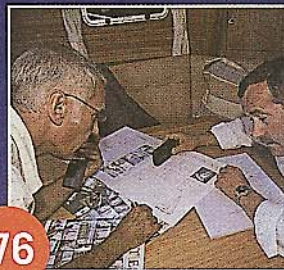


ON TEST

SURVEY!

The sky's the limit for Joe Reynolds and Faith de Sancha who have no set budget limit for their new dream boat



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HEATER INSTALLATION

Fit a diesel heater to your boat in two days. Plus, consult our buyers' guide of available products

BOAT HOOKS

Boat hooks are getting more and more sophisticated. *YM* tests seven of the latest models

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A-Z S

A-Z OF SECOND HAND BOATS

Swansong for the S's

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5-STAR guide

A run down of *YM*'s top tested equipment

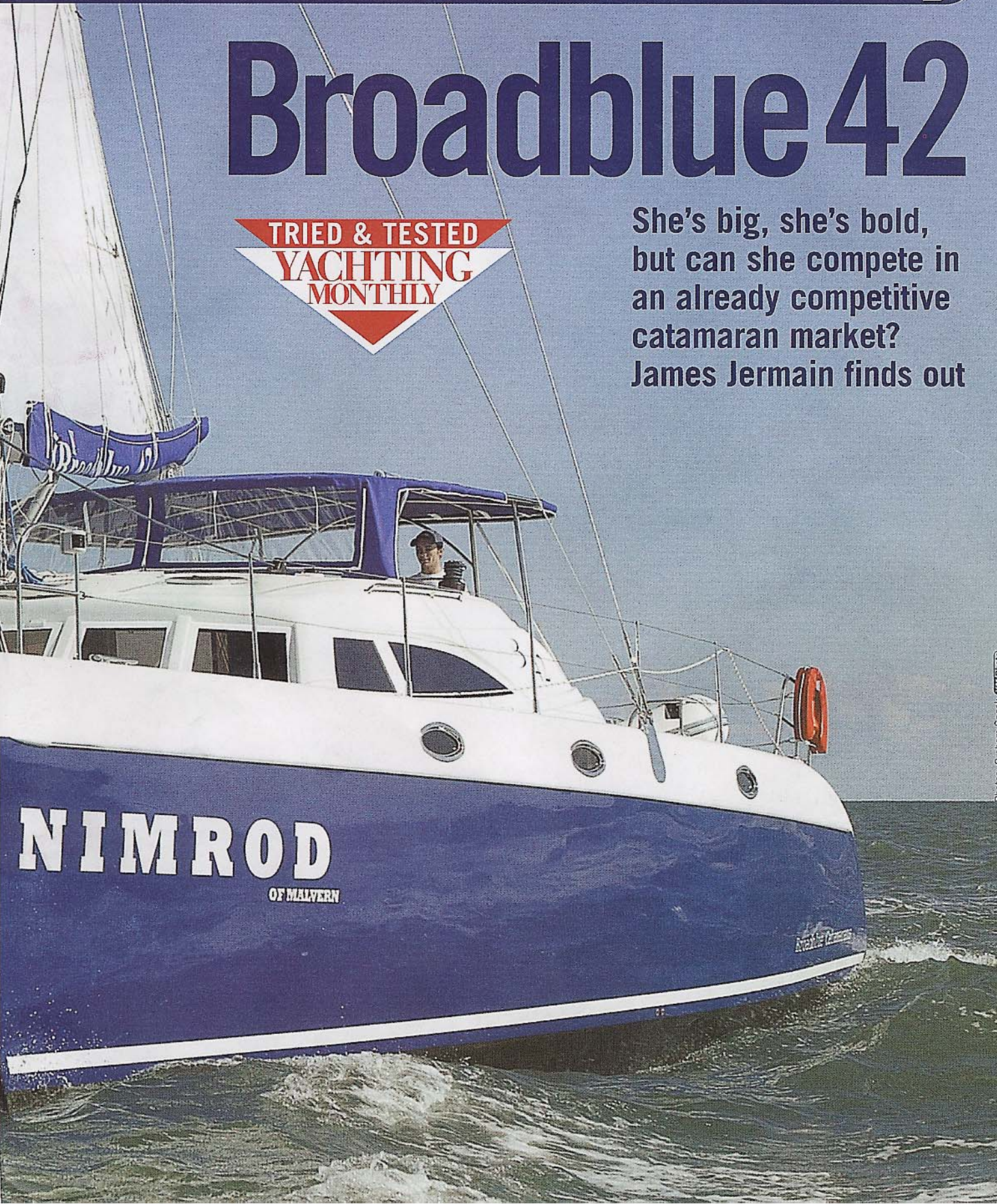
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Broadblue 42

