

HATTERAS SCORES BIG WITH NEW 52

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# BOATING

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HATTERAS 52 COCKPIT MOTOR YACHT:  
PERFORMANCE, LUXURY, STYLE





# HATT TRICK

*Hatteras scores big with a new 52.*

BY BILL PIKE

FOR MORE than two decades now, April 17th has been an annual disaster, at least for me. The pattern commenced back in 1967 when the U.S. Army, for no apparent reason, chose this doomed date to make my enlistment official. The next year, I arrived in Vietnam on the 17th of April ruefully noting the coincidence. Truth to tell, I can't remember what awful thing happened the year after that. Probably ran out of money on R&R in Bangkok.

To list all the misfortunes that have infested subsequent April 17ths would be self-indulgent. Allow me to synopsise the whole mysterious mess by saying that, with mind-boggling regularity, everything from life-threatening storms on the high seas to traffic tickets have since occurred, all of it zeroed in on this one, terrible date.

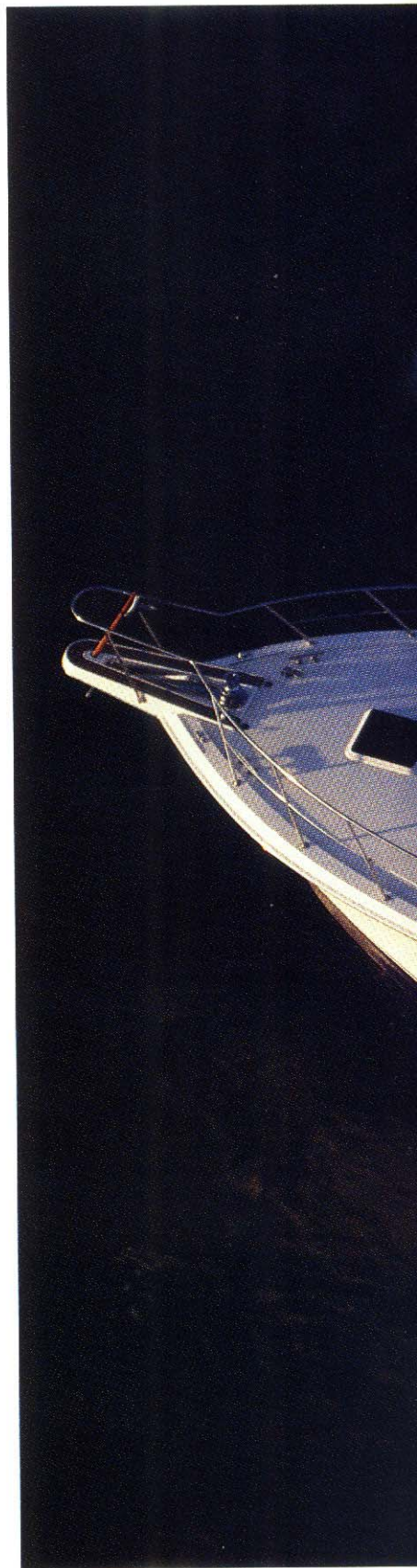
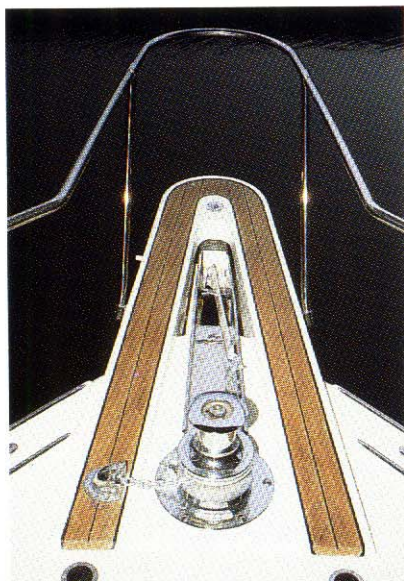
Imagine my concern when schedul-

ing problems boxed me into testing Hatteras's new 52 Cockpit Motor Yacht on April 17th, 1990. Hatteras is one of the top production boatbuilders in the United States, with a reputation that's as solid as the Navy's. Using some of the loftiest of technology, they create masterpieces. Bad luck and masterpieces don't mix.

The situation was made even worse by the fact that nothing really despicable, rotten, or ghastly had transpired the year before. Was the juggernaut of fate saving up for a double whammy? Could I possibly survive the awful fusion of a big, expensive boat with a seething reserve of bad karma? The potential for grief seemed staggering.

