

## NEW BOATS



## Bavaria Cruiser 45

A sweet-sailing cruising machine by Bruce Farr | BY CHARLES J DOANE

It wasn't so long ago that German builder Bavaria Yachts was giving other mass-production sailboat builders a serious run for their money here in the United States. With its huge ultra-modern manufacturing plant, said to be the largest yacht-building facility in the world, Bavaria quickly established a major presence on this side of the Atlantic and offered a wide range of boats at solid competitive prices. Then, just as quickly, they disappeared like the proverbial puff of smoke, one of the first victims of the onset of the Great Recession in the fall of 2008.

Reorganized under new ownership, Bavaria is now re-entering the U.S. market with a line of boats conceived by Bruce Farr and BMW Group DesignworksUSA. I was in Grenada visiting Horizon Yachts, which represents Bavaria in the Caribbean, when this announcement was made, so I jumped at the chance to hop aboard a brand new twin-rudder Bavaria Cruiser 45 for a test sail.

### CONSTRUCTION

The Cruiser 45's hull is laid up by hand and is composed of a combination of chopped strand mat and stitched biaxial mat set in isophthalic polyester resin. Below the waterline the laminate is bulked up with two layers of 2mm Coremat; an epoxy barrier coat is also applied on top of the exterior gelcoat. There is a closed-cell Airex foam core above

the waterline. The hull is stiffened with an inner grid frame. The keel is secured with 20mm stainless steel bolts and Plexus adhesive. The deck, also cored with Airex, is bedded in polyurethane sealant and is screwed down at 8in intervals. As is usual on European boats, the keel is cast iron.

### ON DECK

The deck and cockpit are well conceived. The twin helm stations are pushed right aft, and instead of a scoop transom there is a huge fold-down platform dressed in sumptuous teak. Steering positions at both wheels are comfortable at all heeling angles, thanks to a pair of clever flip-up foot cleats. All-round visibility is good, and I particularly appreciated the custom Horizon Yacht Charters bimini on the boat I sailed. The after edge of the bimini is perfectly pitched so that if you lean into the wheel just a bit you're in the shade, but if you lean back a little you can see the mainsail.

Cockpit stowage is excellent. In addition to two large, but shallow cockpit lockers, there is an enormous lazarette with room for a liferaft, a rolled-up inflatable dinghy, sails and more. There's also a large fixed cockpit table, plenty strong enough to brace against while heeled, that has

both interior storage and enough space underneath to stash an ice chest.

Moving forward, the deck on the whole feels quite secure, thanks to some very aggressive anti-skid. However, I would like to see the cabintop handrails, which run only halfway up the length of the house, extended farther forward. The deck cleats are very rugged, quite large and well positioned. A small foc'sle locker abaft the belowdeck chain locker is just big enough to hold a spinnaker in a bag.

The slightly fractional Seldén rig features long swept-back spreaders with outboard shrouds that terminate just inside the gunwales. Our test boat carried a full-batten mainsail (an in-mast furling main is also available) and upgraded Lewmar 58 primary winches. There is plenty of room in the cockpit to mount secondary winches, if desired. The double mainsheet is split in a bridle



with the sheet tails led to either side of the companionway. Other lines coming off the mast are also led aft.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

The interior enjoys lots of ambient lighting, thanks to a plethora of deck hatches. The twin aft cabins, however, are poorly ventilated. The berths aft are generously sized and also have excellent vertical clearance, despite being situated under the cockpit. Each aft cabin has a well-appointed ensuite head.

The saloon promises to be very comfortable at anchor, but somewhat less so while sailing. The Euro-style in-line galley on the port side has plenty of counter space, but the sinks are undersized. The settees around the athwartship dinette table unfortunately aren't quite long enough to sleep on. The nav desk is a reasonable size, but the main distribution panel is small, with little room for ancillary electronics. There is lots of stowage space under the settees, but most of it is hard to access.

