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ON TEST ADVANCED YACHTS 66



Lines of beauty

When form and function combine in harmony, you have the recipe for a dream yacht. Toby Hodges is tempted into raptures by this beautiful – but eminently practical – new Italian design

There's no better place for people-watching of the rich and famous than at the Casino in Montecarlo. You soon notice how the flashier or more expensive the car in which they arrive, the closer they manage to get parked to the entrance.

But what if you wanted to make a high-profile entrance in a yacht – what would you choose? For starters, she's got to look good, but she would have to have a certain amount of practicality too. She also needs to look after her crew at sea and be very rewarding to sail.

There's an argument that Swan achieved such things, building up a brand so revered they were

talked about in childlike wonder. But if you could have seen the dazed admiration on the faces of my fellow European journalists at a private viewing of the Advanced Yachts 66, you might think a new beauty had been born.

First and foremost she is startlingly pretty, in a modern, powerful, sleek way. But the man responsible for her creation, Marco Tursini, will tell you that function comes first: "Our motto is functionality. We don't promote technical innovation because then things break!"

Advanced Yachts are a Milan-based company comprising project managers, technical offices, marketing and admin offices. Builds are

subcontracted and only top brands are used. Reichel Pugh were contracted for the hull design of the 66, Nauta Design for the styling and interiors. A Felci-designed 60-footer is launching this year, and plans are laid for an 80, plus a sporty-looking 44.

AY CEO Tursini came from the industrial and real estate world. He told me he studied the balance sheet of the marine sector for six or seven years and waited until the balloon burst.

"Starting a business in the crisis, it's very easy to keep staff and easy to develop marketing," he says. "My goal was to set a price at 30 per cent less than Baltic or Swan."

The result is akin to a small superyacht – a 65-footer with the luxury feel of an 80-footer. When style, form and function meet harmoniously it's a pleasure to witness. I will attempt to argue that this Advanced Yacht achieves this better than pretty much any other yacht on the market today.

Yes, on reflection, if I were to park a new boat up outside Montecarlo's Casino, the AY66 would be the one I'd choose.



TEST FACTS

Test Editor: Toby Hodges



- ▶ Where we tested: Porto Mirabello marina, into the bay of La Spezia and island of Porto Venere on the NW coast of Italy.
- ▶ Wind: Force 2-3.
- ▶ Model: three-cabin with offset master berth forward, and crew cabin in the forepeak



- 1 The 26m carbon Hall mast is supported by PBO rigging. A V-boom is optional, but costs three times as much as a conventional boom and lazyjacks
- 2 A comfortable crew cabin with Pullman berth and separate shower is offered, finished in the same light teak as the interior (but with no natural light)
- 3 The genoa track is the only thing that breaks up the expanse of teak. Rope tail bins might add the final touch to a scrupulously tidy cockpit

ON TEST: ADVANCED YACHTS 66



“ The boat sails as she looks. Beautifully, with a soft, rewarding motion ”

'Maserati of the seas'

The AY66 may have been dubbed the 'Maserati of the seas' by company CEO Marco Tursini, but for the trials we were annoyingly lacking in drive in the wind department. She was able to give me only a glimpse of her potential and hint at the raw power that lay beneath her bonnet once 'gusts' got up to 15 knots apparent – but her real razzle-dazzle will be left for those lucky enough to take her out reaching in swells.

Slipping out of Porto Mirabello in La Spezia, heading out past the breakwater towards the postcard backdrop of Portovenere, this boat certainly seemed to me worth every one of her €2.4 million. She sails as she looks. Beautifully, with a soft, rewarding motion. Her obvious power is directly communicated and the idea is to



▲ Above: If James Bond had a yacht... The AY66 oozes muscular style. Note the retractable bowsprit slot for flying offwind sails

be able to sail her single-handedly.

Electric winches are specced to keep down maintenance, and all deck gear and fittings are over-specified for safety. She's a beamy (5.4m), powerful-looking boat and there are uninterrupted views from the helm over the low-profile coachroof – which is nevertheless high enough to step on to help stack the main. The side decks are very low to sit on and wide – too wide to sit against the guardrails, unfortunately, so standing to helm affords the most pleasure.

