

Trawler Talk

Catamaran Trawler Hull Design

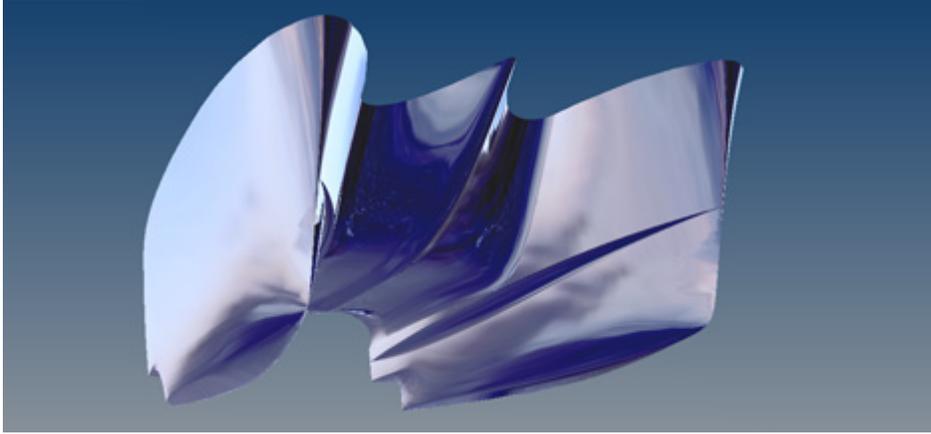
As we try to educate our selves about trawlers these days we can't help but include the power catamaran in the mix. Our education on power cats started about 10 years ago with a 10-foot all fiberglass dingy called a Twin-Vee built in Florida. We bought one at the Miami Boat Show and sold it as a dingy on one of our trawlers but not before we had a chance to play around with it in various wave conditions. We were impressed. It had a lot of interior space for its size and gave a dry and very comfortable ride. Our interest had been aroused and we found ourselves watching the emergence of the larger cruising power cats with a new perspective.

Just like mono-hull boats, multi-hulls (better known as catamarans) come in planing hulls, semi-displacement hulls, and displacement hulls. Individual preferences for speed, performance, and intended use will affect the decision as to which hull design a buyer may choose.

Fuel efficiency, stability, and deck space are hall marks of a catamaran design. Two narrower hulls will slice through the water with less resistance than one large one.

We had first hand experience of the fuel efficiency when we took delivery of a 34 power cat from the factory and cruised it to our home port which was over 900 hundred miles on four of the Great lakes. At a steady 17 knots under varying sea conditions we used under 7 gals per hour total for both engines over a two day period. Another two-day delivery cruising at 14 knots used 3.8 gals per hour. These are the best ratios of fuel consumption to speed that we have ever heard about or experienced in a boat that size!

When you take two hulls and strap them together (it's not quite as simple as that), you increase stability. The ride also has a different feel to it. Many prospective customers ask us to describe the difference between a mono-hull ride and a catamaran ride. The best suggestion is to seatrial them so you can sense and feel the difference for yourself which is not dramatic and often more subjective. Just as in the monohull, the trawler catamaran will give the most comfortable ride.



The design of the catamaran generally dictates a greater width than the comparable size in the monohull. Although this contributes to the stability, the beam is often mentioned as a concern for docking space. We delivered a 43-foot catamaran with a 21 foot beam to the Bahamas from Wisconsin this fall and never had a problem getting a space to dock for the night. You would think that a boating area like the Erie Canal would also be a problem for the wide beam but again it was not. The beam on the 34 cat mentioned above is 16'10" so it will fit in a pretty normal slip.

Lots of deck space is realized as the design allows ample side and forward flat walking areas! This can be very helpful when docking or tying up in locks. It also allows for a lot of flexibility in getting on and off the boat regardless of the dock height.

If you can get past the unique look and style of the catamaran, there are a lot of reasons to consider it for your next boat.

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