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FROM SAILING ROUND CAPE HORN TO KITESURF SAFARIS

TESTED: ICE 60

CONCEIVED BY RACING
DRIVER MARCO MALGARA,
THIS 60-FOOTER IS AS
COOL AS ITS NAME

Styles come and go. To stand the test of time you need something else, something more than aesthetics, something that stays with you after that initial heady rush begins to wane.

The Italians have always owned style and there has been something of a revolution in Italian-designed and/or -built boats in recent years. A number of new brands have joined what was an already crowded performance cruiser market – sexy-looking machines that excel in light-wind, warm weather sailing conditions.

These offer the latest in desirable lines with unblemished decks, shallow cockpits and plenty of sunbathing space, tender garages, etc. Grand Soleil and Solaris are the best established in production yard terms, but have been joined by companies such as Italia Yachts, Mylius, and Eleva. ➤

FACTS

Test editor **TOBY HODGES**

- ▶ **Where we tested:** La Spezia, Italy
- ▶ **Wind:** 3–12 knots
- ▶ **Model:** Number one Joy with carbon rig, in-boom furler, Dyneema sails, carbon rudder and skipper cabin



Photos by Andrea Rizzato





- 1 A long, fixed bowsprit includes a neat anchor roller.
- 2 There is a large, deep sail locker with a big hatch and a workbench above the bow thruster
- 3 The mainsail has plenty of roach and furls into a Southern Spars carbon boom.
- 4 Short, low benches and shallow lockers below are typical for this type of design – to suit sailors in balmy conditions.
- 5 There is a six-man liferaft in each quarter and a beamy, spacious, clean aft deck area.

Ice Yachts, with its ravishing new 60-footer, is another fine example, but are we talking style-only or does it have that special something?

Ice is a relatively new brand, but one that uses a tried and tested designer and shipyard. Its boats are drawn by Umberto Felci and built at the former CN Yacht 2000, a 30-year-old yard near Milan, responsible for more than 80 large custom or semi-custom yachts.

Ice Yachts was born out of one sailor's search for a Felci 61 cruiser-racer, eight of which were built by this yard. Marco Malgara fell in love with the outlook of the boatbuilders and the history of the yard, and ended up buying it six years ago and creating Ice Yachts.

The first project was the Ice 62, which used the lines of the original Felci 61 but with slightly more beam and freeboard. The Ice 44, Ice 33 and Ice 52 followed. The latter I have trialled for European Yacht of the Year, enough of a taster to pique my interest in this new Ice 60 when it hit the water earlier this year.

I was intrigued to find out why

Malgara, an accomplished racing driver who has worked in advertising, marketing and the police force and who remains a successful real estate businessman, would want to buy a shipyard and start a new yacht brand.

"I bought it because I couldn't find a yard with the quality I wanted," Malgara explained during two days spent together testing the Ice 60 and visiting his two shipyards near Milan.

"I tried to improve what the good workers already knew very well, adding my knowledge of sailing and building racing cars."

"The difference between something nice and something well done is important," said Malgara, who competed six times in the notorious endurance motorsport event the Paris-Dakar Rally. "When you are in the desert and something goes wrong, you're in the shit... the same applies with boats."

Malgara, a workaholic who lives and drives in the fast lane, "wanted to create a product that was not available. A yacht to be proud of."

Ice 60 features a long waterline and powerful hull shape: a soft chine gives extra beam with minimal drag

The Joy of sailing

In La Spezia I found Joy, 60ft of Ferrari California light blue hull with a lofty carbon rig, blunt stem and bowsprit. The Ice 60's beamy aft sections have a soft, appealing chine/turn to the hull shape and its lines look powerful and, well, Italian.

And I soon discovered that this is a very easily driven yacht. When we started sailing in zephyrs, I was down below, talking to designer Umberto Felci about the secrets to Italian design. The only way I could tell we were silently moving along once sails were hoisted was by detecting a slight heel and seeing the water moving past the hull porthole as we ghosted along at 3 knots.

