

YACHTING
MONTHLY
Tested

Aventura 28

Mike Kopman almost flies a hull on this fast French catamaran – but would she be suitable for family cruising?

Catamarans are becoming increasingly popular as cruising boats, offering more space and speed potential than you will find on most monohulls of the same length. Built by Go Catamarans in La Rochelle, the Aventura 28 is designed to be simple and quick, with the emphasis firmly on sailing enjoyment with accommodation of the no-frills, functional variety.

Design

From the dock, the Aventura looks like a sprightly performer. The bows are absolutely plumb and knife-like, with a fine entry and slightly hollow sections. The hulls are narrow and symmetrical, with low-aspect stub keels. On top of each hull is a low, wedge-shaped coachroof. An open cockpit lies between the two, a large sprayhood providing protection. The rig is not particularly lofty, yet looks powerful enough for the skittish craft beneath it.

What was immediately obvious was the lack of rake in the mast. In contrast to the markedly aft-raked masts seen on other modern cats, the Aventura's stands straight up. Fractionally rigged, it is supported by diamond stays on aft-raked spreaders, a single set of shrouds and a single forestay. A short bowsprit, for the gennaker, extends from the forward crossbeam, which also supports the trampoline.

Three aluminium crossbeams connect the hulls: one aft, along which the mainsheet track runs; one amidships, on which the mast is stepped; and a smaller one forward that carries the forestay and

bowsprit attachments. There is also a rudimentary bow roller here. The cockpit is simply 'dropped' over the aft and mid beams and bolted down.

On deck

The cockpit is where you will spend most of your time on a boat of this sort, and the Aventura does not disappoint in this area. It is well laid out, comfortable and easy to work. A fixed framework surrounds the area and supports the spray dodger, a bimini and a full cockpit tent if you wish. All sail controls other than the traveller and mainsheet are handled from a series of jammers and two self-tailing Lewmar 30s mounted on a platform immediately aft of the mast. With zero heel, lots of flat workspace and plenty of storage beneath, it feels a bit like working at a desk! There is more stowage space under the seats, and a removable cockpit table for al fresco dining.

Below decks

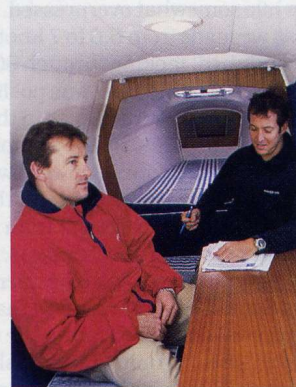
You can't squeeze much accommodation into such narrow hulls, and it would be a mistake to try, as this is contrary to the 'keep it simple' philosophy of fast multihulls. The ends of the hulls are taken up with buoyancy compartments, and there is a lazarette aft in each hull. Accommodation is basic: the hull is unlined (to maximise space) and the woodwork is rudimentary. Not quite pipecotts and a bucket, but creatures seeking comfort may be disappointed. The brochure calls the bunk in the port hull a double and the one in the starboard hull a snug double. However, at 112cm (44in) and 94cm (37in) wide respectively, I'd describe them as a honeymooners' double and a single. The port bunk is wider because it has been moved aft out of the narrow bow sections, allowing for a foredeck locker. Aft of this bunk is a small



The small sink and two-burner stove in the galley



The port hull contains the wider bunk and chart table



The dining area – most will choose to eat in the cockpit

Aventura 28

chart table (you won't be doing any serious passage planning here) and the heads/shower compartment. The starboard hull contains a small galley with a single sink and two-burner gas cooker. Ahead of this is a dining area with a settee that could be used as a short berth and a table that folds against the hull. There's a cool box fitted under here too. Cockpit dining would be preferable. We felt more effort could be made in terms of finish and attention to detail. Admittedly, you don't buy a boat like this for its cosy interior, but it has a distinctly 'home-finished' look in parts.

Under way

On the first day of our test there wasn't a breath of wind, but we headed out into Chichester Harbour to try to find some. With lazyjacks and a Stackpack-type system, hauling up the fully battened main was easy. A few cranks on the winch had it tensioned. There is less roach than on many modern catamarans but it was not lacking in power. The self-tacking jib is equally easy to handle, roller furling being unnecessary on such a small sail. The hank-on system keeps things simple and reduces weight aloft.

Alas, this was all in vain, as there really was no wind, but the two-stroke, long-shaft 8hp Mariner outboard was up to the job of pushing the lightweight cat along at 6 knots without much fuss. This is not the kind of boat you would do a lot of motoring in, but a four-stroke engine would be nice.

A hinged box at the aft end of the cockpit covers the engine, but unfortunately no provision is made for controlling the engine when it is closed – you have to open it to use the controls on the outboard. You would only need to do this when manoeuvring in close quarters, but it is inconvenient and potentially dangerous as there is nothing to hold the lid up, or to stop someone stumbling into the engine well. She is not the easiest boat to get into a tight berth either, but with two shallow hulls and one prop in the middle, it's bound to take some practice.

