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169 January / February 2020

WORLD

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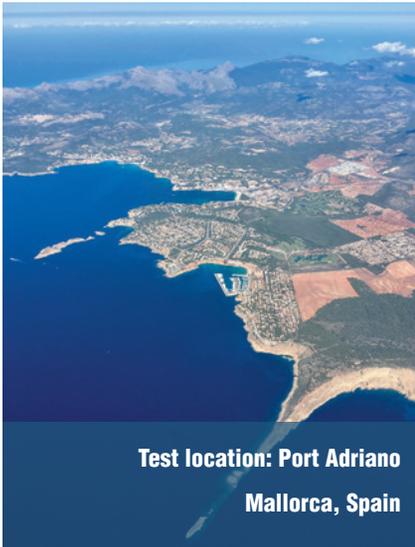


Excess 12

REDISCOVERING THE JOY OF SAILING!

Announced a little over a year ago now, the new Excess catamaran brand have just presented their first two models, the 12 and the 15.

And it's the former we are unveiling here. A new concept more focused on performance and the pleasure of sailing, but without denying any comfort: does the Excess 12 live up to her promises?



Test location: Port Adriano
Mallorca, Spain

Wind: 10 to 17 knots from the southwest
Sea state: Slight

say that these two catamarans have been much-awaited! The simple fact that the Bénéteau Group, world leader in yachting, is launching a new multihull brand, this is an event in itself. First, we need to understand their choice: Lagoon occupies almost half of the market, so why try this bet? Precisely because Lagoon can hardly do better, according to marketing experts... hence the idea of offering more performance-oriented catamarans under another brand, designed to attract an audience directly from the monohull and/or younger audience, who are water-sports enthusiasts. Let's be clear from the outset, the Lagoon team has been in charge of the project. And as we will see later, many elements of the Excess 12 have been borrowed from the Lagoon 40. On the other hand, the distribution network is different.

A shorter nacelle and twin helm stations

Moored side by side in Cannes, the Excess 12 and the Lagoon 40 have two clear differences: the new model adopts a shorter nacelle and has twin helm stations - one on each hull. As for everything else, the Excess

The first two Excess catamarans were presented to the public for the very first time at the Cannes Yachting Festival; it would be fair to

remains faithful to the aft-set rigging and the self-tacking jib. Many elements are common to both models, starting with the mold for the hulls and the underside of the nacelle, and - in part - the deck mold. The other two molds, those for the outboard topsides, are new. They have a pronounced rib and a more pronounced shear. The design of the coachroof is also new. Compared to the Lagoon 40, the Excess is a little lighter and carries more canvas - in the Pulse Line version. At Port Adriano, in southwest Mallorca, we were able to try out the same model as was on show at Cannes. That being a fully-loaded Excess 12 - air conditioning, generator, electric winches, asymmetric spinnaker, gennaker, etc. The engines on this boat are 45 hp, compared to 29 as standard.

Boosted by the Pulse Line rig

These two higher-powered engines are pretty quiet and make dock maneuvering even easier: turning by inverting the throttles is even more straightforward. At cruising speed, you can reach 7/8 knots without pushing it. The electric controls are brought back to each helm station - everything would be perfect if the system for switching control from one station to the other was more intuitive, and therefore faster. With a selection of electric winches at our disposal, hoisting the mainsail is merely a formality. Sail maneuvers are divided into three areas: starboard side of the cockpit, port side of the cockpit and the aft beam for the two





From 15 knots of wind, the Excess 12 holds a good course upwind.

mainsheets. A network of trunking leads the halyards and other lines from the mast foot to the cockpit clutches. Everything works perfectly, but the two rigid parts of the bimini hide the sail plan: you need to move yourself outside to see what you're doing. Close-hauled, it's difficult to expect better than 55 to 60° off the wind if it's less than 10 knots. The official GPS verdict: 5 knots at 50° off the wind, but already 6 knots at 60°. The Excess 12 prefers a slightly stronger wind for a more precise tacking. From 15 knots of wind, this peaks at 55° and speed stabilizes 7 knots. Provided the sea is not too choppy - the ease of the Excess 15 (full test to appear in the magazine very soon) which is very close to us, shows that the length, and this is even truer under load, is definitely THE number one performance factor! Note: most of the heavier equipment - tanks and batteries, etc. - of the Excess are well centered. Tacking the boat is a simple affair: the Excess 12 pivots straight round onto

the other tack, without you needing to touch the sheets. Hoisting the gennaker is equivalent to triggering a turbo: 8 knots speed is quickly exceeded. With the large asymmetric spinnaker, thanks to a coastal effect, we're touching 9 knots. Here, we taste a real feeling of sliding through the water. A check of the polars shows that the Pulse Line rig, with its 5% greater sail area, offers an average gain of 0.3 knots under almost all conditions. There's always a price to pay, but this gap remains smaller than that of the folding propellers vs. standard fixed propellers. Take note, readers...