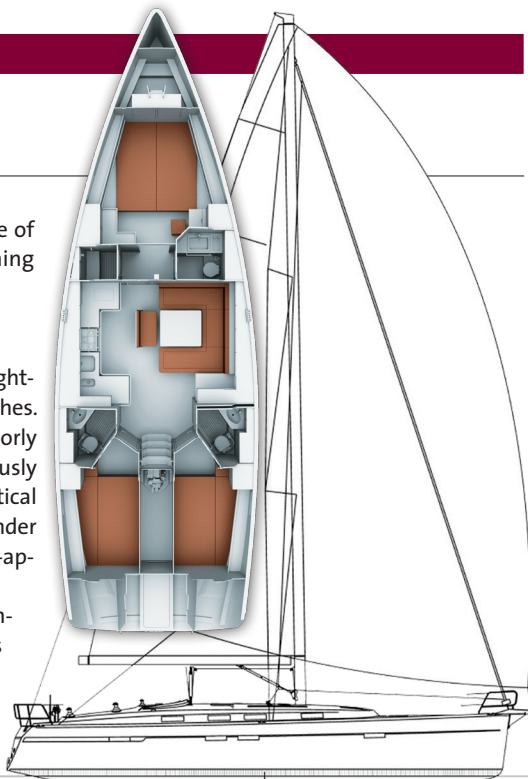
The interior's best feature is the enormous master stateroom. This boasts a very wide double berth and oodles of storage capacity. The ensuite head is split into two components, with a dedicated shower compartment to port and a toilet and vanity compartment to starboard, an arrangement many cruising couples will enjoy. The forward stateroom, if desired, can also be split into two separate sleeping compartments.

### UNDER SAIL

We had ideal conditions outside Grenada's True Blue Bay—a strong 20-knot tradewind and a commensurate lumpy sea. The Cruiser 45, to put it bluntly, sails like a witch and reveled in this environment. Certainly it is one of the better-performing mass-production cruisers I've ever been aboard.

In deference to the breeze, we sailed under the standard 110 percent jib and tucked one reef in the main. Although the mainsail was a little too full (I believe the reef points may have been out of position), we slipped to windward very efficiently. The powerful hull felt smooth and authoritative as it shouldered through the big waves. The motion was predictable, with little slamming.

Speeds were quite impressive. We made 7.8 knots sailing at a 35 degree apparent wind angle, which increased to over 8 knots at a 40 degree angle, and as high as 9.3



knots when we bore away to 60 degrees. Cracking off to a broad reach, we still managed to maintain speeds in the 7- to 8-knot range even though we had no offwind sails onboard and kept the reef in the main.

Helm response was excellent, and I found the boat a joy to steer. Its groove is not very wide, and you can't afford to get too distracted, but careful attention to the wheel is well rewarded. Also, thanks to the twin rudders, which are situated well outboard, you can easily maintain control of this super-wide craft even when it's heeled over on its ear.

### UNDER POWER

Our test boat was equipped with a 75hp Volvo diesel engine, as opposed to the standard 55hp engine, and thus was equally impressive under power. Maintaining a cruising tempo of 2,200 rpm, our Cruiser 45 hit 7.8 knots; at full throttle (2,800 rpm) we made 8.8 knots. The boat turned smartly at speed in just one boatlength and was easy to control when backing down. The engine itself should be easy to work on. The engine compartment is very tall, with excellent access from the front and reasonable access from the sides.

### CONCLUSION

The Cruiser 45 is comparable to most other mass-production cruising boats as far as its cockpit, deck and interior layouts are concerned. Its sailing performance, however, at least in moderate to strong wind, is exceptional. The boat represents a great value for cruisers looking for both charter-boat comfort and performance-boat speed. *SM*



## VITAL STATISTICS

**HEADROOM** 6ft 8in

**BERTHS** 6ft 8in x 5ft 10in (fwd);  
6ft 8in x 4ft 10in (aft)

## SPECIFICATIONS

**LOA** 44ft 7in // **LWL** 41ft 10in

**BEAM** 14ft 4in

**DRAFT** 6ft 11in (std); 5ft 8in (shoal)

**DISPLACEMENT** 27,780lb

**BALLAST** 7,694lb (std); 8,323lb (shoal)

**SAIL AREA** 1,152ft<sup>2</sup>

**FUEL/WATER/WASTE (GAL)** 55/96/18

**ENGINE** 55hp Volvo-Penta  
diesel (sailandrive)

**ELECTRICAL** 130AH (house);  
88AH (engine)

**DESIGNER** Farr Yacht Design;  
BMW Group DesignworksUSA

**BUILDER** Bavaria Yachts USA,  
Annapolis, MD, bavariayachts.com

**PRICE** \$303,042 base

**BALLAST RATIO** 27%

**SAIL AREA/DISPLACEMENT RATIO** 20

**DISPLACEMENT/LENGTH RATIO** 170

## OUR TAKE

### PROS

Excellent sailing performance

Great cockpit stowage

Large forward stateroom

### CONS

Stuffy aft cabins

No place to sleep in saloon

Small galley sinks

### PERFORMANCE

RACER

CRUISER