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A large sailboat with a blue spinnaker sail is sailing on the ocean. The boat has a dark hull with a red stripe along the bottom. The sail is a vibrant blue with white horizontal stripes. The boat is moving towards the right, leaving a white wake in the blue water. The sky is a pale blue with some light clouds. The overall scene is serene and captures the beauty of a luxury sailboat in motion.

CLASS OF THE FIELD

Atalante: Luxury and performance in a 127-foot package.

BY JILL BOBROW

Sporting a beautiful spinnaker, carbon mast and rigging, a deep-draft keel and carbon rudder, *Atalante* is poised for the superyacht regatta circuit.

CONTRARY TO WHAT IS TRENDING IN SOME CIRCLES,

you don't need a 200-footer to achieve luxury cruising fulfillment or promise on the racecourse. *Atalante*, built by Claassen Shipyards, is the first 127-foot (38.8-meter) sailing yacht in Hoek Design's Truly Classic (TC) series. She is not big by superyacht racing standards and not small by any standard, but she suits her owners' needs and desires perfectly. And to any observer, her lines and proportions are a delight.

The couple who own *Atalante* are serious and serial yacht owners, and they knew exactly what they were looking for this time around. Their previous yacht bearing the same name and pedigree was a TC 90. With the new build, they wanted a long-distance passagemaking yacht with more space for themselves, their guests and their crew. The new *Atalante* also needed to be competitive in superyacht regattas around the world. One tipping point for them to build bigger had to do with the criteria for entry in the St. Barths Bucket Regatta, which requires that yachts be 100 feet (30.5 meters) or longer, unless grandfathered in.

Hoek Design applied strong performance parameters to give *Atalante* a fighting chance on the racecourse. The yacht has a high-tensile aluminum hull constructed with continuous longitudinal framing. Her underwater configuration comprises a deep-draft fin keel and a carbon rudder. Combine these factors with her High Modulus carbon mast and rigging, North Sails 3Di sails, Harken

captive main winch and three pairs of Lewmar sheet and running backstay winches, and she has the ingredients to be a winner.

Because the owners are skilled sailors, feel is as important as look to them. According to Claassen, *Atalante's* cable-based steering gives great feedback at the wheel. "You can sail her with two fingers," said Joachim Kieft, sales director of Claassen Shipyards. "She clips along at 12.4 knots and can easily reach a speed of 14 knots on a fetch. Last summer in [western France's] Bay of Biscay, she hit 18 knots off a wave." Since her launch in late spring 2015, *Atalante* has covered several thousand miles.

I visited *Atalante* in Monaco and fell in love with her. What struck me immediately were her human-scale proportions. Low to the water, long and slender with perfectly joined teak decks and low deckhouses, she simply looks and feels like a proper yacht. Her interior, replete with mahogany paneling and wainscoting adjacent to gloss-white-painted bulkheads and white overheads, is reminiscent of the Herreshoffs of old. She is the perfect marriage of classicism and modern technology.

Her deck is configured with two cockpits. The central guest cockpit provides space for lounging or dining, while the helm station is in the aft keyhole cockpit. The separation ensures guests will not get in the way of business—just one feature that makes *Atalante* a smaller sailing yacht with a superyacht attitude. In addition to the



The well-balanced *Atalante* is easy to sail without a large crew. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: With the helm placed in the aft cockpit, guests in the center cockpit enjoy more space to relax in comfort; The binnacle, like many of the fittings such as the mushroom cowl vents, was custom made at Claassen; The well-lit deckhouse permits dining with a view.

RICK TOMLINSON



Truly Classic series built at Claasen Shipyard, Hoek Design is well known for its series of gorgeous sailing yachts over 170 feet (51.8 meters) built at Vitters Shipyard, such *Adèle*, *Erica XII* and *Marie*. I noticed a few elements on *Atalante* that I had seen on some of the bigger boats. For instance: comfortable bench seats outboard of the main cockpit, providing a nice place to sit on either port or starboard tack. Every sailboat should have these.

Claasen Shipyard in the Netherlands is a small yard with a highly experienced team of craftsmen and carpenters. Among its deliveries is 142-foot (43.4-meter) J-Class *Lionheart*. She is longer than *Atalante*, but has less interior volume. Everything from hull construction to all interior fitting out is done in-house. The yard has built 30 Hoek-designed yachts. Nonetheless, *Atalante* was a big project.

The owners of *Atalante* appreciate the intimate atmosphere at

With High Modulus carbon mast and rigging, North Sails 3Di sails, Harken captive main winch and three pairs of Lewmar sheet and running backstay winches, *Atalante* has the ingredients of a winner.



Claasen. They knew they would have the yard's undivided attention. Nigel Ingram from MCM was the owner's representative on the build. *Atalante's* captain, James Prince, and his wife, Kate Prince, who have been with the owners for many years on their previous yacht, were enlisted to ensure all details went smoothly.

The owners did not sacrifice luxury and comfort to achieve the interior space and performance they desired. The interior layout is only a slight departure from the norm. Because they spend significant time sailing with just the two of them, they chose to have one master and two guest staterooms, although a four-stateroom layout would have been an option.

ABOVE: Adjacent to the master stateroom, the salon offers the ambience of a rich library. **LEFT:** Bench seating outboard of the center cockpit, port and starboard, is a typical Hoek Design feature.

Inside dining is in the main deckhouse, a half-level up from the salon via a curved staircase. Opposite the dining table is seating with a sliding card table and flag locker stowage to starboard. The cabinet housing the card table has two cutlery drawers with custom-made inserts in dark-blue velvet by Carrs of Sheffield, which also supplied the cutlery. The salon, which has the ambience of a library, has a bar, bookcases, TV and seating for 10. Interior furnishings by Hamilton Weston in the United Kingdom include a custom leather table with integrated trays that can be flipped to reveal a smooth surface.

The full-beam master has a reading sofa and a vanity table. The toilet and bidet are separate from the shower and bath. Also in the master suite is a navigation station with two screens, a pilot berth and a refrigerator. The deckhouse aft serves as the owner's office at anchor.

The crew area is forward of the mast. In a nod to proper offshore sailing yacht design, the galley's induction stove top and oven are gimbaled—a feature not always found on supersailers. Two cabins accommodate four crew with a flex bunk integrated into the laundry space. *Atalante* was conceived as a 115-footer, but was extended to enhance the crew space. By not putting crew in the forepeak, there was room to bring the chain lockers farther aft, which benefits the yacht's performance.

While *Atalante* is fully custom, the yard now has a template for future yachts in the TC series. To the owners of this first edition, though, she'll always be one of a kind. **Y**

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