An opening bimini for the cockpit!

The helmsman, usually positioned to windward, is in for a treat: the helm is precise and the view of the sail plan and across the water is only partially masked by the coachroof. A mini bimini provides protection against the most vertical rays of the sun - and rain if the wind isn't too strong. And there's a folding seat system: sitting there, you are well sett-

led - and even in pairs since the seats are 1.50 m (5') long - especially since footrests are provided. The hinges are a bit aggressive, have some play and the backs fold down on their own when downwind - little things which need improving. The strong point of the cockpit, in addition to its very large surface area, is its opening bimini: a large canvas acts as a soft top. The ease of installation could be improved, but the pleasure of sailing «open top» when the conditions allow it is undeniable. An (excellent) idea inspired by the Sense monohull range. Access to the boom remains possible from the sides of the bimini, without resorting to acrobatics. As an option, the manufacturer offers a set of canopies to fully enclose the cockpit. The same goes for the helm stations. The exterior table measures 160 by 55 cm (5'3" x 22"). The rear seat is 175 cm (5'9") long. The coachroof has a recess on the outboard edge, which acts as a handrail. Access to the large trampolines is therefore perfectly safe - especially since nowhere is the width of the side-decks less than 65 cm (26").



A cheerful and functional interior

The entrance to the nacelle, like the Lagoons, isn't giving in to the 'Open' trend: the glazing aft, yes, but the flush-decked entrance remains traditional with 62 cm (24") width at the bottom and 140 (4'7") at the top. The headroom is generous, at 2.10 m (6'11"). Although shallower than the Lagoon 40, the nacelle retains a beautiful volume with a 116 x 74 cm (3'10"x 30") saloon table and a nav station facing athwartships - the top measures 84 x 58 cm (33"x23). The L-shaped galley is very complete and well equipped with storage space. You can choose an additional refrigerator or freezer and even a multifunctional display tucked away in a cabinet. The port hull of our test model is dedicated to the owner - large, easily accessible bed, desk, storage space, bathroom. The starboard hull accommodates two cabins. All are well ventilated by three opening hatches aft, and two at the front. The Excess is available with four cabins and two bathrooms or four - the latter version will be perfect for charter but sacrifices some of the width of the forward berths. Inside, the abundant light, the cheerful fabrics and the light woodwork are pleasant: you get a good feeling on

board. Several ambiances are available - Work hard, play hard; Less is More and Fast and Curious. All with a nod to the modern and connected clientele...

Conclusion

The Excess 12 undoubtedly offers more pleasure under sail than a Lagoon 40. Take the helm and feel the wind, glance at the telltales: we love it! This catamaran is also more elegant on the water with her shorter nacelle and more measured freeboard forward. However, the performance, even with the Pulse Line rig, doesn't provide a spectacular bonus. But let's not forget that our test model was significantly burdened by the many options. As for the price: it may seem higher at first sight than the Lagoon 40... but the Excess comes standard with many almost indispensable features - square-topped mainsail, davits, 220V system, battery charger etc. - Congratulations are due for the spirit of the interior layout: simpler, but just as comfortable. I'll bet that the character of the Excess brand will come into its own with the forthcoming models - the 11 is due to be presented at Düsseldorf.



THE DESIGNER'S POINT OF VIEW

By *Bruno Belmont*



“With every model change, there’s been an increase in comfort. And competitors who have been keeping an eye on us. The niche represented by the Nautitech 40, for example, seemed interesting to us. The Excess project started almost four years ago. With this new range of catamarans, we want to talk more about enjoyment than performance. In other words, a beautiful object, well-suited to former monohullers... who no longer sail. A fun and exciting catamaran to helm, with a view of the sails and the water, and direct access to sail controls. For this first-generation Excess, we remain fairly consistent: the size of the bunks doesn’t change but a cupboard will replace a set of drawers. We’re in the launch phase, and we’re taking advantage of a very favorable period: we are kind of looking at our specifications from 20 years ago again with good perspective... but if the market response is really good, we’ll suggest more radical catamarans. The production run of initial models is 5/6 years on average compared to 7/8 thereafter. So, with VPLP, we are already looking toward the second-generation Excess with much finer hulls and deeper keels. After all, we do come from the racing world!”