TRIED & TESTED
YACHTING
MONTHLY

She's big, she's bold, but can she compete in an already competitive catamaran market? James Jermain finds out



NIMROD
OF MALVERN

BROADBLUE 42

When a new company, Broadblue, was formed to take on the mantle of Prout Catamarans, as Britain's only significant production multihull builder, its first all-new design was eagerly anticipated. It has taken some time to arrive but it finally made its debut at this year's Southampton Boat Show.

The company needed a striking, modern design to re-establish its position in the market place but what route would it chose? Would it elect to go head-to-head with the French, South African and American builders with a largely charter-orientated model, or remain true to its heritage with a more substantial, conservative model aimed at the private cruising owner?

The Broadblue 42 is most certainly not an old-style Prout with a few added bells and whistles, but it does embody much of the philosophy of the former company. Safety and comfortable passage-making, including the crossing of oceans, are at the heart of the design. Attention has also been paid to improved performance and easier handling but, with a significantly higher displacement than her rivals and a lower sail area/displacement ratio, sheer speed is a lesser priority.

Design

In appearance she is undeniably striking. Her substance is emphasised by the deep blue hulls, and she has high topsides above which the bridge-deck saloon looks comparatively short and low. The most unusual feature, however, is her sheerline, which rises steeply towards the towering bows. These have been made



deliberately high and given more overhang than is currently fashionable. This creates a lot of reserve buoyancy to resist the lee bow being depressed and keeps the boat dry. The length/beam ratio at just under 2:1 is narrower than some but conforms to modern thinking and provides lateral stability without risking pitchpoling. The hulls have elliptical sections designed to give good load carrying with reduced wetted surface area. The midships sections are deep, reducing to virtually nothing at bow and stern. The moulded keels are shorter and deeper than in the days of Prout. All this combines to give the necessary volume to carry weight while allowing for agile handling, especially when tacking.

The transition from hull side to bridge-deck is a gentle curve. It is strong and deflects waves, therefore creating a certain amount of lift and reducing slamming. The design has retained a small central nacelle, the purpose of which is to strengthen the bridge-deck and further reduce slamming. It is much higher off the water than in Prout designs. Watertight bulkheads in all four ends make her virtually unsinkable.

On deck

Climbing aboard the Broadblue means using either a ladder up the side or boarding over the transom where there is a flight of steps. At the top of the transoms are two broad after-decks, which give easy access to the cockpit. This is not too large but quite deep. It is divided between an exterior dining area and the helm station on a plinth to port. The main control station is also to starboard where halyards and reefing lines come back to an electric winch.

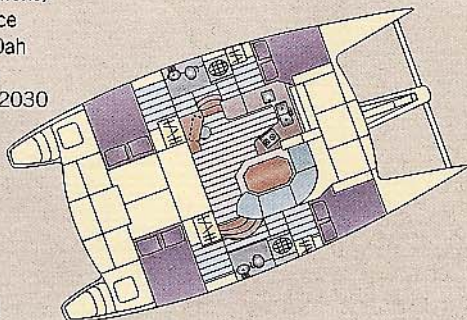
A permanent stainless steel structure supports a soft bimini, which has clear and removable panels to give sight lines to the luffs. The cabin top is too high to see over from the cockpit sole but the bows are clearly in sight from the helm and when standing at the control lines. The sidedecks are wide and well protected and a step gives easy access to the cabin top. The moulded part of the foredeck contains a deep anchor locker, fender locker and gas locker, which has space for two large bottles. A GRP channel runs from the moulded deck to fore crossbeam. The anchor stows under this channel.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS: BROADBLUE 42