Weight is a big priority at Ice Yachts; its yachts are built using a resin-infused mix of glass and carbon fibre as standard. The sailing weight of the 60 is just 18.7 tonnes, including anchor and 75m of chain, and it boasts a substantial 220m² of upwind sail area. It's also a structurally stiff boat, with the capacity to take over 1,000lt of water in tanks that are built into the hull and form part of the structure.

At the wheel, I was instantly impressed by how the boat could harness the light conditions. We soon found some puffs of breeze and were clocking over 7 knots upwind in 7-8 knots apparent. Looking at the very high sail area:displacement ratio of 28.9, slippery performance should indeed be expected. With another knot of wind we could squeeze up to 28° to the apparent wind, or make 8 knots in 10 by sacrificing a few degrees.

Unfortunately, the conditions were tricky and unpredictable all day, the breeze shifting all over the place, which made it tough to get a feel for the boat and accumulate accurate figures. We didn't enjoy five minutes of consistent wind all day – at one point I watched the Windex spin round and round as we sailed along under kite.

The upside is that it certainly helped to be aboard a lightweight performance cruiser that could make the most of such fickle conditions, which I'm told are typical for that area.

Joy's carbon rig is one of the last Southern Spars masts to come out



'WE FOUND SOME PUFFS OF BREEZE AND WERE CLOCKING OVER 7 KNOTS'



Above: the wide, flat cockpit suits Med-style cruising
Left: designer Umberto Felci at the helm

It's all in the detail: design of the Ice 60 is beautifully executed



of its South African yard, while Diamond Sails near Livorno built the black Dyneema sails. I'm not sure the colour of the sails nor their stark vertical logo is in keeping with the slick Italian looks, but they serve a marketing purpose.

A fine red gennaker helped us to make the most of the wind and generate some of our own. It was really rewarding to feel that extra bit of power, even if I nearly sailed a full circle on one gybe, trying to match the wind as it boxed the compass.

Boat speed rose to 9 knots, and we were generally making similar figures to the single-digit wind speeds. It felt very light on the wheels, which use direct Jefa steering connection, but the conditions still made it a challenge on the helm and I needed to monitor the numbers rather than rely on feel.

Felci explained that the Ice 60 has a narrow waterline when stationary and that the soft chine gives the benefit of extra beam, but without the drag resistance of a hard chine.

"It's a fight between how much resistance I have and how much power I add," said Felci, a racing sailor who

competed for 20 years in 470s. "The ratio of stability to power is like the relationship of horsepower to wheel width on cars."

As we chatted, we made our way to the west of Portovenere and its stunning cliff-top monastery guarding the shallow entrance, catching the last of the afternoon breeze, which allowed us to sail at 6 knots in 6 knots.

It was as pleasant as it sounds, but the changeable conditions meant performance was hard to gauge. It was like trying to test a premium hybrid bike on a road full of potholes and stop signs.

The quiet 5-cylinder Volvo Penta and Flexofold prop proved a smooth, efficient combination for our return journey, propelling us at 8 knots at 1,900rpm and 10.5 knots maximum.

Designer deck details

I liked the neat design of the twin pedestals, which seem to grow out of the side decks – they are both relatively discreet, yet create enough space for a large plotter and a panel of pushbuttons. The test boat had the latest Raymarine Axiom 12 pro plotters, which looked very

The stern garage is large enough to fit a fully inflated 3.2m tender. A garage is a key feature of Med-based boats, but does eat into accommodation space

much in keeping with the sharp design of the boat. These use Android operating systems, which proved easy and fast to use and customise displays.

There's a nice gap between the pedestal and the cockpit bench for the mainsail trimmer to work the two-speed winch and traveller.

The traveller uses an Antal electric line driver, while the backstay and vang are hydraulically powered.

