OCEAN ALEXANDER 70

LOA: 70'6"
BEAM: 18'2"
DRAFT: 5'0"
DISPL.: 78,000 lb.
FUEL CAPACITY: 1,040 gal.
WATER CAPACITY: 300 gal.
TEST POWER: 2/900-hp Volvo Penta IPS 1200s
OPTIONAL POWER: none
TRANSMISSION: Volvo Penta IPS; 1.88 gear ratio
PROPELLERS: 30-inch Q-2s
GENERATOR: 2/20-kW Northern Lights
WARRANTY: One year
BASE PRICE: $3,750,000
PRICE AS TESTED: $4,200,000

ALL-AMERICAN

THE NEWEST OCEAN ALEXANDER SHOWS JUST HOW FAR THIS FAR EAST BUILDER HAS COME—LITERALLY. BY CAPT. RICHARD THIEL

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In Memory of
RICHARD THIEL
1945-2016
As a tribute to Richard, our beloved Editor-at-Large and former Editor-in-Chief, *Power & Motoryacht* is publishing his final articles.
For more on Richard, visit *www.pmymag.com/thiel*.

A lot has changed in the marine industry since Alex Chueh launched the first Ocean Alexander back in 1978. Designed by Ed Monk Jr. and built in the Kaohsiung yard in Taiwan, the 50-footer struck a distinctly salty profile, with its lofty forward freeboard, covered side decks, and Portuguese bridge. With a displacement of 55,000 pounds, a beam of 15 feet 5 inches, and a nearly full-length keel, the first Ocean Alexander didn't threaten any speed records at the time but like all of Monk's boats, it excelled in seakeeping. And it was priced well below many of its competitors.

The boat and the company eventually became a success, but along the way they had to contend not only with competing vessels of the type but also with skepticism fed by considerable mendacity on the part of other builders seeking to explain away the boats' attractive pricing. It was often claimed that Taiwanese boats were poorly built, poorly engineered, had inferior plumbing and electrical systems, or were just too heavy and slow. (Indeed, they were often comparatively heavy because the builders were so obsessed with creating a strong and durable laminate.)

Eventually the quality and engineering inherent in Taiwanese boats in general and Ocean Alexanders in particular overcame whatever brickbats competitors threw at them. In fact, as Taiwan's economy matured and its labor rates rose, virtually erasing the vaunted price advantage they had once enjoyed, these boats were able to compete on an equal footing with those built anywhere else in the world—this even though they had to contend with the not-inconsiderable shipping costs required to bring them to America.

To see just how far Ocean Alexander has come from its humble beginnings you need only look at its latest model, the 70e. The e stands for evolution, something you see everywhere onboard this boat, starting with construction. Gone are the days when strength was equated with weight: The 70e is the first Ocean Alexander that is fully cored with high-density foam and resin infused throughout.

