

PARTY POWER

This is not the first offering from PowerCat Marine to grace the pages of Power Boat, and I'm certain it won't be the last. Research and development is a big part of the culture at this Caboolture, Queensland, company and the boating fraternity continues to reap the benefit of their expansion into the local market.

Having reviewed several craft from the PowerCat stable, each being extremely well finished and with great performance, it came as no surprise to find that the new PartyCat 7.60, with a list of features as long as your arm and powered by twin 115 hp Yamaha 4-stroke outboards, lived up to my expectations.

Any notion should be quickly dispelled that the boat's designation might make her only a smooth water cruiser in the manner of the pontoon boats now starting to impact the Australian sheltered waters boating scene. The design of this big 25 footer is such that she can handle chop and swell just as easily as cruising canals and rivers, and do that with up to 14 aboard in full party mode. Carl Noyes, owner of the PartyCat you see here, has taken his family offshore out from the Gold Coast for a day of whale watching to show the abilities of the cat design.

There are a number of features that contribute to the craft's versatility. Useable room onboard flows from stem to stern with both space and sea-keeping ability enhanced by a generous beam of some 2.6 metres and a freeboard of 1.2 metres. These dimensions combine with deep-vee hulls to provide a soft and very dry ride.

From The Beach

Stepping aboard the Party Cat from a beach is done via a forward boarding ladder. The craft can approach beaches with great ease due to its considerable length and very shallow draft of around 35 cm. On the raised front deck is a convenient hot water deck-wash to clear sand off the clip in/out carpet through a convenient drain. A neat bow rail is high enough to be useful but not so high as to be

intrusive. With room for 14 to relax and party, this PowerCat is right at home on sheltered waters but can also handle not-so-smooth conditions for attractive versatility in its use. **By Wayne Kampe**

intrusive.

Entry to the front lounge is via a locking gate and, once aboard, there are seating options fore and aft. To starboard of the boarding gate is a hatch allowing access to the huge anchor well, with the test craft being serviced by an optional Maxwell 500 winch.

Once through the forward deck-cum-swim-platform, there is seating for up to five on the lounges to each side of the Cat. The lounge to port makes a good sized sun deck, whilst that to starboard has a neat return to give it an overall L-shape. A table fits into the corner to take advantage of the lounge's design at meal or snack time.

There is a massive amount of storage under the front lounges and down into the hulls, and large items can be stowed with ease. The rig's full length cleats were kept in there and hardly dented the amount of space available.

Aft of the starboard lounge is a large moulded side console that forms a mini-bathroom complete with electric marine toilet. It features a screened window to starboard, a wash basin, hot/cold shower, a ventilation fan plus full headroom.

Opposite is the galley which, when not in use, simply presents as a smooth section of bench with a Granicote top. This very well set out work area houses a 3-burner gas stove, a sink, a 60 litre ice box and a 55 litre 12/240 volt refrigerator.

There are several large cupboards in the





THIS PHOTO: The excellent freeboard and wide beam of the PartyCat are immediately obvious and contribute to space on board plus a dry ride.

ABOVE LEFT: Lounges are to either side at the front of the PartyCat with carpet on the sole and plush trim on the seats and cockpit sides.

ABOVE: A shallow draft and the forward deck-platform and boarding ladder make access ashore very easy.



POWERCAT PARTYCAT 7.60 WITH TWIN YAMAHA 115 OUTBOARDS



ABOVE: The galley is superb for the size of boat and offers everything needed for entertaining and meal preparation.

ABOVE RIGHT: The helm position is well shaded by the extensive hardtop and is neatly laid out with space for gauges and electronics.

RIGHT: Further seating around the stern makes an excellent dinette, and converts to a double berth for overnighting.



lower section of the unit including a dedicated gas bottle storage cupboard with full ventilation. The neat and close fitting Granicote bench tops hinge upwards from both stove and sink as required. I was impressed with the custom made barbecue plate fitting atop the stove.

A small rail at the back of the bench was a neat bit of work as well, and ensured that the items stored in the area would stay put whilst cooking was in progress. Drink holders abound in the kitchen area with six located within the benches.

Neat Helm

The aft section of the shower/toilet console was set aside for the craft's instrument panel with a slide-adjustable helm seat directly behind. This was a good arrangement in that the console had several tiers with a compact yet comprehensive instrument panel and a neat tinted windscreen.