With up to 16 knots apparent breeze, the mast-mounted B&G log showed 8.5 knots, 7.5 in 14 and 7 in 13 knots, at 27-30° to the apparent wind. Were I to nitpick, I found the steering connection a bit elastic from the Vectran-linked Solimar wheels, which should be tightened to make it even more direct.



- 1 An electric passerelle extends out of the transom quarter
- 2 Room for proper reclining sunbathing benches to transform the whole aft deck into a sea-terrace for taking the rays

TESTING THE AY60



- 3 Aft deck transformation: a platform folds down and steps revolve inside to allow guests to walk down to the water's edge, swim and take a shower. Inside is a huge (2.8m) lazarette



▲ Above: The single-point mainsheet traveller is a neat solution – the rams and workings are hidden under deck plates (exposed in this photograph)

The AY66 is built using epoxy foam sandwich, vacuum-infused, with carbon strengthening. She touched the water at 24 tonnes and is designed to displace 275 tonnes loaded. Her motoring credentials are representative of her deep sea potential. She'll do double figures under engine and carries 1,560lit of fuel, so her 200hp Yanmar could propel her up to 1,000nm at 2,200rpm employing a Gori prop in overdrive mode.

Deck details

The deck is beautifully designed and executed, and is the cleanest I've come across. In fact, the only thing that will ruin it is if you want a tender (up to 3.8m RIB), which would sit on removable foredeck chocks.

The Bamar electric furler is recessed,

along with a staysail furler which uses a removable hydraulic stay (an electric furling Code 0 is being designed for the AY60), and the anchor and roller retract completely.

The dodger and bimini are hidden in wells – even the tank fillers are covered by teak inserts. All the sail systems are led aft to two winches in front of each wheel, and a hydraulic traveller is recessed very neatly. A bin for all rope tails would befit her scrupulously clean lines, however.

The cockpit is large with long benches, but low coamings offer little protection or backrest comfort. However, the table is large enough to seat eight comfortably.

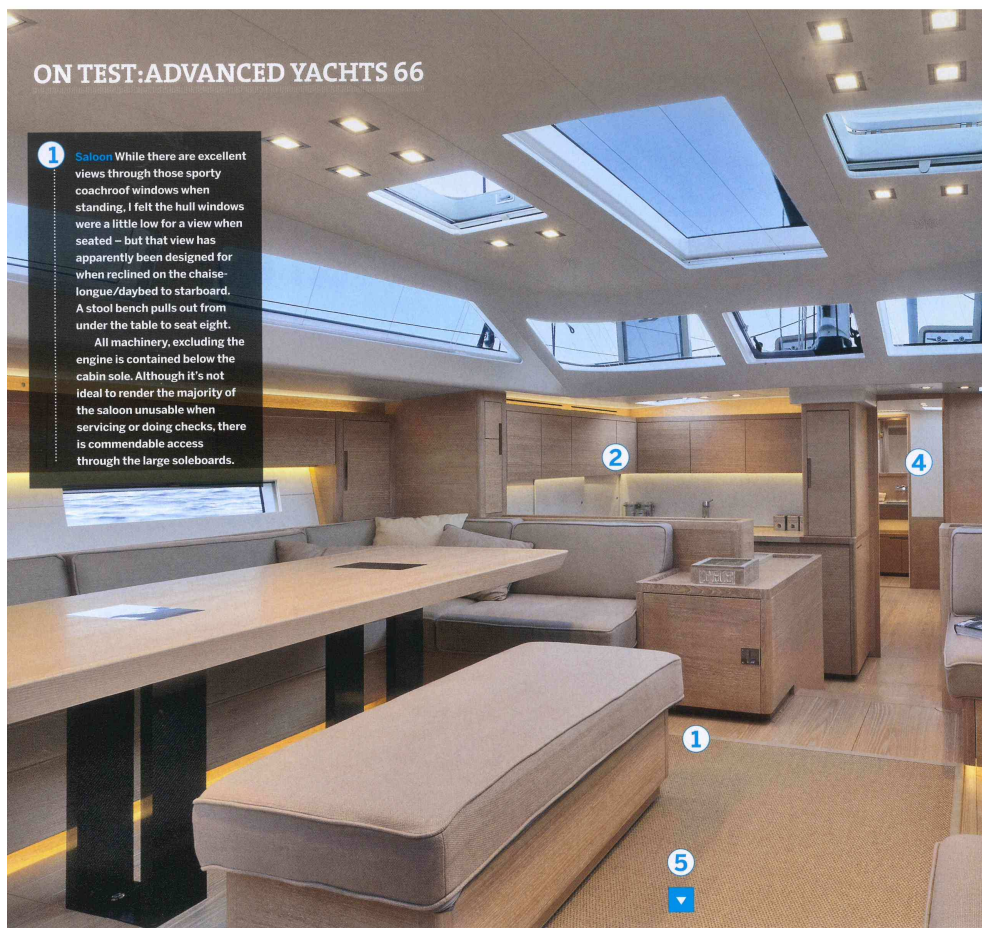
As this is an Italian boat, the table also drops to link the benches and become a sunbathing den large enough for a fashion shoot.



