andaman Islands and to arrive in Phuket in time for the King's Cup Regatta in December.



We liked the use of a central mainsheet winch and traveller to control the large mainsail

ON TEST

Natural light floods in to the raised saloon from the large skylight



Left: The compact galley is located forward to give maximum raised saloon space

Above: The aft master cabin with twin sofa berths

The coachroof has a relatively flat top and this helps make the wide side decks feel secure to walk along. It also contains a foldaway sprayhood which can withstand 30 knots of wind.

The guest cockpit is long and super-shallow. Indeed, without padded cushions on the coamings there would be little in the way of comfortable seated support – or protection. Two large daybeds aft serve a second purpose of helping create headroom in the aft accommodation. The beamy aft deck also has room for two more sizeable sun loungers. The cockpit sole is at a single level from pushpit to the offset companionway, making it easy to move from cockpit to aft deck.

The tender garage can fit a 3.22m dinghy facing forwards. This area doubles as a generous lazarette, although access from both quarters would be preferable. A passarelle extends neatly out of the aft quarter to starboard.

This is the third Advanced Yachts model I have sailed and all have particularly inviting interiors by Nauta.

They display Italian design in subtle tones; not too flamboyant or operatic. The lovely raised saloon of the A80 draws you in. This centrepiece of the yacht is bathed in natural light through the large coachroof and hull portlights and a big skylight hatch.

Raising the roof

A raised saloon area also helps keep the machinery low and central. The engine space below the A80's saloon floorboards is excellent and includes two gensets, a watermaker and aircon.

The large daybed to starboard seemed a bit of a waste of saloon space to me, but Advanced Yachts manager Aldo Tomasina pointed out that owners can use this for resting on passage without feeling cocooned below. The insert to this bed also slides across to the table to seat two.

The A80 has a proper nav station by the companionway. The switchboard is noteworthy for its easy access to the wiring behind, where every wire is labelled – a captain's dream. Not only is there a good size lifting chart table, but the saloon table also hinges open to store full-size A1 paper charts.

The layout of this first boat is similar to the A66, including a galley and dinette forward of the saloon. The key benefit of this is that the owner and guest accommodation is completely separated from the 'service' end. Advanced operates a flexible semi-custom approach to its interiors in terms of both materials and cabin layout. There are two layout schemes for owners who want forward master cabins.

Guest cabins comprise two identical en-suite cabins abaft the saloon. The headroom was notable despite the cabins being below the cockpit.

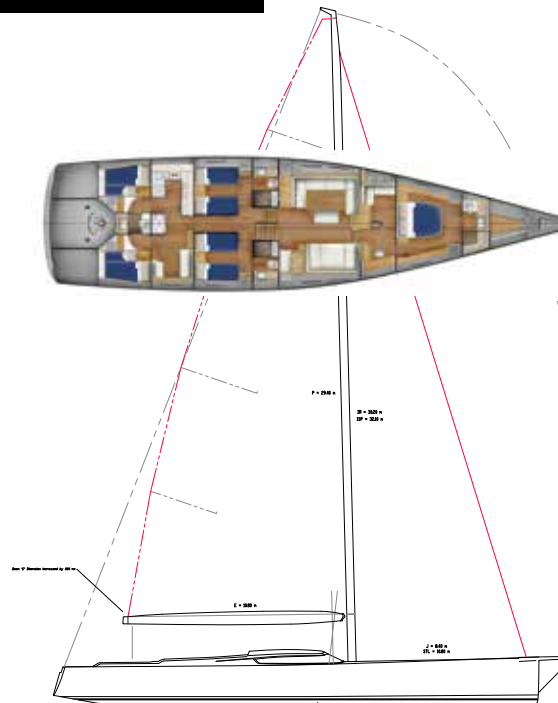
The aft cabin makes full use of the A80's 6.2m beam. The standard design for the owner's aft cabin has an offset double berth, but as *Apsaras's* owners are contemplating chartering the yacht, the cabin was fitted out symmetrically so that it could easily convert into two en-suite double cabins in the future. A benefit of this format is that the large sofas each side of the island berth double as useful passage berths.

Apsaras normally operates with three permanent crew and the crew accommodation forward also has plenty of space. The two Pullman cabins forward of the galley can sleep four crew sharing a heads and a shower. ■

DATA ADVANCED 80

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	23.98m	78ft 8in
LWL	21.60m	70ft 10in
Beam (Max)	6.20m	20ft 4in
Draught	3.50m	11ft 6in
Disp (lightship)	39,700kg	87,523lb
Ballast	11,780kg	25,970lb
Sail Area (100% foretriangle)	317.4m ²	3,416ft ²
Berths	10	
Engine	230hp	
Water	1,300lt	286gal
Fuel	2,000lt	440gal
Sail Area:Disp	277	
Disp:LWL	110	
Design:	Reichel Pugh and Nauta Yachts	



Conclusion

Here is a bluewater performance cruiser that's born to sail. For owners looking to go long distance with two or three paid hands, the A80 is a model that encourages sailing at speed and in refined comfort. I would like to see tail lockers, foot chocks, and aft deck storage designed in – small points that would help finish off her clean looks and functional design.

In many ways the A80 is a larger version of the sexy A66 we tested in 2013. She shares a similar style, layout and powerful potential. The multi-million Euro question will be whether you really want all that power. In areas of typically low wind we saw how it is a real advantage to be able to sail and fully utilise the lightest of breezes. Few other cruising yachts of this size could actually sail in five knots of breeze.

This does suggest that for sailing the oceans and tradewinds, the A80 may need to be kept on a leash and reefed a lot of the time. But what a platform she offers to tour the globe at speed!

