FULL SPEED AHEAD
HOW POD-DRIVE PROPULSION IS CHANGING BOATING

“Charles Darwin was right about evolution: It is for the fittest.

THE 70E IS FLOATING PROOF.”
The Ocean Alexander 70E mixes a healthy respect for the past with an eye toward the future. By Chris Cassetty. Photography by Forest Johnson.
is summed up in that “e” tacked on so casually to the end of the name. It stands for Evolution, an apt descriptor for this 70-footer. But, lest you worry that Ocean Alexander has thrown the baby out with the bath water, this is still a classic OA in so many ways: solid construction, outstanding seakeeping abilities and thoughtful design. If your dad had an Ocean Alexander, he’ll still feel right at home.

So what’s new? Well, start with the Volvo Penta IPS pod drives. This is the first OA with pods, and the setup reflects the modern thinking that went into this yacht. The 70e is also the first Ocean Alexander built in the United States. And mega-yacht designer Evan K. Marshall, working with Ocean Alexander U.S. Director Richard Allender, achieved several evolutionary changes.

First, the 70e has modern exterior lines evocative of much larger yachts, with a table and a sun pad. This is where you can enjoy a sundowner at anchor. The same big-boat thinking carries through to the lower deck. This is a 70-footer with four staterooms served by three heads, and nothing feels shoe-horned to fit. The master suite aft spans the full beam, and oversize windows let in plenty of light and fresh air through the ports in each window. Composite beams frame the windows for strength, and the glass is the sandwiched type used on larger vessels built to stringent classification specs. There is a serenity to this stateroom that comes from Ocean Alexander’s trademark use of teak joinery and a calming fabric headboard with sconces. Our test 70e had bureaus under the windows on each side, but this is an owner-choice area that can also have a couch or table and chairs. What is sure to be a deal closer for some families is the cedar-lined walk-in closet to starboard, with backlit drawers and liveaboard space. The head is another deal closer, with elegant stone counters, twin glass sinks, and a table and a sun pad. This is where you can enjoy a sundowner at anchor.

The same big-boat thinking carries through to the lower deck. This is a 70-footer with four staterooms served by three heads, and nothing feels shoe-horned to fit. The master suite aft spans the full beam, and oversize windows let in plenty of light and fresh air through the ports in each window. Composite beams frame the windows for strength, and the glass is the sandwiched type used on larger vessels built to stringent classification specs. There is a serenity to this stateroom that comes from Ocean Alexander’s trademark use of teak joinery and a calming fabric headboard with sconces. Our test 70e had bureaus under the windows on each side, but this is an owner-choice area that can also have a couch or table and chairs. What is sure to be a deal closer for some families is the cedar-lined walk-in closet to starboard, with backlit drawers and liveaboard space. The head is another deal closer, with elegant stone counters, twin glass sinks, and
the OA “crystal shower” with custom glass door and seat. Forward along the foyer, with hidden washer and dryer, are twin staterooms to port and starboard. The starboard stateroom has considerable stowage, and the bunk stateroom has two single berths plus direct access to the berth, two windows plus an overhead hatch, and an en-suite head finished to match the master with stone counters, glass vessel sink and Hansgrohe faucets. The flybridge, with access from inside (opposite the galley) and the cockpit, also impresses. Once again, Marshall created entertainment areas to suit everyone’s needs. A fiberglass hardtop covers the forward half of the flybridge with helm, starboard-side lounge, and ElectriChef grill and fridge. At the after edge of the hardtop is a wet bar that would do justice to a yacht twice this size. With a pair of stools at the raised counter, this bar will be a gathering point. It has stone counters and a sink, fridge and ice maker for serving guests in the lounges fore and aft. The 70e is offered in two versions: tender up and tender down. The tender-down setup takes advantage of the oversized hydraulic teak swim platform that is standard in both versions. This allows you to carry a large tender – the beam is 18 feet – and launch it by immersing the swim platform, which then becomes a boarding platform as well as a beach for swimming. This would be my choice. The tender-up version adds a crane to the flybridge and places the tender aft on the upper deck. This would be a good solution if you plan long-distance cruises where you want the tender protected, either from large seas or from idle hands in harbors. Crane-launching is always more complicated and requires more people, and you also lose space on the flybridge that, in the tender-down version, is used for more seating and a convertible sun pad. Your call. One feature about pod drives that is often promoted. They take up less space than conventional drives. Nowhere is that more evident than in the 70e’s engine room. The two Volvo Penta IPS 1200s put out 900 hp apiece and are basically marinized six-cylinder, four-stroke diesel truck engines. They are, in a word, bulletproof. There is plenty of room to walk between the engines, and the usual service and checkpoints are mounted inboard to the walkway. Two standard 20-kW Northern Lights gensets are found here. Just abaat the engine room is a surprisingly civilized crew cabin with a single berth, a head, with shower and a mini galley. The 70e has a top hop of 30 knots with a 26-knot cruise speed. Volvo Penta’s joystick docking system enables fingertip control of this 78,000-pound yacht. Upgrade to Dynamic Positioning mode, and you can plant the yacht alongside a dock while you rig tenders and dock lines. Charles Darwin was right about evolution. It is for the fittest. The 70e is floating proof. Ocean Alexander has produced a fully evolved yacht that combines modern sensibilities with classic features, and high-tech engineering with proven construction.