However, the same crewmember cannot reach the primary winch. Using reversible primary winches with remote controls at the pedestals could be a better solution for those wanting to sail short-handed.

There is no provision for the stowing of sheet tails for the main and genoa, but there is a generous locker by the companionway for the running rigging tail ends. The genoa sheets are led neatly aft underdeck from near the shroud bases.

A surprise for a yacht with such a clean deck and look is that the sheets are then led athwartships to the winches, presenting a trip hazard to those on the side deck. Re-routing of the sheets

alongside the coachroof-to-deck join might present a neater alternative.

A typical Med cockpit provides short benches with low coamings, showing a predilection for looks over comfort. The low backrests mean good cushions will be a must, but the benches are at least wide and the large fixed table is a practical feature.

Simplicity of style

The Ice 60 has a minimalist modern design – think open loft style with lots of natural light, white and beige furnishings and materials – the antithesis of a traditional-style yacht interior. The simplicity of Felci's design grew on me, especially as it is practical for purpose and the finish quality is very good.

Most owners of this type and size of yacht will have a skipper, says Malgara, pointing out the compact single cabin opposite the galley. "It's already an expensive boat and owners don't have much time," he argues.

It's unusual to have a crew cabin in the heart of the boat so close to the owner's cabin (forward), but it's a better solution

to help retain the services of a long-term skipper than the typical shoebox-style forepeak solutions found on many yachts this size (a forepeak berth is offered on the Ice 60 as standard).

A forward galley, a layout Felci uses with Dufour too, is sociable – the Ice 60 has plenty of work surface to prepare food while facing the saloon.

The built-in Siemens oven and induction hobs, as well as a domestic-style fridge-freezer on Joy are reflective of how some of today's owners use this sort of yacht and how they cook and overnight in marinas/port rather than at sea. Stowage space is reasonably good and includes plenty of refrigerated and bin space.

The cabins all have generous stowage, natural light, ventilation and headroom. The navstation shares the after end of a comfortable sofa bench. This daybed is another typical feature on an Italian/Med boat and one that works well on the Ice. The 19cm memory foam mattress provides comfortable lounging or a useful passage berth in the centre of the boat where there is least motion. ➤





Saloon is the epitome of clean Italian style

The companionway has four deep, but flat and slippery steps. There are two sturdy leather-clad handrails each side and two more grab handles further forward, which are very much needed as there is a wide, open space between the saloon table and the navstation.

All heads have good stowage, including wet stowage in the port heads shower area – the addition of shower doors would stop them becoming wetrooms. There is good access from the starboard cabin to the engine/machinery room and 8kW genset, with room enough to climb in or directly access the filters. Latches, lights, switches and general details all look very smart.

The light, open layout helps the owner's cabin feel very roomy. Again it's simple, but practical and well finished. The low island berth, with a large Seasmart hatch above, lifts easily on struts to reveal more stowage space and robust stringers below and there is a generous ensuite heads.

The two aft cabins are similar in style and layout. The double to port boasts a large enough berth to sleep lengthways or athwartships and has its own access to the day heads/shower.

We visited both the former CN Yacht 2000 facility on the outskirts of Milan



Light, airy theme continues in the owner's cabin (above) and aft cabins (above right)

and a second yard nearby into which Ice has moved its catamaran production. Ice launches its boats onto the River Po and floats them down to Ravenna.

Ice in build

The catamaran yard was working flat out on its second model, a 67-footer, reportedly the largest cat yet produced in Italy. This uses a mould extension on the Ice Cat 61, which first launched earlier this year.

The original (CN Yacht 2000) yard is much tidier, if by no means a modern workplace. This typically old-school yard relies on everyone knowing where



everything is and doing his or her job in a time-honoured fashion. It may not be intuitive to witness, but it works and there is a family feel to the place, which is crucial when you need staff to put in the hard yards.

