

## ON TEST

# APHRODITE 51

*Swedish boatbuilders Aphrodite Yachts have produced another thoroughbred in the shape of this new flagship. We sailed her in Sweden*

**W**ith the two yards that build the Aphrodite and Najad ranges sited at Henån and Hallberg-Rassy not far away at Ellös – all three on the island of Orust, a short drive from Gothenburg – this part of Sweden must be considered the country's centre for the building of high quality cruising yachts.

The trend towards larger production yachts continues; the Aphrodite 51 is Aphrodite Yachts' new flagship. We enjoyed sailing and motoring her among the islets that pepper the west coast of Orust and, by making judicious use of the twin engine installation, were able to thread our way with complete confidence into – and out of – what seemed at first to be impossible corners.

Moderately tall topsides, relatively short ends and a row of rectangular ports just below the rail characterise the yacht, as does the seven-panel windshield that wraps round the forward end of the pleasantly deep centre cockpit. The retrousse transom is deeply indented to accept an effective bathing

platform. This platform has been provided with a folding boarding ladder which reaches deep into the water when deployed.

A warm off-white gelcoat for both hull and deck mouldings is set off by a striking mulberry boot-top, sheer stripe and style line along each side of the superstructure.

As standard, the yachts are built as cutters, but we sailed the cutter-headed ketch option which costs an additional £3,500 ex VAT.

### Accommodation

Access to the saloon from the cockpit is particularly easy, as the companion has a gentle slope. There are plenty of handholds. The main living area is traditionally laid out and welcoming. Headroom is a lofty 7ft 4in (2.2m).

A large, leather-covered settee wraps round the cabin table to port of the passage through to the forward sleeping accommodation and there is a pair of swivel easy chairs just forward of the chart table on the starboard side.

We found these comfortable, but they fouled the cabin forward bulkhead and the chart area bulkhead when revolved.

All interior joiner work is in well-matched African mahogany and finished to a very good standard. Strangely, the saloon is lit solely by bulkhead-mounted swivel reading lights; there is no general lighting fitted beneath the deckhead. The usual striped teak and holly sole runs throughout the accommodation. This is complemented by a deckhead lining of planked appearance; a softer treatment here would improve the atmosphere.

A narrow door in the cabin forward bulkhead closes off an equally narrow passage leading to the double-berthed forecabin. The forecabin is closed off by a sliding door. There is plenty of stowage here and the berth is 6ft 9in (2.0m) from head to toe. Headroom is 6ft 4in (1.9m).

A second sliding door in the port side of the passage gives access to a small guest cabin with two tiered berths. Access to the upper berth is not too easy and there is limited hanging space.

The head/shower on the starboard side of the passage serves the forward accommodation and is the main head for the yacht; the head at the after end of the yacht is strictly en suite with the owner's cabin. Stowage for toiletries is rather limited. Two opening ports provide ventilation.

The navigating station contains a large chart table which is set rather high. There is plenty of room for instruments



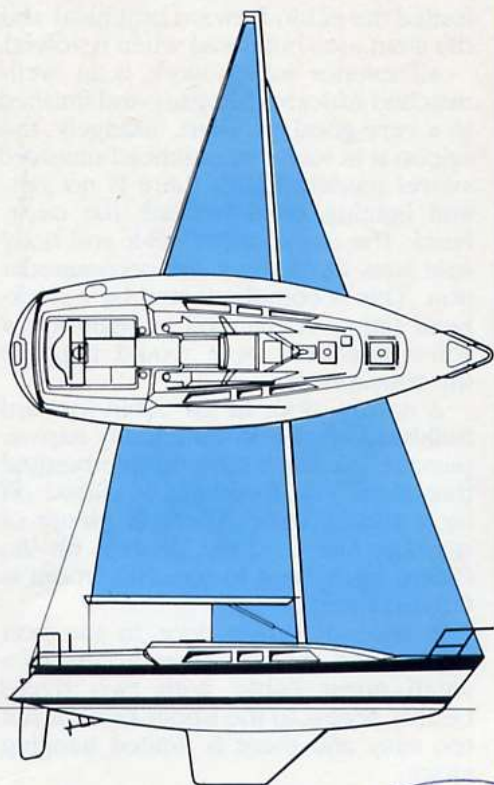
*Barrelling along under full ketch rig among the islands off the west coast of Orust, in Sweden*



