

SPOTLIGHT

- Lagoon 450 S -



The Lagoon 450 S uses the same 45-foot hull as the original model but has an elevated helm, rather than a flybridge.

PHOTO: KELVIN GREEN

VERY GOOD MANNERS

DEDICATED TO COMFORT AT SEA AND AT ANCHOR, THE SPORTOP VERSION OF THE LAGOON 450 CARRIES ON THE FRENCH BUILDER'S TRADITION WITH FEW BLEMISHES.

Text and photos by Kevin Green



THE LAGOON 450 S IS AIMED SQUARELY at the cruising family that wants a proven catamaran with good offshore capabilities, yet in a manageable size for short-handed sailing as well.

The mid-40 foot range is a particularly competitive category with strong offerings from Nautitech, Outremer, Fountaine Pajot and several others – so Lagoon knew it had to do something special to maintain its number-one ranking. And that's what it's done with the February launch of the 450 SporTop.

The Lagoon 450 SporTop is a variation on the proven 450 hull that has a flybridge, and the deck layout is very similar to the Lagoon 39 I enjoyed sailing two years ago. Both designs incorporate the single helm station into the elevated starboard side of the cockpit, thus the SporTop branding.

On a more practical note this design has the boom 70cm lower than the Flybridge version while retaining the same sail area, thus improving stability for these tall cats. The improvements from the Lagoon 39 are the steps onto the hardtop bimini for easy access to the rig and there's an outboard guardrail arm for safety at the helm – which was not actually fitted on our review boat, hull #10.

The binnacle layout has all sail controls nearby plus a dashboard for the B&G plotter and autopilot screen. The user-friendly B&G sailing software on the plotter gave lay lines and other course directions in a simple to use package.

Also handy is the Simrad Joystick control in the saloon chart table, which works in conjunction with the autopilot. This proved effective even in the confines of the shallow waters around the Gold Coast in Australia while motoring back to the berth.

The large throttle levers and Yanmar engine controls complete a functional dashboard; all nicely sheltered below the hardtop dodger that has tracks for plastic screens, making it ideal for offshore.

Voluminous Saloon

Designers Van Peteghem-Lauriot Prévost say that Lagoons are created from the inside out, to prioritise living space; and critics often add, at the cost of making a boxy shaped exterior. Of course beauty is in the eye of the beholder so you can decide about aesthetics over functionality.



The new Lagoon 450 S is a 45-footer with up to four cabins, making ideal for family occasions.

Whatever way you look at it, this is a very functional catamaran, as I found during my sojourn off the Gold Coast. Stepping into the saloon reveals a huge space for a mid-sized catamaran and the benefits of the blunt exterior are apparent when I study the upright coachroof bulkheads.

These not only add volume but also keep out the harsh tropical sun. Again critics would say the downside is windage, so at anchor you may tend to dodge around, but the benefits are plain to see when you consider the 2.0m plus headroom throughout.

Amenities include a galley facing aft, navigation station forward and the dinette can seat a large family easily around its rectangular table. Regular collaborator Nauta Design has created a saloon with plenty locker space, soft close drawers and overhead cupboards.

The spacious navigation station uses the forward portside corner well, giving the skipper bulkheads for electronics and a full size chart table.

Behind, the U-shaped galley is angled outwards to increase space beside the twin stainless sinks, sunk into the composite worktops which have deep fiddles. Cupboard space above and at waist height is good, with room for a dishwasher and main electrical panel.

Cooking is well taken care of, thanks to a three-burner Eno stove/oven with optional microwave cupboard above. The front opening 130-litre fridge should cope with most of the perishables and food is served through the window to the cockpit diners.

The dinette table and cockpit one are interchangeable; also the saloon one can be lowered on shorter alloy legs to become a useful bed. The Alpi Teak finish is smart but perhaps lends less light than the blonde

version while the CNC machine finishing is smooth, with no gaps spotted during my walk-through.

Solid metal fixings on doors and gas struts on cabinetry impressed me – something I feel earlier Lagoons were lacking.

Twin Owner Suites

This review boat came with an Owner's suite to starboard and twin cabins in the port hullm but an interesting variation can be twin Owner





PHOTOS: LAGOON/NICOLAS CLARIS

suites. With Lagoon's strong presence in the charter market there is also a four-cabin en suite version, plus a crew berth option in the bows, so the 450 S should have wide appeal.

Particularly well done is the spacious Owner's hull with its large elongated bathroom forward and the review boat came with additional cupboards which meant myriad storage for even the longest blue-water trip, something that this catamaran is intended to do.

Other good features Owners can enjoy include slatted mattresses with memory-style foam and a good acreage of sleeping area around the island bed. The desk in the centre of the hull has lots of worktop area as well; and is opposite the glass escape hatches – an essential item on oceangoing cats, as well as a European Union requirement.

For privacy, simply slide the door across the entire hull at night. Large one-way windows add to the seclusion while giving plenty light, plus large opening deck hatches and portlights.

Simple Sail Plan

The alloy rig is a sturdy arrangement with large outboard chain plates on the angled wire shrouds, with a roller furling genoa. Climbing the cockpit stairs takes you to the chest-high boom that stores the fully battened mainsail in lazyjacks and foot pegs give access to the luff; but a small saloon-top step would be welcome here.