I saw some of the 16 infusions going into the next Ice 52 (number 11). Epoxy infusion is labour-intensive, with 7,200 hours needed for this boat. Hulls and decks of Ice yachts are laminated sandwich infusion, using a glass-carbon fibre composite material, localised carbon reinforcement and a PVC foam core.

As well as the 52 a new raised saloon (RS) version of the 60 is in build too. ■



Our verdict

I thought this yacht would all be about the look and the feel, the famed Italian design touch. But the Ice 60 proved it had something else, something that stayed with me.

Above the flashy looks and minimalist layout, which is squarely aimed at warm weather sailors, there is passion and quality, from the design to the build and finish. The designer has performance in his blood and really cares about the product.

The yard has a classic semi-custom approach born from knowledge and experience. And it is headed up by a passionate leader in love with sailing and speed.

Above all, there is an underlying sense of pride, which shines out of Ice Yachts. It is what the company is formed on and what its owners buy into. And if there's one thing you'd want to have in a €1m new 60ft performance cruiser, it's pride.

Rivals

Grand Soleil 58 Performance

The purity of Italian design – Felci and Nauta collaborated for this sleek cruiser-racer that launched two years ago.

Price ex VAT: €889,000. www.grandsoleil.net



Solaris 58

A fast cruiser with attitude by Soto Acebal – a benchmark in Italian production yacht style.

Price ex VAT: €952,000. www.solarisyachts.com



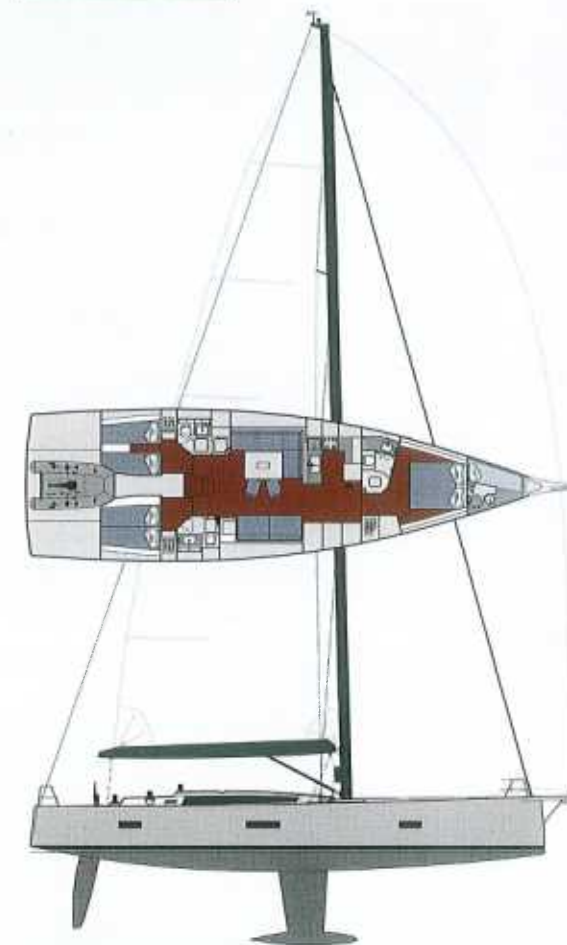
Mylius 60

Full carbon semi-custom yachts, built in Poland and finished in Italy. Fast and dangerously cool, the new 60 launches this summer.

Price ex VAT: POA. www.mylius.it



DATA ICE 60



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	17.99m	59ft 0in
LWL	16.8m	55ft 1in
Beam (max)	5.20m	17ft 1in
Draught	2.85m	9ft 4in
Displacement (lightship)	17,900kg	39,462lb
Ballast	6,100kg	13,448lb
Engine	150hp Volvo Penta	
Fuel	650lt	143gal
Water	1,000lt	220gal
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	194.7m ²	2,096ft ²
Sail Area to displacement ratio	28.9	
Displacement to LWL ratio	105	
Price ex VAT	€960,000 (Test boat €1,301,800)	
Designer	Umberto Felci	

www.iceyachts.it