1/ Inspired by the rigs of offshore racing trimarans, the Excess 12 features a very aft-set mast.

2/ The Excess 12's nacelle, significantly shorter than the Lagoon 40's, shows off a very successful silhouette.

3/ The side-decks are so wide that the yard has moved the stanchions inboard; the slot in the coachroof provides an excellent hand-hold. As for the foredeck and trampolines, they are suitable for both relaxing and downwind sail handling.

4/ The cockpit, very large, can be seen in the central part. Each hull is equipped with a helm station.

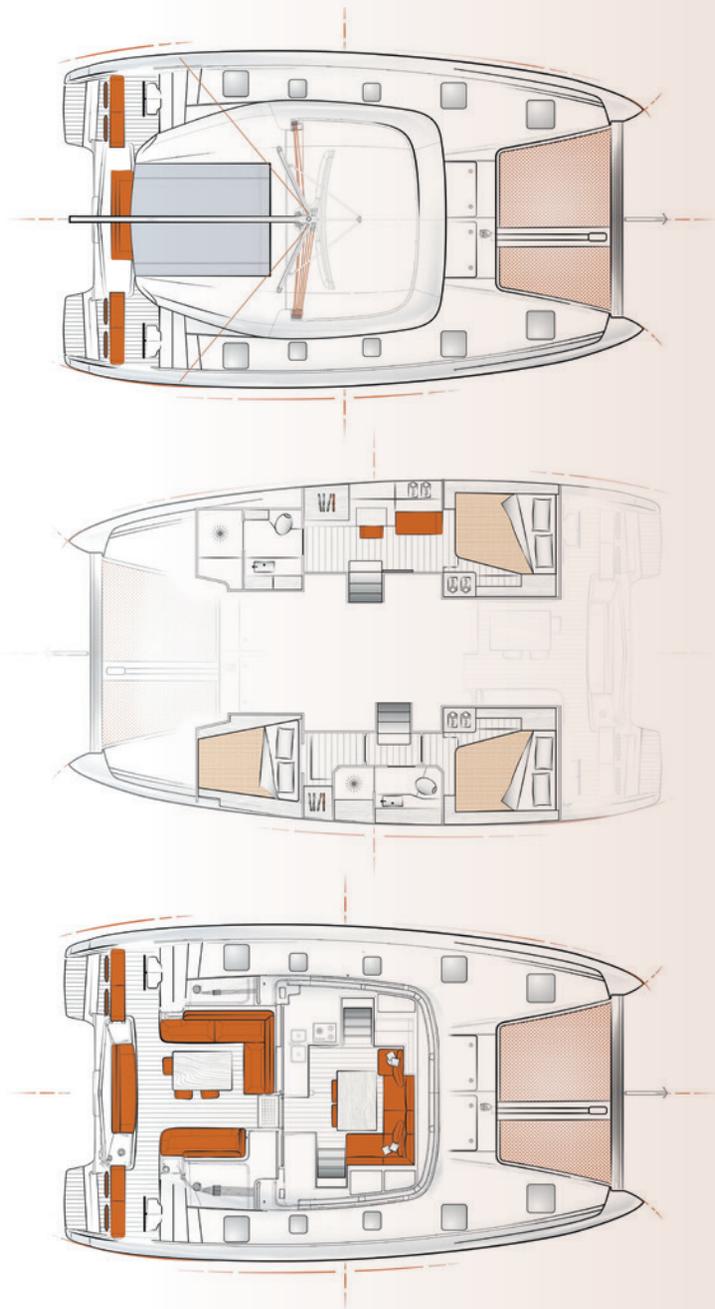
5/ The corners of the bimini mask the sailplan from the maneuvering positions: you need to lean outboard to see.

6/ The nacelle houses a large L-shaped galley, a saloon and a chart table set athwartships.

7/ The berths in the aft cabins - in this case the owner's, on the port side - are accessible from the floor on the inboard side.

8/ The nav station, oriented athwartships, offers an excellent view of the water.

