



New boats: Seawind 1160



Two into one

Caroline Strainig checks out one of the hottest boats on the boat show circuit at the moment – the Aussie-built Seawind 1160.

When the team at Seawind Catamarans wanted to develop a new model, they didn't have far to look. All the inspiration they needed was sitting right in front of them in the form of their popular 1000 and 1200 models.

"Many people have said over the years that they loved the open cockpit-saloon set-up in the 1000, but wanted the extra accommodation and space of the 1200," Seawind marketing manager Brent Vaughan said, when asked how the 1160 came about.

"What we've done with the 1160 is put it all in one package by carrying through that open cockpit-saloon, while still offering spacious accommodation, queen-sized beds, a good-sized galley and large bathrooms."

Nineteen 1160s have been sold since the model was launched at the Sydney International Boat Show in July.

Cockpit, sail plan etc

Okay, let's get down to the nitty-gritty. What do you get for your money?

The most outstanding feature in my book is the saloon door set-up, which has enabled Seawind to combine the 1000's inside-out feeling with the 1200's ability to close the saloon off with solid doors. The tri-folding doors can have one or two sections folded back and when not required swing up and lock under the solid cockpit roof. A great innovation.

Space, glorious space is a big part of the package and there is a wide expanse of gelcoat and umpteen positions seating-wise from which to choose. The latter range from the voluminous foredeck and trampolines to twin double seats aft.

There are a few surprises for those used to the sail plan on the 1000 and 1200. The 1160 has twin steering wheels like the 1000, but also a self-furling and self-tacking jib, plus a self-furling screecher (MPS-type light-wind off-the-breeze sail) that flies from the bowsprit. The targa added to the 1000 during production has also been incorporated from day one in the 1160. Not only that, but Seawind has taken it a step further, making it out of

fibreglass and using it as a platform for the mainsheet traveller to get that up out of the way and as part of a hardtop that extends to the saloon doors. The endless line needed to make this kind of traveller possible is controlled from the port side and reversible at the touch of a button.

The majority of sail controls are led aft to jammers and winches near the helm to minimise the need to go forward. The exception on the test boat was the slab reefing, but this might be replaced by single-line reefing in future boats, so reefing controls too will come back close to the helm.

Stowage-wise, there are plenty of lockers and those who have to do anchor duty will be impressed by the deep chain locker. Standard instruments include a tri-data – depth, speed and log – and VHF radio.

Saloon and down below

The saloon's centrepiece is a big U-shaped settee and a table that lowers to make a bed. This table also swivels, so you can move it close to the settee for an intimate dinner for two or further away for a smorgasbord so people can move around it.

There are two versions: a three-cabin and four-cabin. The test boat was the three-cabin version. Down four steps to starboard was a queen-sized berth aft, galley midships and head and another cabin forwards. Down four steps to port was a large ensuite with sit-down and stand-up shower aft, small chart table and stowage midships and queen-sized berth forwards.

The bed in the master cabin of the three-cabin version is a standard fore-and-aft model but you can opt for an athwartships island bed if you'd prefer not having to climb over your partner when you get in and out of bed.

In the four-cabin version the starboard side remains the same but in the port side a double berth is aft where the head is in the three-cabin version and a slightly smaller head midships.

Noteworthy features include the twin-freezer and bar fridge in the galley, twin 30hp Volvo saildrives and holding tanks, which come as standard. There are plenty of lockers, although



ALL PICS BY ANDREA FRANCOLINI

ABOVE & LEFT: A single-spreader mast, furling headsail, furling screecher (light-wind downwind sail) and hardtop bimini are just some of the features of the stylish new Seawind 1160.

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ABOVE: The head off the master cabin has a sit-down and stand-up shower.



ABOVE: The nifty fold-up doors (pictured here in their stowage spot under the roof) enable the 1160 to achieve the 1000's inside-out feeling with the 1200's protection from the elements.

those who opt for the four-cabin version will find some stowage sacrificed.

For easy-care and longevity Seawind has opted for a mix of natural and manmade materials. Beech trim is used throughout and jarrah on the saloon table top, but simulated teak and holly for the cabin sole and

Laminex on work surfaces. Ventilation, particularly in the saloon, is excellent with plenty of opening windows and good natural light.

How she sailed

Winds were gusting up to 20 knots when we set sail on Sydney Harbour so we had ample chance to put the 1160

through its paces. The boat pointed comfortably around the 45° mark and off the wind was in its element, particularly with the big screecher up downwind when conditions eased. To windward she clocked up to 7.8 knots and off the wind a couple more knots again. On most catamarans I let the headsail back slightly when tacking to

cruising helmsman

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help bring the bow around, but with a self-tacking headsail this is obviously impossible. Nevertheless, even in sheltered nooks in only a few knots of wind, the 1160 still retained boat speed and I never felt we were in danger of stalling. The combination of self-tacking headsail and close-at-hand sail controls also made it easy for one person to do most of the sheet work.

Seawind delivery skipper Royce Black, who was on board for our outing, had sailed the boat from Pittwater to Sydney in a strong northerly of 25-35 knots the day before. On a broad reach with a reef in the main he said it averaged between 10 and 11 knots.

"Having twin helms made it easy to get out of the wind and weather and sitting on the coaming slightly to one side of either, telltale visibility is excellent," he said.

He thought the offshore performance was even better than that of the 1200.

Under motor on Sydney Harbour the 1160 tracked straight and achieved seven knots at 2200 rpm.

Summary

Further comment from me is probably superfluous because buyers have already voted with their chequebooks and in my view that is really the ultimate test of any boat's appeal. That said, I cannot resist noting that the team at Seawind has achieved its purpose and managed to divide two into one – with interest. The only question is when the 1160 will surpass the 150-sold mark of the popular 1000. My bet is sooner rather than later.

FIRST CAB OFF THE RANK

Often when the first boat in a new production run is launched there is a fair bit of tweaking to do, but in this case there was minimal – probably because the 1160 builds on two already-proven models. The minor changes planned included a heavier-wearing rope on the traveller (spectra instead of polyester), moving the intermediate shroud more outboard so it's out of the way of the side deck, plus some additional grab rails.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA:	.....11.6m
LWL:	.....10.9m
Beam:	.....6.2m
Draft:	.....0.9m
Underwing:	.....0.75
Displacement:	.....6500kg
Steering:	.....Cable
Engines:	.....2 x 30hp Volvo saildrives
Mast:	.....Tempo Spars single-spreader
Deck gear:	.....Harken winches, Spinlock rope clutches, Gebo hatches
Sails:	.....Halsey-Lidgard 9.5-ounce Dacron main and jib as standard
Fuel capacity:	.....360 litres
Water capacity:	.....800 litres
Construction:	.....GRP, five-year warranty on hull and deck against osmosis, 12 months on entire boat
Price:	.....From \$444,000. In survey an additional \$24,000
Builder:	.....Seawind Catamarans, ph (02) 9810 1833 or visit www.seawindcats.com , where you can also enjoy a virtual tour of the boat.



Seawind 1160 profile *



Four-cabin layout.



Three-cabin layout.

* Note: The mast is now a single-spreader.



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