Day two yielded a chilly 15-20 knots and threatening rain. We headed out with a full main and jib. Speed was steady between 8 and 9 knots on a close reach and she was light and responsive on the helm, imparting a good sensation of speed. Mainsail controls are close to hand, but we would prefer the traveller control on the end of the track rather than on the car, so that the main could be trimmed from here. She was reasonably close-winded, tacking through 85°, but she needs to be kept moving to make good progress to weather – stall her and those shallow-draught keels quickly lose their grip. Like most cats, she needs to be sailed through tacks, but she accelerates quickly when bearing off on the new course. Despite her fine entry she showed little tendency to bury her bows. We did take a few big waves over the trampoline, but more due to punching into a nasty sea over the bar than anything else.

The asymmetrical spinnaker is set from a 'Code Zero'-style furler – you attach the tack to the bowsprit, hoist the rolled sail, then unfurl it – and it's a breeze to handle. The boat really comes alive with this sail up. We saw 15 knots on a broad reach and she was exhilarating to helm. We didn't quite fly a hull but we had the windward rudder clear of the water.

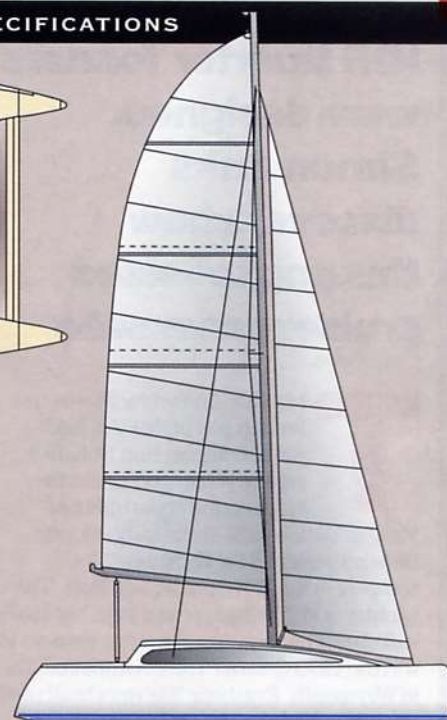
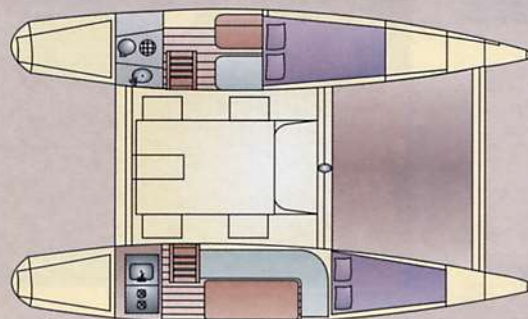
My only complaint was her tendency to develop lee helm with a good breeze from aft of the beam. Not only does it spoil the feel on the helm, but bearing off with the sails sheeted in on a multihull can encourage the leeward bow to dig in, so lee helm can be quite alarming. It may be linked to the rig being too upright, or possibly incorrect toe-in on the rudders. Most owners would not sail her with full main and kite in boisterous conditions, but it is something to be aware of.

As the wind built to around 25 knots we changed back to the jib and put a reef in the main. In 'family mode' she was far more controllable.

Verdict

For the adventurous young family that doesn't plan on going too far and wants a simple boat that is fun to sail, the Aventura fits the bill. It's got enough 'go' to keep speed junkies happy, the accommodation will suffice for the occasional long weekend away and there's a safe, stable platform from which to enjoy it all – and the option of taking the ground. In short, she'll provide a great day out. However, she's not the boat for everyone. Some may see £50,000 as a bit much for 'camping comfort'. But she does go! ▲

AVENTURA 28: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



Specifications

Price inc VAT	£49,995
LOA	8.43m (27ft 8in)
LWL	8.43m (27ft 8in)
Beam (overall)	5.25m (17ft 3in)
Beam (each hull)	1.25m (4ft 2in)
Draught	0.68m (2ft 3in)
Displacement	1,400kg (3,088 lbs)
Sail area	Main: 25m ² (269sq ft) Jib: 15m ² (162sq ft) Gennaker: 54m ² (581sq ft)
Engine	Mariner Sailmate two-stroke long-shaft 6kw (8hp) 10-litre portable fuel tank
Fuel	2 x 50 litres
Water	
RCD Category	B
Designer	GO Catamaran
Builder	GO Catamaran
UK Agent	Multihull World Tel. 01243 377333, www.multihullworld.co.uk email: sales@multihullworld.co.uk

Standard equipment:

Fully battened main, jib and gennaker (on furler) by Incidences
Compass, log, depth and wind instruments
Fenders and warps
Cockpit table
Cockpit tent and bimini
Four bilge pumps (two electric, two manual)
Anchor with chain and warp

Construction:

The hull and deck are formed from female moulds in glass-reinforced polyester foam sandwich. The stub keels are moulded to the hulls but are not integral, so if a keel is damaged the watertight integrity of the hull is not compromised. Buoyancy compartments fore and aft in each hull.