Down one tier there were instruments to monitor the twin Yamaha 4-strokes plus fuel gauges within a neat moulding on the dash face, and below that again was a Navman sounder. The latter was located centrally below the other instruments with plenty of space available for more navigational aids to be fitted. A flat area there would be handy to store the skipper's personal items.

Just below the horizontal area were the Clarion AM/FM stereo and CD player plus an array of water-proof switches to control everything from head lights to deck lights. A marine radio was set up to starboard just below the switch panel.



The sports type wheel linked to hydraulic steering and was centrally located with the forward controls for the engines positioned within a moulding beside the skipper's right hand. The swivelling helm seat had deep padding, great support and was of a decent size with a handy drink holder.

A very rigid, lined, moulded hardtop extended from well forward of the galley to well beyond the helm area. With its massive stainless steel braces, the hardtop was strong enough to walk on and has a small but effective guard rail so that suitable items could be stored aloft if necessary.

A large six-person U-shaped rear lounge has a table easily set up for on-board dining or revelry. Stored overhead in a frame within the targa when not in use, the table pops down in seconds to set up on a pedestal base to hold the tucker. What's more, at the end of the day it doubles as a base to allow the aft lounge cushions to be re-positioned to form a good sized double bed. With the clears in place, what better way to spend a night afloat?

Another good touch was the location of the skipper's seat which could be swivelled

so the occupant could enjoy some nibbles on the run, or it could be used as additional seating when it's time to enjoy a meal.

The transom area of the PartyCat is also put to best use and incorporates a wide aft swim platform with stainless steel grab rails and a generous boarding ladder. There's handy storage space for fenders and the like, or it's large enough to hold some folding crab pots!

Enthusiastic Performance

Rated for twin outboards from 60 to 115 hp each, the reviewed PartyCat sported twin counter-rotating 115 hp Yamaha 4-strokes. Turning 17 inch propellers, the Yamahas never really gave the impression of working hard at any stage of our test which was carried out within the Southport Broadwater.

The engines were super smooth and ultra quiet in the best 4-stroke tradition, and the PartyCat moved from displacement to planing mode without the slightest fuss. She planed freely at 18 kph and 2,500 rpm, and then cruised very smoothly with virtually no engine noise intruding whatsoever at 36 kph and 3,500 rpm. 4,500 rpm gave 48 kph on the



GPS unit and a brief burst at full throttle brought up 5,700 rpm and saw us humming along at 67 kph. With three aboard plus a full fuel load of 300 litres, that's very good performance.

The twin hulls of the PartyCat 7.60 gave a very smooth ride from deep 28 degree vee sections plus central planing planks and outer reversed chines aft. Even at full throttle, the boat remained totally unfussed when crossing the wash from several of the very large craft traversing the Broadwater during our test runs. Entry through chop was merely a lift of the bows with negligible impact.

In best PowerCat style, the boat was totally dry thanks to the combination of the 1.2 metre freeboard, the very fine entry and

the manner in which the hulls' design pushed displaced water away from the boat at speed. Unlike some cat designs, the PartyCat was totally devoid of spray or mist in the stern area at speed. During our fast runs, all rails and fittings, even those in the vicinity of the outboards, remained dry and free of water.

All Rounder

It's easy to regard the PartyCat as much an all round boat as a party cruiser. While that is quite correct, it's not to diminish in any way her role as a boat set up to make on-water entertainment as easy as possible. Certainly, this well appointed and thoughtfully finished craft will do a sterling job of taking thirteen folk plus the skipper out for fun

Striping and graphics on the topsides add to the smart appearance of the PartyCat. You can see the raised driving position aft of the mini-cabin that contains a toilet.

times. As well, a family man who wants to spend as much time as possible on the water with his wife and children will find the craft's versatility very tempting.

As owner Carl Noyes put it, "To get this amount of living space in a boat on the one level, you need to look at a forty footer, and maybe even larger".

THE NUMBERS

PowerCat PartyCat 7.60

Length:	7.60 metres
Beam:	2.60 metres
Deadrise:	28 degrees
Draft:	0.35 metres (engines up)
Fuel:	300 litres
Water:	80 litres
Power:	Twin outboards 45 to 86 kW (60 to 115 hp)
Power as tested:	Twin Yamaha 4-strokes 86 kW (115 hp) each
Speeds:	18 kph at 2,500 rpm 36 kph at 3,500 rpm 48 kph at 4,500 rpm 67 kph at 5,700 rpm
Price from:	\$76,750 with twin 60 hp Yamaha 4-strokes
Price as tested:	\$110,382 including options and extras

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Smooth performance

POWER Cat

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