

AZIMUT 60 WINDY 32 GT PEARL 80 INTERCRUISER 32 FERRETTI 780

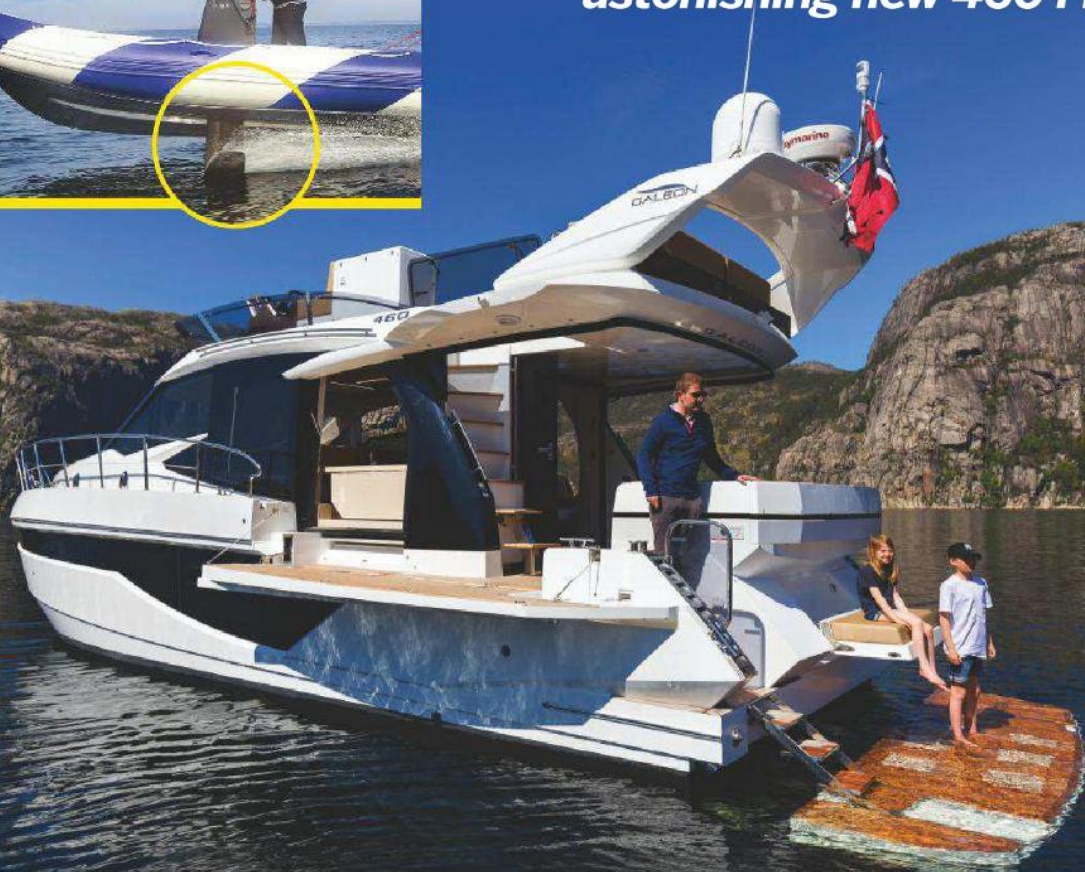
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UPTOWN PEARL

With the bright lights of Miami as our backdrop, we see if the striking Pearl 80 has what it takes to challenge the mainstream opposition

Words Jack Haines



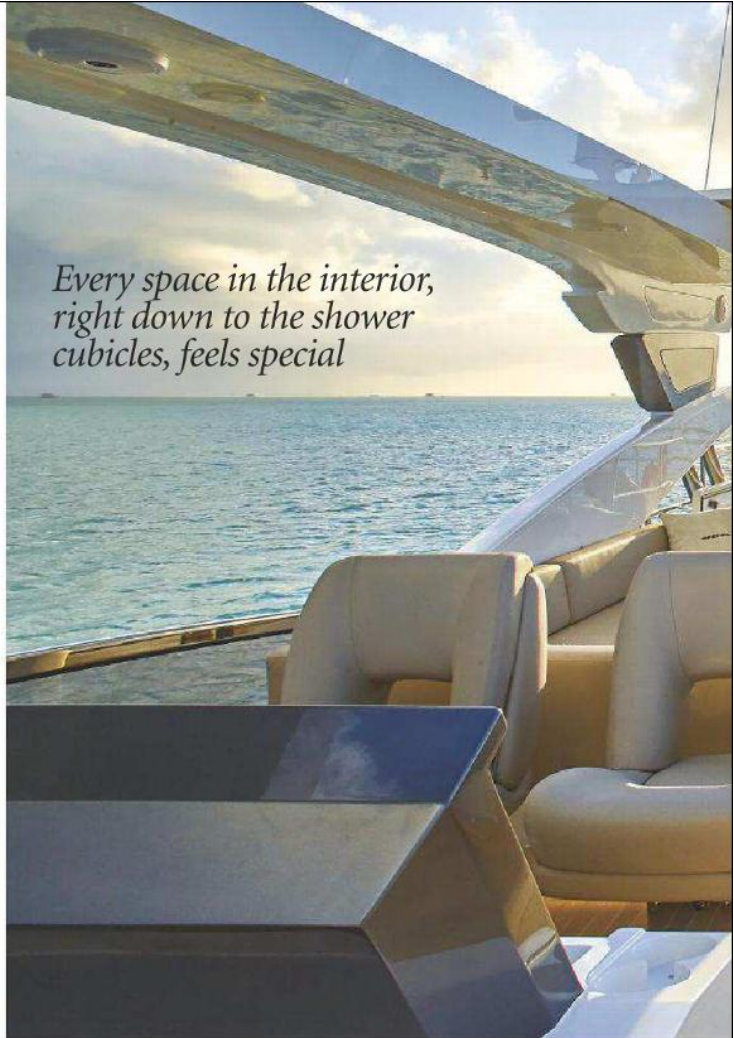
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owntown Miami on a December evening, and hazy sunlight is bouncing off the mirrored towers that make up the city's shimmering financial district. We are here to meet the Pearl 80, which is alongside the jetty attached to the subtly named Epic Hotel.