▲ Above: at anchor, the vast, sleek cockpit provides an ideal place in which to enjoy the surroundings

ON TEST: ADVANCED YACHTS 66

1 Saloon While there are excellent views through those sporty coachroof windows when standing, I felt the hull windows were a little low for a view when seated – but that view has apparently been designed for when reclined on the chaise-longue/daybed to starboard. A stool bench pulls out from under the table to seat eight. All machinery, excluding the engine is contained below the cabin sole. Although it's not ideal to render the majority of the saloon unusable when servicing or doing checks, there is commendable access through the large soleboards.



Villa living

Nauta Design's Mario Pedol has obviously put his all into this project, as the interior is up to superyacht standard. It's not over-flashy or even too contemporary, but tasteful and practical and there's a full-beam semi-raised saloon from which to sit and enjoy it all. "We wanted to produce a feeling of going into a villa not a cave," Marco Tursini proudly explained.

The AY66 is finished in soft colours throughout, including beige and stone-coloured Corian, and showcases tactile joiner work – a light teak with white paint brushed into the grain to give a harmonious warm feel that echoes the decking outside on deck. Fridges, dishwasher, washing machine, etc., are hidden behind teak doors to keep this continuity. Electric blinds are

used over the windows to help maintain the woodwork.

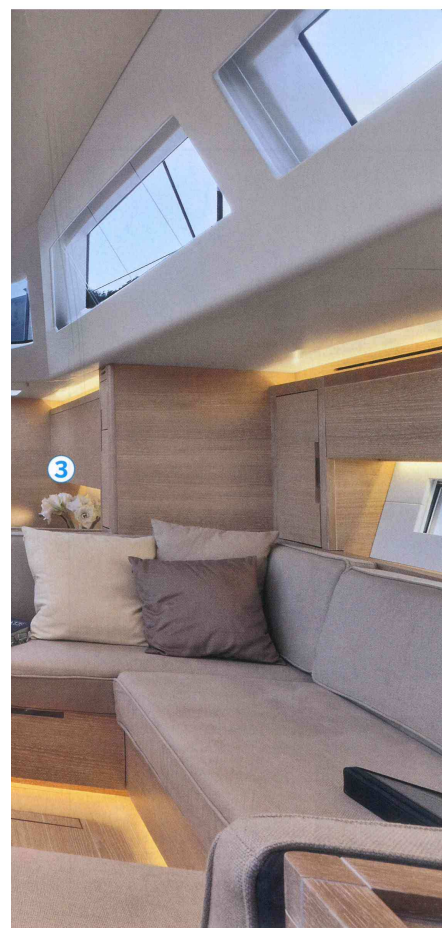
Foam sandwich is used for the furniture and soles and AY have a semi-custom build approach, so interior trim can be changed to suit an owner's taste.

There is good attention to detail: the first locker to port at the base of the shallow companionway is a large wet-hanging locker. Enough ventilation has been worked through the deck not to have to rely on aircon throughout, and all machinery and weight is kept central and low.

