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NATURAL SELECTION
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86, the definition of a
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DARWIN

86

THE DARWIN 86 FROM CANTIERE DELLE MARCHE MAY BE SMALL IN OVERALL LENGTH, BUT SHE'S ALSO A SERIOUS LONG-DISTANCE EXPLORER, AND A BOAT PUNCHING WELL ABOVE HER WEIGHT

The expression 'pocket superyacht' gets bandied around quite a lot in this industry. Anything, it seems, that is less than 30 metres LOA and has a decent amount of accommodation is branded a pocket superyacht, whether it deserves that moniker or not. Some do, but many do not.

Many of the 'pocket superyachts' we see are little more than sub 30-metre accommodation barges, and the ability to sleep 14 people does not necessarily make them superyachts. To qualify as a proper mini-superyacht, a boat requires more than just a lot of space on board. It needs the attention to detail and build quality we expect to see in 30 metre-plus boats; it needs to have the kind of systems and redundancy we expect from much bigger vessels; and it needs proper crew quarters. Only then can a smallish boat be correctly described as a pocket superyacht.

Which brings us to the Darwin 86 from Cantiere delle Marche in Ancona. This is a yacht that appeared on the European boat show circuit at the latter end of 2011, and it is pitched very much as a pocket superyacht. But is it really, or is it just an 86-footer with a lot of space?

Twenty-six metres is only a little over the maximum length for an owner-skipper, and quite a way short of what most consider superyacht territory. At about €6 million, it also costs a lot less than what most of us would expect to pay for a superyacht. But after a day on board, including a short sea-trial, it is clear that the Darwin 86 is indeed one of that rare breed: the true pocket superyacht.

The first striking aspect of the Darwin 86 is the styling. Designed as an explorer yacht, it may only be 26 metres LOA, but with four decks it is tall. The styling will find few fans among enthusiasts of sleek Italian sports-cruisers, but this isn't a boat aimed at the fast and the



words: Tom Isitt
photography:
Paolo Renato Sacchi;
Fabio Taccola





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furious. It is for those who prefer a more sedate pace, and want to cover long distances in comfort. The Darwin has the purposeful lines and utilitarian appeal we've come to expect from explorer yachts. It may not be beautiful, but it has a functional elegance that will definitely appeal to those in search of a 'little ship'.

The little ship feel continues when you step on board. Cantiere delle Marche is better known for its commercial vessels than its recreational boats, and this background is apparent as you walk around. The solidity of the build and the engineering solutions achieved leave you in no doubt that this boat will last. And although it was built by a yard more used to producing 100 metre-plus tankers and passenger ships, the fit and finish of the Darwin 86 is exceptional.

As a semi-custom build, the Darwin 86 has a standard layout that can be adapted. This one, *Vitadimare 3*, sticks pretty closely to the standard arrangement, with a few changes to accommodate the owner's wishes. On



the main deck is the saloon, dining area, a bar and the dayhead, and stairs down to the accommodation deck forward on the starboard side. At the stern, a generous cockpit contains a dining table seating 10.

The saloon area is a decent size and the décor neutral and understated. You don't expect an explorer yacht to be dripping with bling, but even so the interior is very low-key. There's a reason: the owner is passionate about two things – wine, and art. There are hundreds of wine glasses and 15 fridges on board *Vitadimare 3*, while the neutral colour-scheme is designed to show off his collection of artworks. And there is art everywhere, including a limited-edition Dali print in one crew cabin and a limited-edition Picasso print in the other crew cabin. That's not something you see every day.

Interestingly, the designer Sergio Cutolo chose to devote the forward part of the main deck to the crew. Forward of the bar and dining area is a galley on the port side and a crew mess on the starboard side. Forward of those are two twin crew cabins with bathrooms and separate shower compartments. Having the crew on the main deck makes good sense from an operational point of view, but it's unusual not to have the owner's or VIP cabin at the forward end of the main deck.

Down on the accommodation deck, things are as you expect. There is a full-width owner's suite aft, a central lobby, two twin cabins (with a Pullman berth), and a VIP double forward. In the owner's suite, the layout has been changed slightly. On the standard boat the bathroom is on the starboard side, with wardrobes and a desk on the aft bulkhead opposite the bed. But in *Vitadimare 3* the owner has moved the bathroom to where the wardrobes were and created a walk-in wardrobe next to the bathroom. This makes the owner's cabin full-width, but only slightly longer than the length of the bed.