Price	£299,037
LOA	12.80m (42ft)
LWL	11.38m (37ft 4in)
Beam	6.70m (22ft)
Draught	1.25m (4ft 1in)
Displacement	9,100kg (20,061 lb)
Sail area (main and genoa)	101m ² (1,088sq ft)
Berths	6/8
Fuel	444 litre (98 gallons)
Water	400 litre (88 gallons)
Batteries	2 x 140ah service batteries, 2 x 80ah engine batteries
Engines (standard)	2 x 30hp Volvo 2030 diesels with saildrives
RCD Category	A
Design	Broadblue
STIX number	TBA
Contact	Broadblue Catamarans
Tel:	01502 518002

OPTIONS

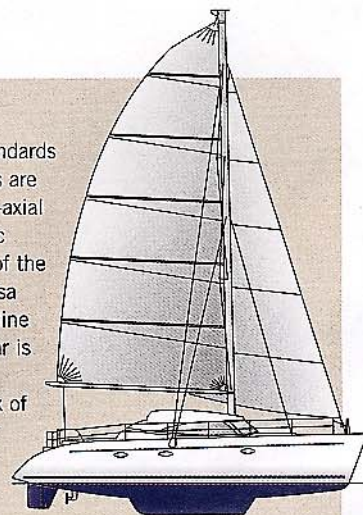
Gennaker kit	£8,758
Davits	£3,472
Bimini	£6,168
Electric halyard winch	£3,229
55hp engines	£5,743
Heating	£3,984
Inverter/charger	£3,127
Blue hulls	£3,378
Launch and commission	£4,089



CONSTRUCTION

By some multihull standards Broadblue's mouldings are quite conventional. Bi-axial rovings and isophthalic resins form the basis of the laminate, which is balsa cored above the waterline and in the deck. Kevlar is added in high stress areas and those at risk of impact, especially the bows and keels. The outer faces of the laminates are also thicker than the inner to improve impact resistance. The basic structure is in two parts, the hulls and underside of the bridge-deck and the deck and cabin top. These are fully bonded.

Most of the structural bulkheads are vacuum bagged round a foam core, as is much of the joinery, which is used as part of the stiffening structure. The rudders are skeg-hung on stainless steel stocks and linked by wire. The steering linkage itself is hydraulic. The keels are integrally moulded and sealed from the hulls to form a double bottom and buoyancy chamber.



FOR

- Well fitted and finished
- Good load carrying
- Seakindly and safe

AGAINST

- Light weather windward performance
- High forecabin bunks
- Expensive

Under sail

Broadblue's sail area is about the same as other cruising cats of this length but her displacement is higher. The heavily roached, fully battened main dominates the rig, though the optional gennaker, set on a short, fixed sprit, gives her a useful bit of turbo-charging when the wind is more than 55° apparent. The aluminium mast is supported by upper and intermediate shrouds to the outer sides of the hulls, plus an inner and outer forestay. The spar is stiffened by upper and lower lateral diamonds. It is a conservative, secure plan best suited to reaching in moderate to strong conditions.

During our trials, we had generally light to moderate winds ranging from 7 to 14 knots (Force 3-4). The sea was slight. We began by broad reaching down Southampton Water to the Solent under full main and gennaker. In the lighter winds she felt a bit sticky and made only 4.2 knots, although with an apparent wind speed of about the same this was understandable. Once we could bring the freshening breeze on to the beam, the gennaker began to pull strongly and speed picked up to just over 7 knots.