The athwartships galley is forward of the saloon, lowered to be at the same eye-height as those seated in the saloon. Apparently, it took 60 days of discussion to agree this eye-level height – no wonder she took two years to build!



2 Galley This is large, light, inviting and practical to work in. I really liked this layout. Two huge fridges, a drinks fridge and a wine cooler hint at the hospitality potential.



3 Dinette The area opposite the galley to starboard can be a pullman cabin, an office or, as aboard the test boat, a dinette. Note how much ambient light floods all these areas.



4 Forward cabin Simple and elegant, this is an appropriate size and style for a master cabin, with options for a standard double berth in a central position or, as we had it aboard the test boat (above), the 'French way' with the berth to port. Large hull windows provide panoramic views. In the en-suite heads forward, there's an inviting separate shower with rainfall showerhead.



5 Aft cabins Double and twin cabins each with access to a heads and separate shower. Four natural light outlets, including three opening ports/hatches provide good ventilation and light. The starboard cabin has a door to the engine room – there are four openings to the engine room and the steps remove for complete engine access.

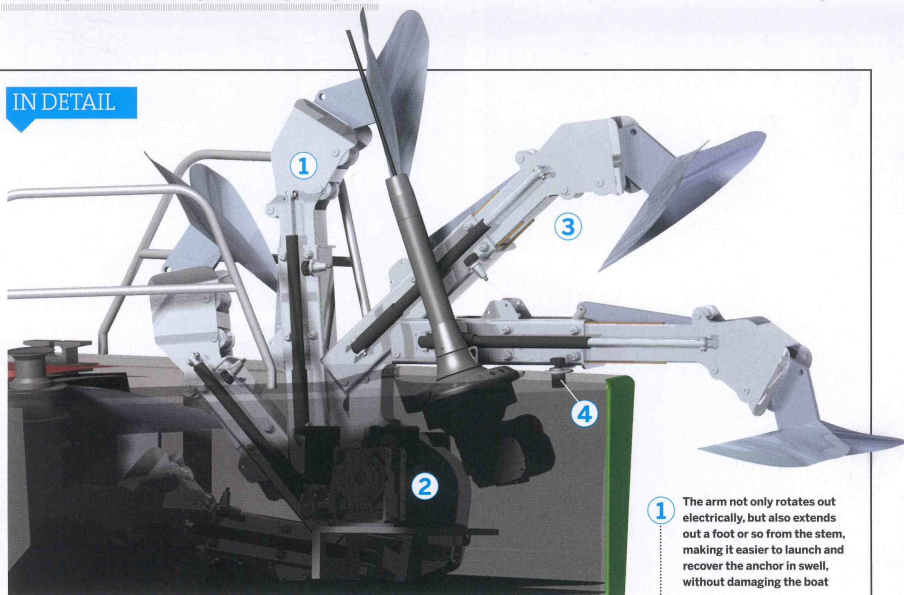


4 We wanted to produce a feeling of going into a villa, not a cave, says CEO Marco Tursini

Useful wet-hanging locker to port as you descend the companionway. On the opposite side to this is a comfortable, practical chart table

ON TEST: ADVANCED YACHTS 66

IN DETAIL



AY66 anchor arrangement

In November 2012 we published a letter from a reader who was concerned that some modern cruisers we test don't seem to have bow fittings for deploying anchors.

My answer was that, among other systems, many now use anchoring arms that pivot away into the forepeak/anchor locker to keep deck lines clean. The arrangement aboard the Advanced Yachts 66 is the most advanced example I've come across – a very well-engineered work of art.

Developed with Solimar, it not only retracts away completely, but if you select the telescopic version – as aboard the test boat – the anchor also extends out forward to provide proper stem clearance.

The builders used 3D design modelling to make sure every movement of the arm was simulated to create clear, easy operation and a good fit into the anchor locker.

The telescopic operation of the arm is controlled electronically via an electric wormdrive ram. Bronze

sheaves with neoprene adapters help ease the movement of the arm, along with dowels to counter any forces from either side.