The flybridge has plenty of space for sunloungers, and this version also features a flybridge helm console. Aft on the main deck is a dining table seating 10 (left). The engine room (above) is superbly installed and beautifully engineered. Even the paint has been beautifully applied, following extensive research by the yard into the different systems available



The VIP suite (left), is forward on the lower deck. The main deck saloon (below), with dining area, bar and lounge, features low-key décor and some of the owner's art collection. As with other spaces on board, the yacht here feels considerably larger than her length would suggest

The interior is very low-key. There's a reason: the owner is passionate about two things – wine and art. The neutral colour-scheme is designed to show off his collection of artworks



Up a flight of stairs from the companionway by the galley is the bridge deck, where the owner has made more changes. The bridge itself remains unchanged from the standard boat, but aft where normally an upper saloon and television area spans the full width of this deck, the owner has specified the captain's cabin to be placed on the port side, with a much-reduced television area on the starboard side. This does cut down on the available seating for owner and guests, but giving the captain his own cabin next to the bridge makes a lot of sense (if you want to keep him). Aft is a large outdoor area with a dining table, full barbecue and galley facilities, and enough room for the tender and a crane.

Finally, up on the flybridge, you can specify pretty much anything you like. The owner has eschewed the standard spa pool for an additional helm position, and the rest of this deck is given over to sunpads and lounging areas.

Sitting on her berth in Sardinia, the Darwin looks almost as tall as she is long, suggesting she would roll heavily at sea. The weather is flat-calm for her sea-trial, so it is unclear what she would be like in heavy seas. But best efforts to cross and re-cross the boat's own wash



have minimal effects on stability. Even putting her into a full-power turn only elicits a moderate roll – not enough to send any of the *objets d'art* crashing to the floor.

The twin Caterpillar 400hp engines are a good match for a boat like this, giving a top speed of about 12 knots at 1,750rpm. At this speed it is only using 65 litres of fuel per engine per hour, a figure almost halved by dropping the revs to 1,500rpm and the speed to 11 knots. At this comfortable cruising speed the Darwin is very smooth, very quiet, and has a range in excess of 4,500 nautical miles. This is a genuine long-distance explorer, an impression reinforced by a visit to the engine room and machinery spaces, where the installation is superb and the quality of engineering beyond reproach. Independent rudders, and thrusters at the bow and stern, make the Darwin easy to manoeuvre in tight situations, which is important in a boat weighing 200 tonnes fully loaded.

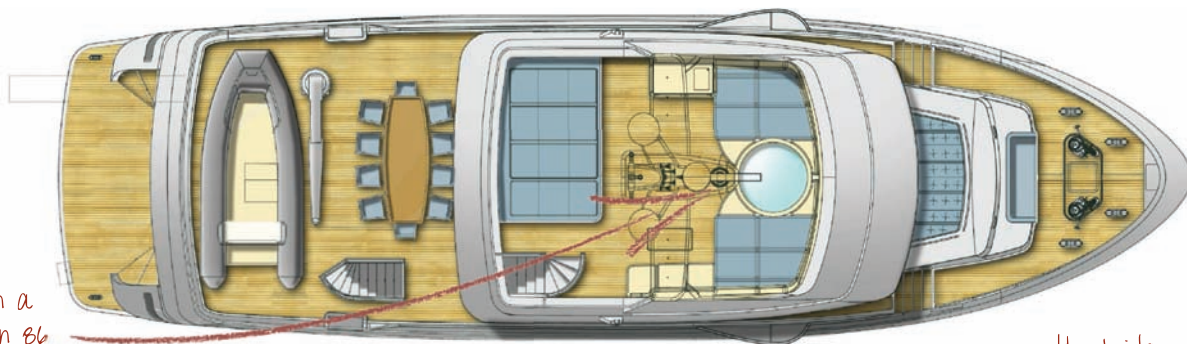
These practicalities really set the Darwin apart from similar boats of this length. There is an astonishing amount of storage on board, more than enough for a month at sea without re-provisioning, and features such as the refrigerated garbage-storage compartment show that a lot of thought has gone into this boat.

