



Allures 45: Heavy Mettle

This aluminum French 45-footer is a versatile, long-range offshore voyager.

BY JIMMY CORNELL

FOR 13 YEARS I OWNED *AVENTURA III*, an aluminum centerboard yacht aboard which I sailed 70,000 nautical miles, so I can say from experience that I believe this type of boat comes closest to my ideal cruiser. First, aluminum hulls are strong and easily maintained. Second, the centerboard provides the advantages of shallow draft while enhancing downwind sailing performance. But yacht design and construction have greatly evolved since *Aventura III* was built in 1998, something I came to realize while aboard the new Allures 45 at the 2010 Paris Boat Show. Several months later, I accepted an invitation to visit the Allures yard in Cherbourg, France, and take the 45 for a test sail.

As we cast off the lines from the boat's tight berth, it responded so well that there was no need to use the bow thruster. I was unsure of the efficacy of the twin rudders, so once we reached the outer harbor, I did several maneuvers with the board down to see how the boat performed at slow speeds both ahead and astern. Control was outstanding, and it remained so when I repeated the drill with the board up, which wouldn't have been the case when motoring my previous boat, *Aventura III*, which I sold last year.

The day's light, fluky wind was actually a bonus for testing the boat's performance. Cutter rigs, in my opinion, are the ideal configuration for cruising boats, and I found the solent jib and staysail arrangement, backed by an efficient, fully battened mainsail, to be a perfect combination. The swept-back spreaders on the 9/10ths fractional rig also seemed suited to this relatively light-displacement boat with a healthy ballast-to-displacement ratio. The 45 certainly sailed well and, thanks to its deep, 10-foot centerboard, behaved no differently from a keeled yacht. As we heeled in a gust, the leeward rudder did all the work, and the boat tracked straight as an arrow. To improve performance, both the water and fuel tanks are equipped with transfer pumps to shift the "liquid ballast" to windward, a feature that will surely appeal to performance-minded sailors.

Allures' innovative composite superstructure provides an aesthetically pleasing coachroof, an ergonomically shaped cockpit, and the opportunity to fit out the interior of the boat before it's bonded to the hull.

When you step down into the saloon, natural light pours through the large, molded roof and side windows and is enhanced by the honey-colored cherry woodwork and pastel upholstery. There are several optional layouts, the most popular of which is the three-cabin/two-head arrangement with the master cabin forward. Those planning a longer voyage with a small crew might prefer the two-

LOA	45' 8"	(13.98 m.)
LWL	40' 5"	(12.35 m.)
Beam	14' 6"	(4.43 m.)
Draft (board up)	3' 5"	(1.05 m.)
(board down)	9' 8"	(3.00 m.)
Sail Area	1,076 sq. ft.	(100 sq. m.)
Ballast (cast iron)	9,479 lb.	(4,300 kg.)
Displacement	26,015 lb.	(11,800 kg.)
Ballast/D	.36	
D/L	175	
SA/D	19.6	
Water	145 gal.	(550 l.)
Fuel	145 gal.	(550 l.)
Holding	12 gal.	(45 l.)
Mast Height	65' 6"	(20 m.)
Engine	Volvo D2 55CV	
Designer	Berret Racoupeau/Darnet	
Price	\$400,158	

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cabin layout, in which the portside aft cabin serves as a utility room that could hold a washing machine, freezer, workbench, storage, and one or two folding-cot bunks.

Despite the many changes that recent years have delivered in contemporary boat design and construction, I remain convinced that the most important features by which to judge the suitability of a long-distance cruising boat for an offshore voyage are safety, comfort, and performance. The Allures 45 passed my test with flying colors.

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