### A Breakfast Foreboding

Test day dawned with bird song, blue skies, and balmy wafts. About 7 a.m., I took a seat downstairs in the







**MAGIC SHOW**—How fast will a 28-ton production motor yacht go, hauling a pair of Detroit Diesel 8V-92TAs and enough creature comforts to furnish a suite at the Plaza? Our radar gun says a cool 28.2 mph. Detail work (see helm and bow pulpit, left) is impeccable and so's the high-tech construction.





*SOPHISTICATED LADY—Our test boat had an optional ash interior. Want the traditional teaky look? It's standard. And so's the expert joinerwork, whether in the salon (above) or the galley (below).*



dining room of the Aerie Bed & Breakfast, and listened to the proprietress recite a long, poem-like menu, embellished with such high-flown phrases as "home-made Belgian waffles" and "fresh strawberries."

When finished, she was kind enough to promise me that New Bern, North Carolina, and its environs are *not* regularly subject to earthquakes, hurricanes, cholera or UFOs during April. Bryant Phillips, Marketing Director for Hatteras, knocked on the screen door toward the end of her discourse.

A couple of energetic inhalations while passing the kitchen prompted Bryant to join me for breakfast. Although the odd waffle comment cropped up, we mostly talked about the new 52, a full-bore, "split-level" motor yacht, with a modest cockpit (11'10" x 4'4"), a low profile, the handling characteristics of a sportfisherman, and a decidedly untypical top speed.

Introduced during this year's Miami Boat Show to fill what Hatteras perceived as a gap in its product line, the 52 bears a striking resemblance to the new 48' motor yacht, a sister ship which preceded her into the world by a couple of months. Similarities between the two boats are more than skin deep. The 48's hull was created by damming the mold for the 52. Both share the same layouts, and are obvious successors to the famous Hargrave hulls so typical of Hatteras, although in point of fact, Jack Hargrave did not design either the new 52 or the new 48.

Neither boat much resembles the old Hatteras 48 motor yacht, at least when it comes to fundamentals. The *old* 48 was a so-called "semi-displacement" progenitor first marketed about a decade ago. It was designed to do double duty. Up for-

**SLEEPING BEAUTY—The head (through the open door) is just as appealing and comfortable as the master stateroom. Below: Here's how this big 52 beauty looks when she's not sleeping.**







“People today want to go fast. And while they’re going fast, they want to *look* like they’re going fast.”

ward, the hull had the deep forefoot and hard chines characteristic of a planing boat. Astern, the underbody possessed the qualities of a displacement hull. After sections were quite flat, and bilges “slack” or rounded. Depending on powerplant and pursuant speed, the old 48 made a fine 9-knot displacement-type yacht or, if the owner was hot to trot, an excellent 19-knot planer.

“But the 52 is different,” Bryant explained in a soft Carolinian drawl, apparently unphased by the frightening sight of a grown man tearing at the molten depths of a pile of golden waffles like it was his last meal on Earth. (Who knew when the plague of April 17th would descend in earnest?)

“People use their boats differently these days. They want to go faster. I hesitate to use the word revolutionary. But, when we designed the 52, no attempt was made to make her into a semi-displacement boat. She’s got a full, planing hull.”

**How To Look Fast**

Deadrise at the transom of the 52 is 14 degrees. No slack bilges, anywhere. Chines are hard from bow to stern. The forefoot is deep and the spray rails wide. There are no running strakes but a substantial keel is an integral foam-filled part of the hull, stretching from the bow to a point about 12’ forward of the transom. Incidentally, Hatteras maintains that a sharp angle between the bottom of the boat and the side of the keel tends to trap water, cause drag, and reduce speed. For that reason, the keel is radiused into the hull.

“Look at this.” Bryant had brought along some drawings which he now unrolled on the table. He began ex-

**PROPULSION AND PERFORMANCE**

**Hatteras 52 Cockpit M/Y**

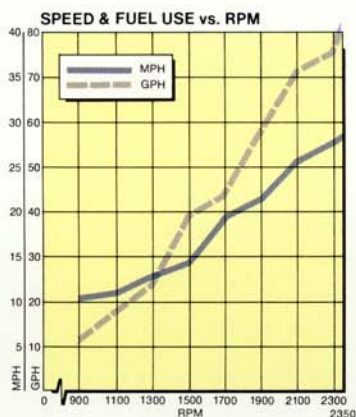
**Standard power:** twin 720-shp DDC 8V-92TA diesel inboards