The hydraulic steering, with four turns lock to lock had no feel to it as was to be expected, but the steering was refreshingly positive. On the other hand, if the helmsman needed to take a few minutes out to trim a sheet or check a plot, she would run straight and true. She gave her best speeds, not surprisingly, on a close reach, when we topped 8 knots at 60° in 18-knots apparent (12 knots true) and returned a best figure of 8.6 knots in 21 knots apparent wind. She can hold on to full sail in up to 25 to 26 knots apparent.

A barber hauler will allow the gennaker to set up to around 55° but above that it must be furled in favour of the jib. This is effective to about 35° to the apparent wind but 40° gives a better and more efficient speed to windward. In fact, speeds to windward were disappointing. Six knots was her best speed to windward with 16 knots of wind over the deck and tacking through a little more than 90°. However, she tacked remarkably quickly and reliably and was reasonably quick to accelerate back up to speed, provided the helmsman remembered to bear away a few degrees while speed built.

One thing which impressed us was her motion. Although this is quick compared to a monohull, it is much slower and softer than most cruising cats and there was little or no slamming, even when she was buffeted by passing ferries. Her wake was clean, although at higher speeds she dragged her transoms a little due, probably, to the fact that our boat had 55hp engines in place of the standard 30s.

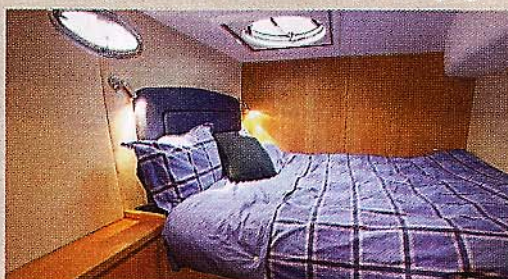
Under power

The 55hp Volvos are probably more powerful than the boat needs and certainly tend to depress the transoms. The standard 30hp Volvos are perhaps adequate for most



Above: the windows and opening hatch allow for good air circulation and ventilation in the spacious galley.

Right: the chart table's triangular shape is awkward but the switch panel has an impressive array of tank gauges



Above: both aftercabins have a double bunk with a padded headboard on the inboard side.

Left: the forecabins have reasonable stowage but the berths are very high and the small step barely adequate for climbing into them.

Right: the fold-out table has a chessboard inlaid into it



circumstances. We found she would cruise quite happily at 8 knots with a top speed just of under 9 knots. Noise levels were low and the installations were smooth. The engines are mounted mainly aft of the accommodation in the quarters with just the forward end accessible from under the bunks in the stern cabins. The main access is through hatches in the after-decks. There is plenty of room to climb in and move all round each engine. Manoeuvring a big cat is daunting at first but with engines in each wing, she can be spun on her own axis and even encouraged to move sideways. Only in strong crosswinds will she be a bit of a handful. In open water, one engine can be shut down for economy and she will still be able to circle in both directions, ahead and astern.

Below decks

The first impression of the interior is of a light, airy saloon fitted out to a standard more often associated with a substantial monohull. Windows give almost 360° vision but the individual, toughened glass panes are small for safety. Some parts of the joinery were still in the prototype stage, and due for improvement. However, the majority, produced by Broadblue's parent company, the furniture makers of the

same name, was accurately made and well finished. The look of substance is not an illusion, but it is not heavy. Much of the interior is built using vacuum-bagged foam sandwich with glass or American cherry-veneered ply as the outer skins.

The saloon is divided more or less 50:50 between the dining area and the galley. The chart table occupies a corner against the after bulkhead. The dinette is raised a few inches off the sole to improve the view out of the windows and has a fold-out table with a chessboard inlaid into it. There is bench seating for six or seven to which fold-out stools will add another couple of places. The table is just large enough for this number. The base of the table contains a couple of drawers, one of which is designed to hold bottles. There are large shelves behind the seating, and hatches which give access to the watertank and freshwater systems.

The galley is large with plenty of Corian-topped work surfaces, a four-burner stove with oven, front-opening fridge and top-opening cool-box. Around it is a wealth of stowage in lockers and drawers. There is an opening window ahead of it and a hatch above so air circulation should be good. The chart table is an awkward triangular shape but it is large enough to take

