

When form meets function



The Ferretti 870 turns a sporty day into an awesome high-seas adventure. By Dag Pike

COURTESY FERRETTI YACHTS

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he wind was blowing close to gale force, and there was considerable doubt about the wisdom of going to sea. But the blow was off the land and starting to die away. It was close to sunset so we gave it a try. The result was one of the best sea trials I've had for a long time. It was exciting to put the Ferretti 870 through a challenging test and rewarding because she came through it with flying colors. This yacht showed me that she can cope with the rough stuff.

It started with the ZF steering. This differential steering system is designed to reduce the heeling of the hull when it's turned at speed. With this setup the inboard rudder is turned according to the helm requirements, but the outboard one turns only a few degrees in the same direction. The reasoning behind it is that the deeper inboard rudder does most of the work when turning while the outboard rudder primarily generates lift, which is what causes the yacht to heel. It may seem like a small detail, but it certainly works and produces a more comfortable and controllable turn.

This variation in rudder angle can be achieved with modern "fly by wire" steering systems. The ZF system also offers feeling in the wheel. Let go of the helm in a turn and it will return gently to amidships, just like the old days when there was a direct link between rudder and wheel. Having feel in the wheel certainly adds to the pleasure of driving this yacht.

Her cleverness is not limited to steering. So many yachts that I sea trial have poor visibility from the lower helm, but Ferretti fitted the 870 with a wide central windscreen featuring

slim mullions so you can get a clear picture of what is going on outside. When your 87-foot yacht speeds along at just north of 30 knots, it helps to have a clean view of where you're heading.

As we motored out of the harbor at Cannes, France, a considerable swell and seas of four to six feet unceremoniously greeted us. The 870 eased through these waves and gradually built up speed as we came into the lee of the land. Running flat out in these conditions, this lady revealed performance that was much more exhilarating than you might expect from what looks like a comfortable, even sedate, motoryacht. She easily cruised at just a hair under 25 knots in these challenging seas.

Although my test vessel was equipped with gyrostabilizers, they



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RPM	KNOTS	GPH	dB(A)
800	8.7	13.2	58
1000	10.2	17.8	58
1400	13.6	25.8	60
1600	17.8	48.2	61
1800	20.2	82.3	61
2000	24.2	114.3	66
2200	27.8	141.5	68
2450	31.0	192.4	72

TEST CONDITIONS: Speeds were measured by GPS on the waters off Cannes, France, in four- to six-foot seas with a 25-knot wind, with 50 percent fuel, 50 percent water and six persons aboard. Fuel consumption was provided by the boatbuilder. Sound levels were measured at the helm with doors and windows closed.

LOA: 87'5"
BEAM: 20'6"
DRAFT: 6'5"
DISPL.: 149,914 lb. (light)
FUEL: 1,955 gal.
WATER: 349 gal.
DEADRISE: 12 degrees
ENGINES (tested): 2 x 1,948 hp
 MTU V-12 2000 M94 diesels
BASE PRICE: Upon request

This yacht's owner can enjoy the view out of the master stateroom's massive vertical windows (right). Opposite: There is quick and easy access to the big MTU diesels and the filters on centerline (top). The Ferretti 870's salon's sofas are made of buttery-soft white leather. Note the abundant natural light via the elongated side windows (bottom).

were not engaged during this sea trial, so we could not test their effectiveness. There was some rolling when we set beam-to the waves that the stabilizers would have likely neutralized. The movement of the yacht was comfortable with very limited slamming, and using the tabs calmed any pitching motion. Her hull has 12 degrees of deadrise aft, which is typical for this class of yacht, and combined with the fine entry gives adequate cushioning in head seas. It felt like driving a sport boat rather than a luxuriously appointed motoryacht.

The 870's 1,948-horsepower MTU diesels are well tamed when maneuvering in the marina. But if you prefer, a trolling valve can be used to provide even more subtle maneuvering. The torque of the motors, combined with a bow thruster, offers all the control needed. There is also a control panel in the after cockpit for use when mooring stern-to.



Ferretti has stuck to convention with a straight-shaft and propeller system linking those big MTUs. Her engine room is pristine, clinical white. Across the forward end of the engine compartment is the deep fuel tank, which creates a sound barrier between the engines and accommodations. (The sound levels, just 66 db(A) at cruise speed, are impressively low.)

The designers have separated out most of the auxiliary gear

from the main engines and put them in what they call the systems area. This is where you find the generators, watermaker and air-conditioning handlers. And the crew cabins are located in this area for instant access. With a side door to the galley and wheelhouse at main deck level, the crew can carry out their duties without impinging on the guests.

These guest areas are wonderful too. Large windows in the salon let in plenty of natural light, and the bulwark height has been reduced in the area of the dining table so that there is a great view outside when seated. The well-equipped galley is just forward of this dining table so that food can be served hot from the stove, and forward from the galley a door leads into the wheelhouse, where there is a corner table and settee that could be a breakfast nook or possibly a crew mess room.

The after section of this yacht's salon is all luxury, with white-leather settees set around a coffee table, facing the retractable TV on the starboard side. There are bar facilities in lockers below that TV. A sliding door provides access to a generous cockpit, where there is a small bar counter in the corner and a dining table matched to the transom settee. A flying-bridge overhang offers guests abundant sun protection when in the cockpit.

The after end of that flying bridge has space for tender stowage. Forward, close under the arch mast, there is a hot tub, a



The 870's lower helm (above) offers excellent sight lines and came in quite handy on test day as winds exceeded 25 knots and seas hit six feet. Her amidships master (below) spans the full 20-foot-6-inch beam. The en suite head just abaft the berth sports double sinks. That hot tub is the flying bridge's entertainment centerpiece (right). An upper helm is set forward and to port. Her exterior lines are as contemporary as her interior design (below right).



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table and seating with a barbecue counter on the starboard side. Here there is a double grill, ice maker and fridge, which makes the spot a great open-air living area. Ferretti offers an optional fixed Bimini with an opening center to provide sun shelter. At the forward end, there is a reverse-angle windscreen that gives some wind shelter at the portside helm.

From up top, there are internal stairs down to the single-seat lower helm and then another stairway down to the staterooms. The amidships master is a haven of peace and quiet with stunning

views out of the large side windows. The Danish owner of this 870 was enthralled by these deep windows and told me during the test that he spent much of the time at sea in this cabin. The after end of the master has a nearly full-width head with double sinks, and a walk-in closet occupies the remainder of this space.

Forward of here is a double guest cabin to port, a twin cabin to starboard and a forepeak VIP. Each stateroom features en suite heads with marble countertops and wooden decks. The level of opulence is generous. Throughout the accommodations, the styling of the 870 has been kept fairly neutral. Off-white paneling gives a feeling of space and is matched to wood trim that adds to the high-end feel.

My test vessel was luxurious yet playful — literally. With the tender stowed up top, Ferretti has used the garage space to create a “beach” area. You can stow a PWC, dive gear and more here.

Ferretti’s 870 is a masterpiece of detailing. You can sense how this design has evolved from its builder’s many years of experience, and she’s something of a chameleon. Though she looks at first glance as though the accent is totally on comfort rather than performance, the 870 can push through weather and big water and is also an agile performer.

She may catch your eye with her style, but she will hold it with her substance. **Y**

Ferretti Yachts, +39 0543 787511; ferretti-yachts.com