**Optional power:** twin 535-shp DDC 6V-92TA diesel inboards

**Test boat power:** twin 720-shp Detroit Diesel 8V-92TA diesel inboards with 736 cid, 4.84” bore x 5.00” stroke, swinging 36” x 36” five-bladed Radice Rolla propellers through 2.54:1 reduction

rpm	speed			fuel use		efficiency			operation	
	knots	mph	% of max.	gph	% of max.	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	angle	sound level
900	9.0	10.4	36	11.8	15	0.76	0.88	652	0.5	70
1100	9.6	11.1	39	18.6	23	0.52	0.59	442	2.0	73
1300	11.3	13.0	46	24.2	30	0.47	0.54	398	3.5	75
1500	12.6	14.5	51	39.8	49	0.32	0.36	270	6.0	79
1700	16.7	19.3	68	44.0	72	0.38	0.44	325	5.0	80
1900	18.5	21.3	76	57.8	76	0.32	0.37	273	5.0	80
2100	22.2	25.5	90	71.4	89	0.31	0.36	266	6.0	83
2300	24.2	27.8	99	75.8	94	0.32	0.37	273	6.0	83
2350	24.5	28.2	100	80.2	100	0.30	0.35	256	6.0	82

Advertised fuel capacity 950 gal. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with four persons aboard, full fuel, full water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.



plaining how the appearance and styling of the new 52 distinguish it from earlier Hatterases. A couple of the differences were immediately apparent from a rendering of the boat’s profile.

First, the large, lower windshield, as well as the smaller one on the flying bridge, are dramatically swept back, their lines evenly matching those of the entire forward end of the superstructure. A much less conservative “look” than you’ll see in previous models.

Second, the venturi windshield top-side is gone, and so is the faceted aspect of the lower windshield. Running lights are recessed and the conflicting lines of the vertical “wing” doors on the weatherdeck, typical of earlier models, are completely hidden on the 52, behind the bases of the radar arch supports.

The most pervasive shift in style,

however, was harder to spot. It involves a subtle but effective pattern created by the boat’s non-horizontal style lines. Whether they’re found in the “step” of the sheerline aft, in the radar arch, in the rails communicating between cockpit and aft deck, or in the rake of the leading edge of the superstructure, all these lines, when extended through space, meet at a theoretical point above the boat, thereby creating a subliminal, swept-back feeling in the eye of the beholder. Moreover, since the theoretical focus of the lines is well astern, the feeling evoked is also one of speed, even when the boat is at rest.

“Like I said,” Bryant summarized, finishing his coffee, “people today want to go fast. And, they want to *look* like they’re going fast.”

**Tour De Force**

We loaded the test gear into the car. Shipped all the way from New York on an airplane, the stuff had arrived, on time, at the proper address, in one piece. This was totally befuddling, given the hypothetical potential for trouble on this particular day.

We then took a long, lovely drive through the Carolinian countryside, and followed it up with a tour of Hatteras’s New Bern plant, the spot where the big stuff gets built. Smaller Hatterai, like the 52, are created in a town called High Point, about 200 miles on down the road.

During the tour of the plant, I successfully negotiated a lengthy and sinuous path through a bunch of buildings, and met a lot of folks, seemingly half the 1,100 employees who work at New Bern, without falling down, getting paint on my new Woolrich coat, glop on my shoes, or in-



## The big shift in appearance involves a subtle pattern crafted by the boat's non-horizontal style lines.

advertently making a single social blunder. It was an April-the-17th miracle.

I was also able to see a number of construction techniques and details common to all Hatteras yachts, including the one I'd soon be testing:

- Two kinds of gel coat are used on each yacht, in two different layers. The outer layer consists of Glidden "Blisterguard" applied below the waterline and a good grade of two-part polyester gel coat above. Lab tests show that Blisterguard is ten times more resistant to blistering than regular gel coat. A second layer of gray gel coat backs up the first, acting as a UV barrier and providing a contrasting background for hand layup. And, as if all this were not enough, a DuPont Imron paint job finishes the hull and superstructure of every Hatteras.

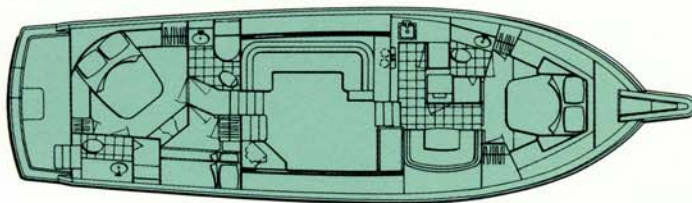
- Fuel tanks are fiberglass, and approved by Underwriters' Laboratories. Since they're virtually seamless when complete, there are no welds to crack and leak as there can be with aluminum fuel tanks.