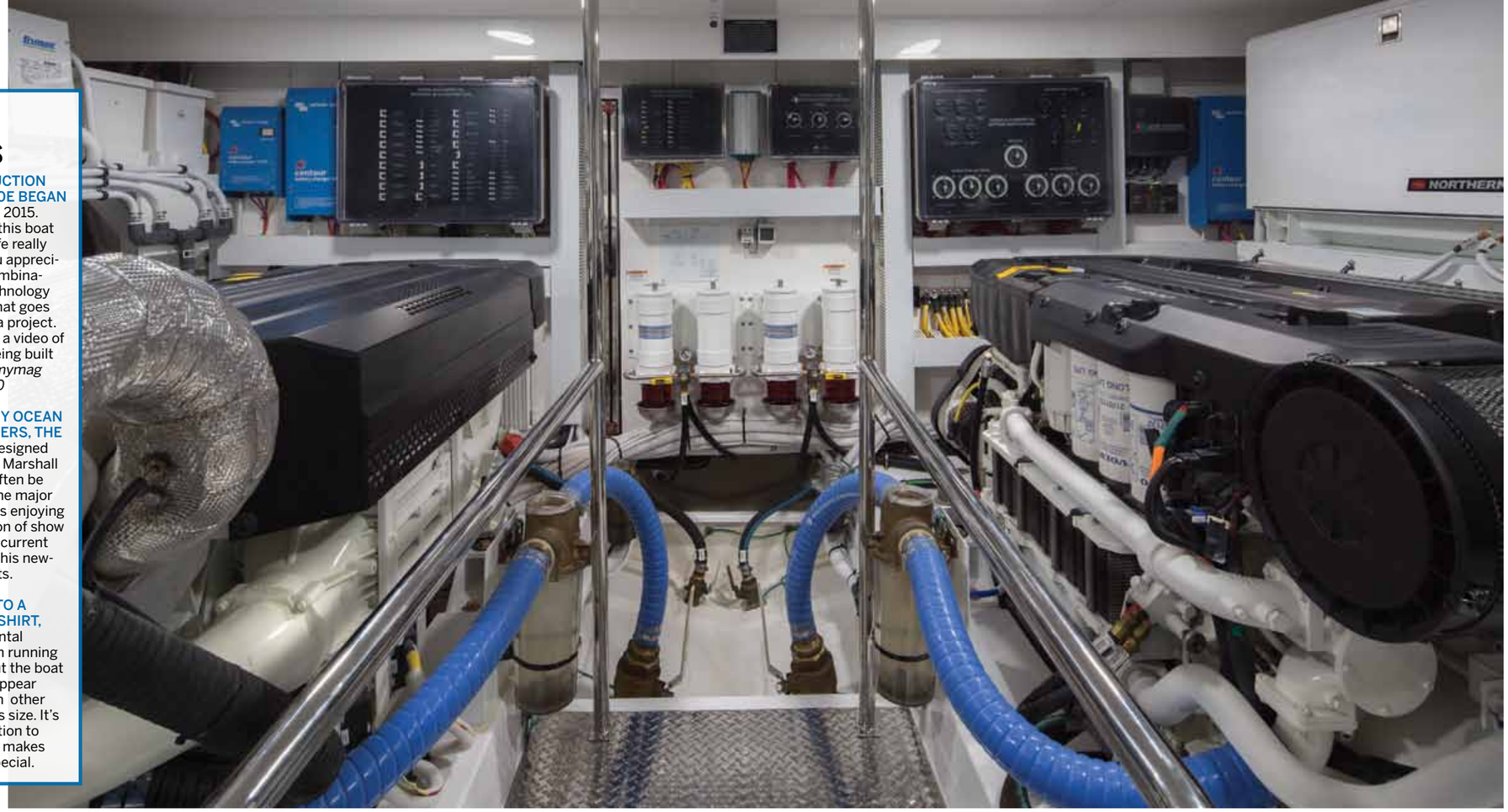
From the cockpit to the helm, the Ocean Alexander 70 accomplishes single-level living while also providing some separate social spaces.

Test Notes

CONSTRUCTION ON THE 70E BEGAN in January 2015. Watching this boat come to life really makes you appreciate the combination of technology and skill that goes into such a project. Check out a video of the 70e being built at *www.pmymag.com/oa70*

LIKE MANY OCEAN ALEXANDERS, THE 70e was designed by Evan K. Marshall who can often be found at the major boat shows enjoying the reaction of show goers and current owners to his newest projects.

SIMILAR TO A STRIPED SHIRT, the horizontal wood grain running throughout the boat makes it appear larger than other boats of its size. It's that attention to detail that makes the 70e special.



A clean, clearly labeled engine room with easy access to service points and safety rails in between the engines has been a staple at Ocean Alexander for some time and its clearly present in the belly of the 70.

The boat is also quiet, benefiting from a variety of acoustical-reduction methods designed to minimize interior sound levels, including a proprietary vibration-damping system for the gensets. (OA says that the 70e's sound and vibration levels are at times one-half to one-tenth of the standards set by ISO 6954.)