The Darwin 86 is an explorer in more than just name and style – it's a proper long-distance yacht. There are 29 metre and 32 metre versions of the Darwin in the pipeline, and from the renderings they look to carry the height more easily. But for a 26 metre boat, the Darwin 86 is an extraordinary vessel. Not everyone wants an explorer, but for someone who wants a serious go-anywhere yacht at a reasonable price, and with all the features you need, the Darwin looks hard to beat. Is it a proper pocket superyacht? In this case the answer is a very definite 'yes'.

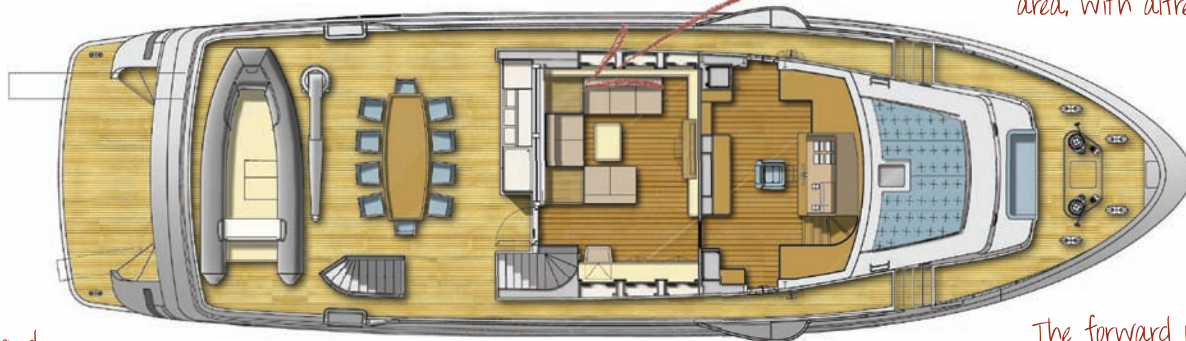


DARWIN 86

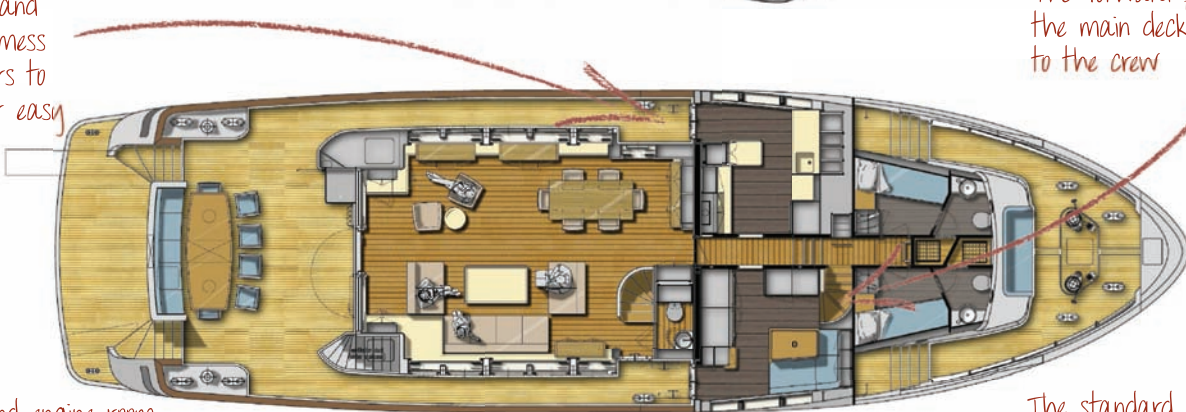
The flybridge on a standard Darwin 86 features a spa pool as well as sunpads



on the bridge deck there is an upper saloon and television area, with alfresco dining aft



The port galley and starboard crew mess both feature doors to the sidedecks for easy crew access



The forward part of the main deck is devoted to the crew

The lazarette and engine room are superbly fitted out, with acres of space and clearly labelled systems



The standard owner's suite features a starboard en suite, aft wardrobes and a desk area to port