Our test model was the three-cabin version - the port hull is dedicated to the owner.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Builder: Excess Catamarans

Architect: VPLP

Exterior design: Patrick Le Quément

Interior design: Nauta Design

Overall length: 11.73 m (38'6")

Hull length: 11.46 m (37'7")

Width: 6.73 m (22'1")

Draft: 1.35 m (4'5")

Standard air draft: 18.27 m (59'11")

Displacement: 10.3 t (22,700 lbs)

Sail area: 82/87 m² (880/940 sq ft)

Mainsail: 50/52 m² (540/560 sq ft)

Self-steering jib: 32/35 m² (345/375 sq ft)

Code 0: 67/75 m² (720/810 sq ft)

Motorization: 2 x 29 or 2 x 45 HP

Fuel: 2 x 200 l (2 x 53 US gal)

Water: 300 l (80 US gal)

Price excluding tax: € 311,000€

Main options ex-tax:

Pulse Line version: € 17,950

Additional for 40.2 starboard aft electric winch instead of the standard: € 2,950.

Code 0 fittings with pole and furler: € 5,282

Code 0 mylar standard sail plan: € 7,400

Code 0 mylar Pulse Line: € 8,096

Raymarine electronics pack: € 3,500

Canvas opening bimini: € 5,554

2nd helm seat to port: € 2,850

Aft cockpit sole + sugarscoops in synthetic teak: € 6,272

Additional for large teak table: € 820

Forward pulpit and composite seat with front guardwires: € 1,041

12V Refrigerator 40L (1.4 cu ft) in the cockpit: € 1,294

Carbon passerelle 2.60 m (8'6") folding with cover + 2 brackets: € 2,750

2 x 45 HP motors: € 4,943

Electric controls for motors at the helm stations: € 9,280

Three-bladed folding propellers: € 2,420

Panda generator 9kVA 230V/50Hz + cocoon: € 20,294

AGM batteries instead of standard acid batteries: € 697

Inverter 12/230V - 2kVA: € 2,850

Solar panels on davits (4X120W): € 8,160

CL290 dinghy pack with Yamaha 10HP outboard: € 7,750

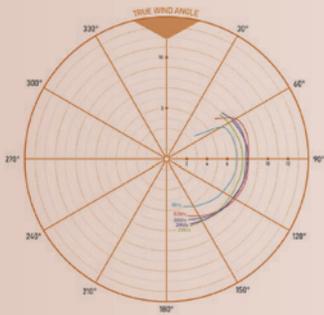
Price of the model we tested: € 493,543 ex-tax

- 😊 ♦ Pleasure at the helm
- ♦ Openable cockpit
- ♦ Self-tacking jib

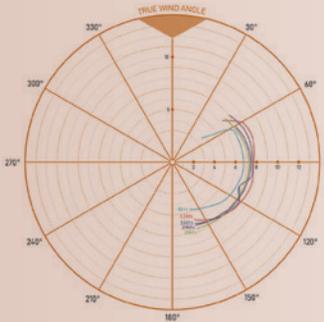
- ☹️ ♦ Lack of visibility of the sailplan from the maneuvering areas
- ♦ Perfectible folding helm seats
- ♦ Not easy to switch control of the engines from one helm station to the other

COMPETITORS

MODEL	Leopard 40	Lagoon 40	Lucia 40	Nautitech 40 Open	Bali 4.1
BUILDER	Robertson/Caine	Lagoon	Fountaine Pajot	Nautitech	Catana Group
UPWIND SAIL AREA	95.9 m ² / 1030 sq ft	81.3 m ² / 875 sq ft	95 m ² / 1,025 sq ft	91 m ² / 980 sq ft	106 m ² / 1,140 sq ft
WEIGHT IN T / LBS	9.3 / 20,500	10.8 / 23,800	9.5 / 20,985	8.5 / 18,740	8.9 / 19,620
BASIC PRICE	€319,000	€272,500	€306,962	€308,900	€323,700



PULSE LINE



STANDARD

The Pulse Line version guarantees performance that is 0.3 knots higher on all points of sail.

The Pulse Line version, with its higher mast, increases the sail area by up to 5m² (54 sq ft).

The aft-set mast improves weight centering and allows you to take advantage of a large-area self-tacking jib.

The openable bimini is a success: in appropriate conditions, sailing uncovered is most enjoyable.

From either side, the helmsman enjoys a clear view of the water and the sails.

The coachroof of the Excess 12 is significantly shorter than that of the Lagoon 40.

The two outer hull molds have a marked rib and inverted deck shear.

The sturdy fixed skegs limit the draft to 1.35 m / 4'5".

Sail control is divided between three zones - mid-area port side of the cockpit, mid-area starboard and aft for the two mainsheets.

Wide and uncluttered, the side-decks offer easy and safe access to the trampolines.

Standard engines are 29 HP, with 45 HP as an option.