The rotation of the anchor arm can be locked at any time by switching off the electric motor, and a worm reduction unit allows the arm to be stopped at any position, in case of a sudden power problem.

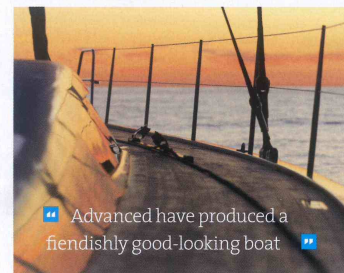
The steel parts can be mirror-polished or satin-finished as desired to match the aesthetic qualities of the yacht itself.



Reichel Pugh lines and Nautia styling – sleek, powerful and seriously alluring



- 1 The arm not only rotates out electrically, but also extends out a foot or so from the stem, making it easier to launch and recover the anchor in swell, without damaging the boat
- 2 Two sensors operate rotation, with adjustable strikers that block the arm at the preset positions
- 3 Telescopic section: the stainless steel rectangular section has sheaves inside which slide on bronze bushes. These sheaves have two functions: to facilitate the movement of the anchor arm and to ensure the anchor chain runs out correctly
- 4 Once in its working position, the anchor arm is kept in place by a preset self-aligning locking system



“Advanced have produced a fiendishly good-looking boat”

Conclusion

The Italians are good at looking good. In fact, they're the best at it. But it can sometimes rank above merits like reliability and practicality.

Though a couple of features aboard the AY66 hint that Italian aesthetics and comfort win over practicality – such as cockpit benches more suitable for sunbathing than sailing and the enormous daybed below – these are impressively balanced by practical elements such as the huge tank capacity, strict weight management kept central and low, good ventilation and sensible wet-hanging allocation.

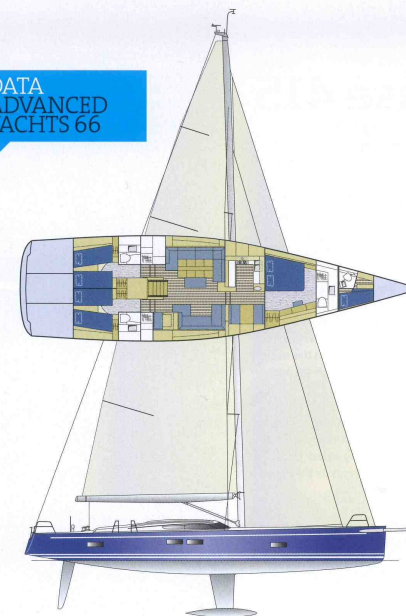
Advanced Yachts have produced a manageable-sized boat with a superyacht's soul – she's over-specified and all in premium quality yet at a relatively reasonable price. And given that they claim to start with safety and functionality, Advanced have produced a fiendishly good-looking boat.

I think she will be a handful when the breeze is up, however, as she has a tall mast and is heavily canvassed for the light airs of the Med – her displacement to length ratio for example is a skittish 111. So, if offshore cruising is your aim, the Swan 66 is arguably more suitable.

But considering AY's goal was to produce a boat competitive to Nautor's Swan for a 30 per cent lower price – at €2.4m, the AY66 costs over €1m less than the Swan 66 – the Italians have succeeded in producing a highly impressive first model. I can't wait to see the 60.



DATA ADVANCED YACHTS 66



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	20.46m	67ft 2in
LWL	18.18m	59ft 8in
Beam (max)	5.40m	17ft 9in
Draught	3.20m	10ft 6in
Disp (lightship)	24,000kg	52,910lb
Ballast	8,590kg	19,158lb
Sail area	230.8m ²	2,848ft ²
Berths	8-10	
Engine	200hp	
Water	9,000lt	1,980gal
Fuel	1,520lt	334gal
Sail area: disp	28.2	
Disp: LWL	111	
Price (ex VAT)	€2.4m (£1.9m)	

Design: Reichel & Pugh/Nautia Design
www.advancedyachts.it



The Felci-designed A60 is due to launch this spring, with a target price ex VAT of €1.6m