This is one of downtown's popular nightspots and as darkness crawls in, the valet is handed keys to supercar after supercar; a Lamborghini Aventador here, a Rolls-Royce Wraith there – but nothing is turning heads quite like the big Pearl.

The next morning is our first glimpse of the 80 in daylight. It's a handsome and well-proportioned boat with huge slabs of mirrored glass practically camouflaging it against the surrounding buildings. The 80 shares its Bill Dixon exterior, Kelly Hoppen interior and accommodation layout with the 75 but it is built using entirely new tooling and, crucially, specifically for shafts on V-drives and not the ZF pod drive system that the 75 had. The yard's hand was slightly forced on this matter as ZF stopped producing the pods but feedback suggested that buyers in this market, who generally have a skipper, feel more comfortable with shaftdrives anyway. There are a host of Caterpillar, MTU and MAN engine options but our test boat has a thumping great pair of MAN V12 1,800s within its tidy engineroom, more on which later.

For now, let's explore the 80's achingly stylish interior. There are three different Kelly Hoppen interior designs (Taupe, Studio and Luxury) but not a huge amount of play regarding physical layout. That said, the standard configuration is good, so it seems unlikely that customers will feel the need to change it. On the main deck, you can partition off the galley if you want privacy from crew but the test boat's open galley, looking back down over a bar area



Every space in the interior, right down to the shower cubicles, feels special

towards the low-slung lounging area aft, works really well. There are instances of form over function though, and some particularly sharp edges that it's all too easy to whack knees or hips on at sea.

The helm and galley area is spectacular thanks to the glass panelling above. It's bright and the views are sensational, but it gets warm, so the tropical air con upgrade should be one of the first ticks on the options list.

The four ensuite cabins below decks are designed with as much flair as the main deck. Every space, right down to the shower cubicles, feels special, and you can't help but be drawn in by the layers of detail and sheer variety of materials and textures on show.

A narrow corridor leads between a twin cabin to port and a smart double to starboard culminating at the quirky VIP cabin with its

Glass panels in the flybridge overhang let light into the cockpit



The striking Kelly Hoppen interior is a major part of the Pearl 80's charm





The dining area is located under the windscreen next to the helm. The galley can be partitioned off if required



offset berth and cosy sofa tucked between the portside hull windows. Floorspace feels pinched around the bed but this sacrifice results in a sizeable ensuite and a walk-in wardrobe.

The master cabin amidships is palatial and boasts its own fabulous ensuite and spacious walk-in wardrobe. The lighting throughout the boat is tasteful but it's especially classy in this cabin and the mirrored wall on the forward bulkhead conceals a large TV.

We take to the flybridge to negotiate the network of canals that lead out to the main channel and the Port of Miami. The flybridge feels enormous and is protected by an impressive hardtop with a sliding roof that peels back to leave a huge aperture, through which the sun can lay down its rays. There is low-profile seating arranged around a coffee table adjacent to the helm and a larger dinette amidships, though the long bases and low backs on the sofas won't make for a particularly comfortable dining experience. Opposite, there is a substantial wet bar and this particular boat had the option of a hot tub with open space for sunloungers out aft. It feels like wasted space, but Pearl has included glazing in the deck to help brighten up the cockpit below – a nice touch.

The aforementioned MAN V12s dish up mountains of power and offer eerily quiet progress as we mooch past Miami's container port and South Pointe Beach. The calm of the Intercoastal Waterway (ICW) gives way to a rolling swell as we venture out into the North Atlantic and set a course south towards Key Biscayne.

Heading directly into the swell, the 80's refinement and composure is reassuring, as is the way the hull brushes off the rollers as I ease the chunky throttles forward. Even in reasonably challenging conditions, we reach an impressive top speed of 35.4 knots with 60% fuel, full water, a jetski and Seakeeper 16 on board. As eye-catching as that top speed is though, what's most useful is the huge cruising band it gives you. Essentially it allows you to cruise anywhere between 8 knots and if you really want to get a move on, 32 knots. It's utterly effortless too; even in the upper echelons of the rev range, the MANs provide a noticeable wallop of power right up to their 2,350rpm maximum.