- Stringers are hollow, FRP hat-sections, pumped full of closed-cell, urethane foam after they've been fully glassed into the hull. There are four of them on the 52, two on either side of the keel. The six main fiberglass members athwartship are vacuum-bagged and Divinycell cored.

In way of the engines, steel bars (10' x 3" x 5/8") are sandwiched into the top surfaces of stringers.

As with most of her sister ships, the bottom of the 52 is solid glass, about 7/8" thick next to the keel. Hull sides, from gunwale to chine, are cored with 1/2" end-grain balsa, and so's the transom, down to the waterline. Below that, the transom is cored with Divinycell. The deck/superstructure is cored with balsa and Divinycell, de-

### SPECIFICATIONS Hatteras 52 Cockpit M/Y



<b>LOA</b>	52'9"	<b>Bridge clearance</b>	17'1"
<b>Beam</b>	16'0"	(from waterline to top of arch)	
<b>Draft</b>	4'5"	<b>Max cabin headroom</b>	6'8"
<b>Displacement</b>		<b>Fuel capacity (gal.)</b>	950
(lbs., approx.)	55,400	<b>Water capacity (gal.)</b>	170
<b>Freeboard forward</b>	6'11"	<b>Base price</b>	\$658,400
<b>Freeboard aft</b>	4'7"	(w/standard power)	
		<b>Designer</b>	Hatteras Design Team

**Standard equipment (major items):** All chrome-on-brass or ss deck hardware; 316L ss bowrails w/2 boarding gates; bronze rudders, struts and rubber strut bearings; bottom paint; anchor and rode; swim platform w/ss swim ladder; adjustable Pompanette helm seats on bridge; Morse engine controls; Bennett trim tabs; transom door; washdown out

lets in cockpit and engine room; wing doors on aft deck; Roper electric stove; Sharp Carousel II microwave/convection oven; full-sized Euroflair Frigidaire refrigerator; three auto. bilge pumps and one emergency manual pump; engine synchronizer; SSB ground screen laminated into hardtop.

pending on location and use.

Except for interior joinerwork and trim, the hull of a Hatteras holds no structural wood, and no potential for rot.

- Hatteras's approach to muffling systems is a little different. The 52, for example, has four exhaust ports rather than two. There's a small set (5" diameter) above the waterline, at the transom, and a large set (10" diameter) below, underwater.

The smaller ports are backed up by fiberglass, water-cooled, Riley Beard mufflers, somewhat similar to those found on automobiles. They process exhaust at idle, without the glug-glug-glug sound characteristic of more standard muffling systems.

Above 1300 rpm, engine gases exit the boat straight through the larger ports below the waterline. Back pressure is considerably reduced. Water muffles the sound and carries the fumes aft. No station-wagon effect.

- High Point, where our 52 was built, is the furniture-making capital of America. Hatteras mills all its own lumber and relies on local talent to turn the stuff into gold. Instead of much darker teak, our test boat had

an optional ash interior (\$8,500) with a light finish. The carpentry was precise, as fine as I've seen anywhere.

### Boat Test Existentialism

I stood on the dock, looking at the 52. With the test gear dangling from my fists, I felt like BOATING's own version of Jean-Paul Sartre, vertiginously poised on the brink of absurdity, waiting for the radar gun to fall in the water.

Something just *had* to happen. Something bad. Maybe the fuel lines on the 52's ever-predictable twin Detroit Diesel 8V-92TAs would have off-beat fittings, capable of resisting the most lethal assortment of tools ever assembled

for a Boat Test? Maybe the inscrutable test-gear computer would choose this particular day to die?

Upon entering the engine room of the 52, the first thing to hit me was a pleasant surprise. Accessed via an opening under the three-step stairway between salon and galley/dinette (down), the twin Detroit's, as well as the 20kw Onan generator (just forward of the engine, starboard side), are surrounded by plenty of wide-open wrench-swinging space.

How does Hatteras turn a comparatively small area, without standing headroom, into a workable engine room? Because the 3"-thick salon deck is so strong it needs no compression posts or heavy timbers for support, there are no obstructions to contend with.

The deck consists of two layers of tri-axial glass on either side of a 2 3/4" thickness of PVC foam core, vacuum bagged. Just about all decks and bulkheads aboard the boat are done this way, using either PVC or Divinycell for core materials.

One of the advantages of this type of construction, at least in engine-room applications, is that there's no



need to clutter up the place with sound-deadening insulation. Decks and bulkheads alone do the job.