Propulsion has also evolved, well beyond that 50-footer's straight-inboard configuration. The only package offered on the 70e is twin 900-horsepower Volvo Penta IPS1200s, the largest and most powerful pod drives currently offered by Volvo. Unfortunately, a glitch in our 70e's hydraulic system on test day obviated a sea trial, so the performance numbers you see here have been supplied by Volvo Penta. The top speed of 28 knots is a benchmark owners of the 50 could only dream of, as is the superb maneuverability provided by the standard IPS joystick control. Yet despite her speed, the 70e enjoys a cruising range of 400 miles or better anywhere above 1500 rpm thanks to efficient IPS propulsion and generous tankage.

Another good example of the 70e's evolution is her interior layout. Expansive glass and a large covered cockpit create bright, airy gathering places. The galley is large and midship and to starboard, where it can easily serve both interior and exterior dining areas, including those on the expansive flying bridge, which is easily accessed via a port-side interior stairway directly across from it. (There are also additional stairs for access from the cockpit.) The bridge is three-quarters covered by a hardtop; on our test boat the after-most quarter had optional additional seating, leaving the hydraulic swim platform to hold the tender.

All sleeping accommodations are reached by the forward portside companionway, and since IPS has allowed the engine bulkhead to be farther aft than would be the case with straight inboards, there is space for four roomy cabins. The master is, of course, aft and full-beam and flanked by the kind of large windows that were inconceivable almost four decades ago; the forward VIP, only marginally smaller, also has plenty of natural light. Both staterooms have en suite facilities and 6-foot 5-inch headroom. Between them is a twin-berth stateroom to starboard, with direct access to the dayhead, and a portside bunkroom.

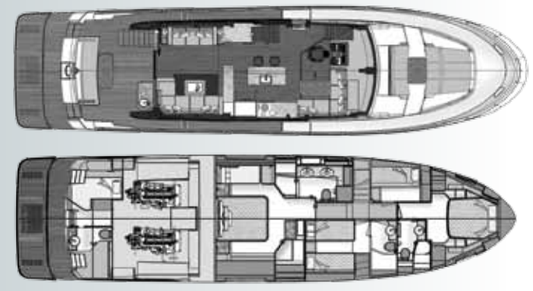
The only way to reach the engine room is through a transom door, which leads initially to port and starboard sleeping areas for crew, above each pod. To actually reach the engine room itself you walk forward through a wet head with toilet and watertight door. The ER has really evolved—it's decidedly more finely finished: Everything is painted white and there's a notable absence of exposed piping and valves, a common feature of some Far East boats. The mains can be accessed on three sides and batteries have been thoughtfully clustered outboard, to either side. A single aluminum fuel tank forward is equipped with sight gauges and high- and low-level alarms; it can be filled from either or both sides.

But when it comes to evolution, the biggest change represented by the 70e may be not how she is built but where. For the first time at OA, construction is occurring not in Taiwan but in the United States, or more specifically in a recently refurbished plant in Merritt Island, Florida. This is a significant development for a Far East builder and it should result in a significant savings in transportation costs. I say "should" because boats destined for California and the Pacific Northwest—two big markets for OA—will still need to be transported as deck cargo through the Panama Canal. Still, that's bound to cost a lot less than crossing the Pacific.

For now the rest of the OA line will continue to be built in Taiwan, but given the considerable size and sophistication of the Merritt Island facility, it seems likely that at least some of the construction will eventually migrate to the U.S. The natural question is whether there's any discernible difference between OAs built in Taiwan and the U.S.-built 70e. I would have to say that visually I could see none beyond the aforementioned engine-room details. Indeed, the 70e looks every bit the all-American, both inside and out. ❒

Ocean Alexander, 800-940-3554; www.oceanalexander.com

OCEAN ALEXANDER 70E



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE
1000	10.5	9	1,092
1250	12.0	14	803
1500	13.9	28	465
1750	16.2	35	433
2000	20.8	48	406
2150	26.2	63	389
2300	28.0	65	403

TEST CONDITIONS: All data supplied by Volvo Penta. Range based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity. Sound level measurements not available.