We slip back into the ICW, the water a kaleidoscope of vibrant blues. We make a heading for the Rickenbacker Causeway, lining the bow up with the skyscrapers of downtown Miami. The Pearl's lower helm is the ideal place to enjoy the view from as the glass reaches so far back over the top of your head. The navigator's seat and L-shaped seating area to starboard mean guests can be part of the action when the boat is on the move, though it's a shame the low seating means only taller guests will actually be able to see out.

The master cabin bristles with eye-catching design touches...



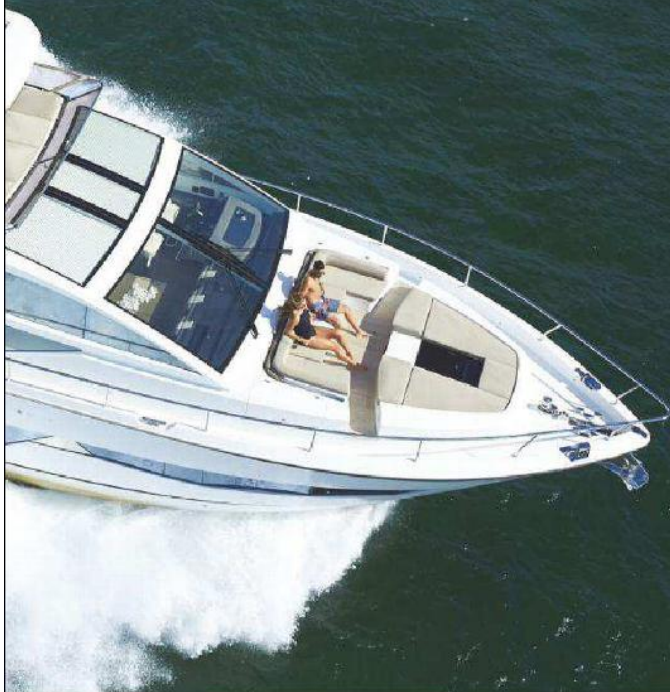
...like a television that looks like a mirror when not in use



Even the shower cubicle is decorated with real coral



In a big marina, you're likely to see another Sunseeker or Azimut. But another Pearl? Probably not



HULL LENGTH
62ft 12in (19.2m)
DRAUGHT 5ft 3in (1.6m)
DISPLACEMENT
57 tonnes (dry)
FUEL CAPACITY
1,145 imp gal (5,250 litres)
WATER CAPACITY
286 imp gal (1,300 litres)
TEST ENGINES
Twin MAN V12 1,800hp
TOP SPEED ON TEST
35.4 knots
CRUISING SPEED
8-32 knots
PERFORMANCE
(range on 80% fuel)
800rpm
9.1 knots, 43.5lph,
0.95mpg, 871nm
1,000rpm
9.8 knots, 75.7lph,
0.59mpg, 539nm
1,200rpm
10.2 knots, 144lph,
0.32mpg, 295nm
1,400rpm
10.7 knots, 212lph,
0.23mpg, 210nm
1,600rpm
20.3 knots, 286lph,
0.32nm, 295nm
1,800rpm
24.6 knots, 379lph,
0.30mpg, 270nm
2,000rpm
29.5 knots, 511lph,
0.26mpg, 240nm
2,200rpm
32.7 knots, 595lph,
0.25mpg, 229nm
2,350rpm
35.4 knots, 681lph,
0.24mpg, 216nm
DESIGNER Bill Dixon
/ Kelly Hoppen
PRICE FROM
£2.49m ex VAT
PRICE AS TESTED
£2.93m ex VAT



LENGTH OVERALL 78ft 5in (23.9m)

BEAM 19ft 6in (6.01m)

We head to Miami Beach Marina for lunch and take up the last berth, a narrow-piled slip that leaves millimetres either side for the skipper to guide the boat in stern first. The bite of twin props and two variable speed thrusters make light work of the manoeuvre and demonstrate that pods don't necessarily have it all their own way.

Pearls are an unfamiliar site in the US, but rarity is one of the reasons why the boats appeal to its customers. In a big marina, you're likely to see another Sunseeker or Azimut. But another Pearl? Probably not. It's not just exclusivity; Pearl offers something different in terms of its sophisticated interior design and there's

also the fact that the 80 is around 10-15% cheaper than the equivalent Sunseeker and comes loaded with big-ticket optional extras including full teak decks, air conditioning, a hydraulic bathing platform and passerelle.

As we tie up at the foot of the Epic once again, the camera phones that were trained on the supercars on its forecourt swing around and take aim at the Pearl. In a city like Miami, inexorably linked with glamour and luxury, the Pearl 80 feels at home. **CONTACT** Pearl Motoryacht. Tel: +44 (0)1926 491069.

Web: www.pearlyachts.com

The guest cabins are flanked by glass panels to let more light in



The quirky VIP suite is angled across the bow of the boat