The solid bimini underfoot is a safe platform and visits here can include sunbathing on the indented aft section. Also here is the wide main track that has a short run for the mainsheet to the nearby trio of

Harken 60 winches at the binnacle.

Similarly, the halyards have a short run from the cabin-stepped mast to the banks of jammers within arm's length of the wheel. Large diameter lines, oversize winches and jammers all are welcome, especially in a blow.





PHOTOS: LAGOON/NICOLAS CLARIS



Further sail area can be added with a 1,000 square foot of Code 0 – advisable for this heavy cat during light airs – by connecting the optional bowsprit that already has a fixing. This also requires a pair of deck-mounted sheet winches.

Sturdy Hull

The tall and wide hulls create lots of volume that is intended to retain buoyancy and water line as you load on the gear. Construction is infused with polyester with balsa core above the water and solid GRP below – a method I prefer for blue-water cruising, rather than foam throughout.

This is another reason why the 450 S is heavier than her rivals, but arguably more solid. However the factory says items such as mooring gear and other essentials are included in the light displacement figure (15,000kg) while rivals do not.

The tall topsides and blunt saloon top will create plenty of windage, but that is the price you pay for a very comfortable interior. Usefully, there are steps indented in the midships hull which I found very handy when mooring.

At the transom, the stepped bulkheads ensure easy water access, and the dinghy davits complete a good cruising layout, with room on the guardrail for a BBQ.

The good design continues as you walk along the flat decks (with handrails on the

coachroof) to the bow. The foredeck has a sunken section with twin large drains that won't retain a dangerous volume of water in heavy weather and is a comfy small cockpit, surrounded by lockers.

Two of these large lockers can house extra tankage and cruising gear including large outboard motors; and one hatch accesses the rode. The vertical capstan-windless runs the chain out to the bow and a second roller is nearby as well.

The review boat came with twin 57hp saildrive Yanmars that are accessed via the aft deck hatches, once you've lifted the optional storage





PHOTOS: LAGOON/NICOLAS CLARIS



shelves above them. Given the wide hulls, there is ample space around them for servicing the gearbox oil, filters and impeller. There's enough space for a generator here as well.

The optional folding propellers are welcome, given the bulk of the 450S. At 15 tonnes she's about 30% heavier – according to how 'light displacement' is measured – than her rivals, so benefits from reducing drag wherever possible.

Sailing The Gold Coast

Under sail in the light 8.5-knot winds blowing from the mountains, we ghosted along at 5.8 knots with the breeze on the starboard quarter. Sitting comfortably on the three-person helm seat I watched the telltales go horizontal on the genoa and by sliding the hardtop bimini back could also see the fully battened mainsail on starboard tack.

Gybing was done easily with only two of us aboard – my host Martin from the local TMG dealership centred the boom by hauling it along the track before we turned down the Broadwater channel to the sea.

Once clear of the sandbanks I tacked over – done without easing the mainsail – and the 450 S slid round easily as we headed towards the disturbed water on the sandbank edges.

On port tack the mainsail is obscured but it's easy enough to duck out on deck – unless you've fitted the guardrail bulkhead – as we hadn't done on our boat.

Hardening up took little effort thanks to the optional Harken 60 electric winches – a single electric H60 comes as standard for the halyards – which pointed us at 45 degrees.

Powering up the 450 S nicely at this angle to 7.2 knots until the heavy chop slammed between the hulls to halve our speed, but the high bridgedeck clearance minimised the wave drag.

Once through the chop we sped up nicely, the cable steering felt light and nimble to the touch. As the breeze filled in to 13 knots I pushed the apparent up to 19 knots as we climbed high to 30 degrees, reaching an impressive 11.2 knots boat speed that is good for a family catamaran with mini keels.



PHOTOS: KELVIN GREEN

Back in the Broadwater and under engine power, the upgraded 57hp Yanmars pushed us to nearly 10 knots before I throttled back in the 6-knot zone.

Docking in light winds caused little dramas once we became attuned to the relatively little bite from the folding Yanmar propellers when going backwards – compared to the fixed ones on the 40MY sistership that I'd motored just before.

But overall, I found good manners generally throughout the handling of the Lagoon 450 S thanks to those outboard located propellers that can spin the 45-foot hull on its length – a consideration for power boaters changing to a more environmentally friendly and fun way of boating.

www.cata-lagoon.com

www.simpsonmarine.com

Lagoon 450 S

Length Overall	13.96m / 45ft 10in
Beam	7.87m
Draft	1.30m
Displacement (light)	15,000kg
Sail Area	130sqm
Engine (std)	2 x 45hp Yanmar 4JH45 (57hp option)
Fuel	2 x 520 litres
Water	2 x 175 litres
Berths	6 guests, 2 crew
Design	Van Peteghem-Lauriot Prévost
Interior	Nauta Design
EC Certification	A: 12 ; B: 14 ; C: 20 ; D: 30

Review boat extras: Upgraded engines (57HP), Folding Yanmar propellers, B&G Electronic package including 12-inch Zeus screens, Freezer 110 litres, bed slats, electric toilets, GRP bimini, 2 electric Harken winches, Fresh & saltwater pumps, davits & dinghy.