DARWIN 86 Cantiere delle Marche

LOA 26.1m
LWL 22.87m
Beam 7.43m
Draught 2.3m
Displacement
195 tonnes (full load)
Gross tonnage 206 GT

Engines
2 x Caterpillar C12 400hp
Speed (max/cruise)
12 knots/10.5 knots
Range
7,000nm at 8.5 knots
Thrusters
2 x 40kW electric

Generators
2 x 50kW Kohler
Stabilisers
2 x CMC zero speed and adaptive
Fuel capacity
42,000 litres
Freshwater capacity
3,400 litres

Owner and guests 10
Crew 5
Tenders
1 x 6.5m max; 1 x 4.5m
Construction
Steel
Classification
RINA C * HULL MACH Y

Naval architecture
Hydrotec by Sergio Cutolo
Exterior styling
Sergio Cutolo
Interior design
Marco Veglia and Pierluigi Floris

Builder/ Year
Cantiere delle Marche/ 2011
tel: +39 071 206705
email: info@cantieredellemarche.it
web: www.cantieredellemarche.it
Price guide
From €6 million

Yacht auction site to make sales more efficient

▶ A team of experienced auctioneers and superyacht brokers has launched a website aimed at making buying and selling yachts simpler and more efficient.

TheYachtAuction.com website went live on 8 December, and was set up as a response to owner feedback on the process of yacht purchase and sale.

'When a sale is made you normally have a lot of conditions,' says Andy McDougall, director of TheYachtAuction.com and a veteran superyacht broker. 'Our sales process is not unconditional, but much of the paperwork and the survey will normally have been done before the boat goes to auction. Then once the successful bid is made the price does not change. Therefore you cut out what is often many months of negotiation resulting from the survey, sea trial and everything else.'

The site is modelled on successful auction houses that deal in classic cars, property and art. Like these, McDougall believes the site will help establish true value by increasing interest in each yacht.

'Quite often in the brokerage process you'll only have one client who is interested. This way you're getting three or four people bidding and generally the real value of the yacht will be achieved a lot quicker,' he says. 'Also, with multiple bidders the price should go higher than if there were no other buyers out there. We believe it is a much more scientific way of selling a yacht than hoping someone sees an advert.'

TheYachtAuction.com will be pitched at superyacht owners and buyers, but will work with smaller yachts, including luxury tenders, which may also appeal to this market. The first auction will be held in February 2012.

CONTACT [web: www.theyachtauction.com](http://www.theyachtauction.com)



CLAUS SCHAEFER/THEYACHTPHOTO.COM

The 78m Abeking & Rasmussen yacht *Amaryllis* on the Weser river in northwest Germany, en route to her second sea trial

On the iPad this issue

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ShowBoats Design Awards

The yachting elite gathered in Palm Beach, Florida for this prestigious annual prize-giving. Head to the iPad edition to enjoy a video of the glittering event



Superyacht Design Symposium

An invaluable opportunity to share ideas with experts on a diverse range of topics, the 2011 Symposium was the best yet – see our video to understand why



America's Cup

San Diego gave the America's Cup the prominence it deserved in 2011 – and the crews didn't disappoint. See more of the action in our extended gallery and video



Tender Design

Tenders have become so much more than a means of getting from A to B. See more pictures of these 'mini-yachts' by top designers with our iPad app



Attessa IV

An extraordinary rebuild – with a fascinating back-story – by an owner who thinks outside the box. See more of *Attessa IV* in our extended image gallery



Falcon

Built in a masculine style, *Falcon's* owner will use it for fishing trips with his friends. The iPad's the place to see more of this fast, elegant superyacht



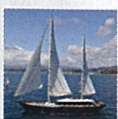
Prima

The first superyacht from the family-run Palumbo Shipyards, *Prima* is a great charter yacht. Check out the extended gallery in our iPad edition...



Darwin 86

A true 'pocket superyacht', the Darwin 86 is a go-anywhere boat at a reasonable price. Our iPad edition carries more pictures of this cleverly designed model



Infinity

Cobra Yacht's 46m embodies traditional Turkish design and modern style. See more of *Infinity* with our extended image gallery and video



Ocean Traveller

Thoroughly off the beaten track, Fernando de Noronha is the perfect yachting retreat. Our iPad app features more images of this Brazilian paradise