



THE ANTARES



the world's best liveaboard



a racing convert

BY RUSS CREAGH

After 25 years of competitive sailing in Australia, I sold the boat and hung up my competitive shoes. But loving the sea and messing about in boats, it wasn't long before I started thinking about getting a boat to go cruising in. Most of my sailing to that point had been in monohulls, but after writing down a list of desirable features in a cruising boat, it soon became obvious that a catamaran fulfilled the requirements best. Essentially, I wanted a comfortable, robust home on the sea that could take me anywhere I wanted to go with reasonable speed and confidence.

IT WAS AT THAT POINT MY catamaran education really started and I began researching catamarans and cruising issues in earnest. I soaked up any information I could find on the subject: books, magazines, internet, boat shows, brokers, builders, designers, fellow yachties, anything that would improve my knowledge.

It became obvious fairly quickly that I was on a worldwide search. The largest volume of cruising cats come out of France, with significant contributions from many other countries around the globe. I investigated, and in some cases test sailed production cats in the 45ft range along with a couple of custom ones. French, US, UK, Canadian, South African, Brazilian, New Zealand, and Australian. To cut a long story short, I concluded that the Antares 44i represented the best resolution of the complex design challenges of a world cruising live-aboard yacht.

The Antares success formula is simple, 'a design intent to build the perfect live-aboard sailing cat for a couple. Plus the benefit of incremental improvement which only comes from having launched many sister ships over an extended period.' No other builder can claim this.

The key I believe is to understand yourself and your requirements.

Whatever they are, there will definitely be a boat out there that has been conceived and built for exactly what you have in mind. In my case, because of my racing heritage, I now realise I started looking for something that was too sporty. I was still thinking about the buzz of speed under sail. But a live aboard cruiser is not about racing, it's about living, and most of the time you are at anchor, or tied to a jetty.

That is not say that performance does not concern me. It's just another issue that must be integrated into the complex design brief. I know that given the right conditions, my Antares 44 *Salarn* can clock 250nm in a day. And so far without trying to push the boat to its limit I've touched 13.8kts. But the sustainable speed is all dependent on the sea state. I regularly take the decision to sail the boat conservatively, and consequently, at slower speed, because I do not want to shake the hell out of my house and contents and incur the wrath of the admiral (ie, my wife).

I have had my Antares, *Salarn* for almost a year now, cruising the Aegean Sea (Greek Islands and Turkish coast). I have yet to hear an uncomplimentary comment from the many fellow sailors who have asked for a look over her, and I am yet to find a boat that I would swap for her.

44i



Now down to specifics of the boat ...

Sailability and seaworthiness

With a well-balanced rig, the Antares can sail itself to windward with little helm input. She has easily driven hulls under sail or power, so depending on conditions I know four to 10kts is always achievable. The modest rig, at 61' above the waterline, is easily handled short-handed. With the placement of the engines and water/fuel tanks amidships and below the waterline, the weight is centralised, so tendency to hobby-horse in a seaway is minimised, as is slamming thanks to plenty of bridge-deck clearance.

Design and live-ability

It's a floating, three bedroom, two bathroom apartment with generous outdoor living areas. The interior on the Antares 44i is built using a lightweight, hi-tech honeycomb board with a cherry wood finish. The spacious saloon seamlessly integrates with the galley for an open-concept and well-appointed kitchen suited for extended living aboard. And we have more storage than we need. The fight is always to keep weight off the boat, a real struggle for most live-aboards.

Overall build and fitout quality

Cost is always an issue, but clearly it has not been the primary driver in the design decisions. Robustness, utility, on-going maintenance, practicality in a live-aboard situation, were clearly other important design criteria. From the shaft drive steering system and shaft drive engine propulsion, to the rigging, deck hardware, mechanics, electrics and electronics, Antares Yachts has made many quality component choices.

It is not hard to find another boat that has a bigger this, or a faster that, but individual specifications are meaningless. What is important is how all the components fit together and function. There are many compromises that have to be made in the design of any boat, as the final design is crafted in such a way as to harmonize and optimise all the competing criteria. In my view, the Antares has hit the sweet spot. She's big enough, but not too big. The Antares provides good all round performance under sail or power with a short-handed crew. The fitout is luxurious with robust, easily serviced systems though out, and the well-designed spaces provide maximum utility. www.liveantares.com

Russ has spent 25+ years racing competitively in Australia and has lived in Perth, Brisbane and Sydney. He is currently cruising in the Turkish and Greek waters with his wife Nina aboard their Antares 44 *Salarn*.



SPECIFICATIONS

Length overall	44' (13.6m)
Length waterline	43' 6" (13.3m)
Beam overall	21' 9" (6.6m)
Draft	4' (1.2m)
Height above waterline	61' (18.6m)
Weight	17,500 lbs. (7937kg)
Displacement	22,500 lbs. (10,205kg)
Generator	6kw
Auxiliaries	2 x 29hp Yanmar diesels (2 x 22 kW)

Sail Areas

Mainsail	606sqft (56 m ²)
Jib	243sqft (23 m ²)
Genoa	472sqft (44 m ²)
Screecher	635sqft (59 m ²)

Capacities

Fuel	120 US gal. (455 litres)
Water	150 US gal. (568 litres)
Holding	2 x 30 US gal. (2 x 114 litres)
CE Classification	Offshore Class A