In addition to roominess, I was in for some other pleasant surprises belowdecks. There are labels on raw-water strainers, major valves, and lines. Wide copper bonding strips with heavy-gauge bonding wires run from every separate metal part. The huge Dahl fuel filters, with stainless-steel catchment basins under, are easy to get at but not in the way. The same holds true for the Lunaire a/c (42,000 Btu), General Electric surge arrestors, fixed Kidde Halon fire extinguishing system with automatic and remote manual controls, Aquapure water filters, water heater, battery banks and easily accessed Y-valves for the two SeaLand electric heads above.

### Har, Har, Har

With me, Jack Hine (Hatteras's test engineer), a couple of other guys, and a cooler full of sodas and sandwiches aboard, the brave new 52 set out from New Bern and headed down the Neuse River for Beaufort, by way of a stretch of the ICW locally known as "Adams Crick."

(Note: When engaging a Tarheel in conversation, never make the mistake of saying Bu-fort, unless you mean the town down in South Carolina. It's Bo-fort, North Carolina, and any other pronunciation will get you into a pile of trouble. More about this later.)

When Hatteras designed the 52, there were two options. 1) The boat could be a traditional, flush-deck, 50' motor yacht with a relatively high vertical center of gravity, ponderous handling characteristics, and sedate top-end speeds. 2) Or the boat could be a multi-deck, aft-cabin type, with a little more length, a lower profile and center of gravity, sporty handling characteristics, and some real planing

speed capability.

Given the fact that speed is of the essence in today's market, the choice was easy to make, particularly when Hatteras looked at competing models, like Ocean's 48' motor yacht, the 50' Viking and the Chris-Craft 501. None of these vessels exactly qualifies as a slow boat to China.

In a light chop, average top speed was 28.2 mph. The Hynautic hydraulic helm was responsive. There was none of the stately "feel" you get from most motor yachts. The boat followed her rudders quickly in a turn, and she tracked like a train.

Capt. Ted Connor gave me the wheel halfway down to Beaufort. By then, I'd already messed up a couple of attempts at conversation with him. Bu-fort, instead of Bo-fort. Twice.

Ted told me the course he'd been steering, then suggested I might find it easier to use the red buoy, dead ahead, as a mark. I agreed, knowing it's always easier to steer on a mark than hold a compass course. I looked into the hazy distance. Looked again.

"Jeeze, Ted," I said. "Maybe I need new glasses."

"It's there," he replied, lofty and laconic.

I continued to squint for a good half hour, contorting my face, talking to myself, trying to see the mysterious marker.

Eventually, I saw a mirage and, to my undying shame, tentatively announced the bogus sighting. Ted was in his glory. It was Tarheel heaven.

"No buoy out there, Bill," he howled. "Har, Har, Har."

### American Express

Except for a Galley Maid electric windlass (\$6,660), permanent aft deck enclosure (\$9,480), a couple of RCA 13" TVs (\$2,790 total), Lunaire a/c for the aft deck (\$4,275), and the items already mentioned, the 52 we tested had

few options. Even the 8V-92TAs are standard.

Base price for the 52 is \$658,400. For comparison's sake, a Viking 50 MY will cost about \$686,000, with the same engines. Chris-Craft's 501 ball-parks for around \$599,000 with DDC 6V-92s. The Ocean 48, with 6V-92s, should cost about \$491,000. All these prices are approximate, of course, and may vary, dealer to dealer.

From the pictures included with this story, you should be able to get a pretty good idea of what the interior of the 52 is like.

You'll also see from the overhead line-drawing that our test boat had a guest stateroom forward and master aft, as well as a smaller cabin with bunks adjoining the master to starboard. At no charge, Hatteras will replace this third, smaller stateroom with a much enlarged head for the master.

And would you believe . . . except for the missing buoy, we docked without mishap at Beaufort after four hours of cruising and testing. No groundings. Mechanical problems. Broken bones.

In fact, the test of the 52 went as smoothly as any I've ever done. The boat is everything Hatteras intends her to be. The cruise from New Bern was spectacular.

A couple days later, a much anticipated and retroactive axe fell. I got a letter from American Express.

Right away, a feeling, not unlike the pangs of the condemned, began percolating up from my solar plexus. Oh yeah. The dread monthly bill. Kinda forgot.

I opened the thing up: \$2,195. Whoa! It was dated, April 17th, 1990. ⚓

*For more information, contact: Hatteras Yachts, Dept. B, Box 2690, High Point, NC 27261 919/889-6621.*

# Hatteras