*Top, the large chart table and abundant stowage round the navigating station. Above, the windlass is sited inside the anchor locker*



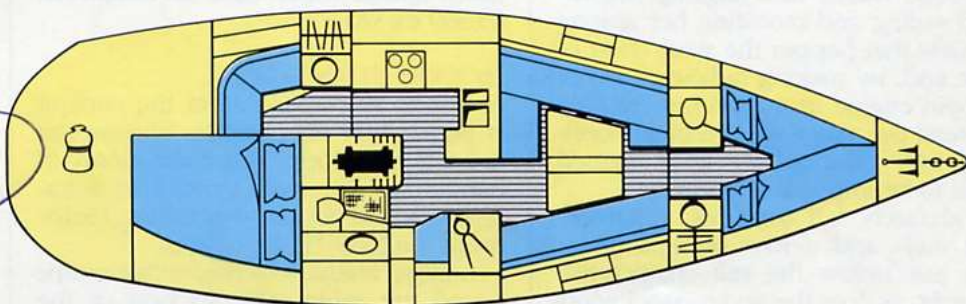
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*Storage in the galley is generous and there is plenty of worktop area. The stainless steel rail is to be stood off a little more*



## Construction

Both hull and deck are fair and have excellent panel stiffness. The deck is particularly nicely detailed – the companion, hatch garage and the garages over the control lines are well executed. The Typhoon is built in conditions of closely controlled temperature and humidity and each hull receives a Lloyds Hull Construction Certificate. A double isophthalic gelcoat is applied to the exterior of the hull and also to the interior from sheer to just above the waterline. Isophthalic resin is also used when applying the first layer of mat. Both transverse and longitudinal top hat stiffening over a foam core are used to strengthen the hull shell. A cast iron keel is attached with stainless steel studs through adequately thick plate washers and secured with double lock nuts. The plumbing is double-clipped to skin fittings throughout.

## Under power and sail

The yacht was driven by a Volvo 2003 developing 28hp (20.86kW). It threw a 20 x 17in (508 x 432mm) two-bladed propeller, driving through a 3:1 gear-

box. Unusually, the combined throttle and shift was on the port cockpit coaming just above the engine control panel. If fitted on the starboard coaming, this would have intruded into the after cabin. The stop lever was recessed into the base of the helmsman's seat, also on the port side. Handling under power was satisfactory and the yacht could be brought to rest from full ahead within her own length. A maximum speed of 7.4 knots was achieved at 2,900rpm which is a little down on the theoretical hull speed of 7.56 knots. There seemed to be some propeller thrash at high cruising revs which caused vibration and additional noise in the after cabin. Under sail, the yacht proved to be fast on all points and was dry. She tacked through 77° in the moderate conditions that prevailed for our test. The primary winches on the after ends of the coachroof were well sited.

The four-part mainsheet worked well enough on the track running the full width of the cockpit just ahead of the wheel pedestal. Here it can be handled by the helmsman or by a member of the crew further forward. When the mainsheet car is let right down the track, on

either tack, it fouls the lids of the cockpit lockers, making it impossible to open them until the car is drawn clear. An adjustment would resolve this problem. The yacht tracks well, but in fresh air seems to carry a lot of wheel when the apparent wind is anywhere forward of the beam. (Perhaps that rig ought to be more upright.) The rudder is well counterbalanced to give a pleasantly light feeling on the helm even when plenty of rudder is applied.

## Specification and conclusion

In standard trim, the Typhoon 37 is supplied with self-tailing winches and a twin-groove headstay foil. There is adequate ground tackle, two mooring warps and six fenders.

The galley is provided with a Camping Gaz cylinder and the sinks are served by hot and cold pressure water. The galley equipment also includes a refrigerated icebox. This yacht really does combine performance with cruising comfort. She will be fun to drive with a full racing crew, but equally satisfying to sail short-handed. ■