

A blue and white sailboat with a large black sail and a Chinese flag flying from the mast. The sail has the text 'GP60-03' on it. The boat is on the water under a clear blue sky.

# GUNBOAT 60

FAST BOAT OR WAS IT A LONG PASSAGE TO CHINA

more photos and story at [www.prosailasia.com](http://www.prosailasia.com) and [facebook.com/TeamProSailAsia](https://www.facebook.com/TeamProSailAsia)

“Never start a delivery on a Friday” - Simon Simmon’s words now echo! “It’s just plain bad luck.” Hindsight is a wonderful thing and the other pearly words of wisdom - “the typhoons don’t normally come far south, unless you leave on a Friday!”

And so it was that we departed Singapore on Friday the 21st June bound for Xiamen, China in the worst haze in history with Gunboat 60-03.

Moonwave is the first of the Iren’s Series of Gunboats and despite being No. 03 she is the first out clocking up the miles.

Now that is what gun boats are supposed to do and 6500 miles in 6 months is good going. But are they all they are hyped up to be?

# a study of the colour BLUE

The finish of the dolphin blue boat is, stupendous and any finish is only as good as the surface preparation, so full marks there to the yard and happy polishing to the crew. It is also the very first thing you notice about the Gunboat 60's that are rolling out of the China yard of Hudson Marine. It is simply glorious to look at.

After having spent just about 2000 miles on GB60-03 we can tell you that the single best feature of the boat without doubt is her "construction. There is no squeaking in the whole structure. There is NO flex between hulls. When you're loaded up and sailing you can open every door and window without anything hanging up. There is no deflexion between the bows even when you have the big 300 sqm kite powering

up and you're running into waves. It is an incredibly stiff structure that Hudson and Hakes have been able to put together.

But this is a serious structure. A one-piece carbon mono-block molding that includes the hulls and bridge deck floor. The resin-infused system takes a week to set up in the mold and two hours for the resin to saturate the laminates when they open the taps. The mold is maintained in a climate-controlled room and heated in the during the curing process.

To give you an idea of the scale of production, four Gunboat 60's sit on their shop dollies on the shop floor and are simply be dwarfed by the shed as 400 workers go about the task of

building boats. The Gunboat 60 is a full carbon construction. Everything you touch is the Carbon! Hudson Marine have extensive experience in putting boats together but the recent infusion of Paul Hakes and his team into the corporate structure has made a profound difference as the team from Hakes Marine operate at very high standards having earned the respect from building fastidious race machines in New Zealand.

The company is huge, the boat sheds are enormous and yet the attention to detail is not over looked and the results speak for themselves. The Iren's Gunboat is a complicated structure and a very complex build. That Hudson Yachts has been able to mold 4 GB 60's in such a short period is really a great

feat. Hudson Yachts expects to ramp production up to 6 boats a year - that's quite incredible.

Complexity comes in the form of retractable prop shafts, retractable rudders, 3m deep centre-boards - pay attention here, centre-boards not dagger-boards. A massive Maarstrom rotating carbon wing mast and the really complex bit - a hybrid re-generation energy system. This is a brave undertaking for any manufacturer, just the under water appendages alone would be enough to put most factories off before even commencing work!

In the history of sailing, even dinghy's have given up on centreboards in favour of the far simpler and more reliable dagger-board style let alone a large cat

that can generate some 60,000 lb. of force on the foils!

Controlling all of these systems is a brain box and a lot of hydraulics. Whilst the rudders retract manually, the centre-boards are controlled at a touch on the small Sailtec Screen which is right next to a big RED 'kill' button. To get the boards up or down you simply touch the screen. The same screen gives an active read out of shroud and mainsheet loads in kg s.

The load cells in the shrouds can detect the load and if need be, dump the mainsheet load to prevent hull flying - but that would spoil all the fun! The Sailtec system works flawlessly and it is very interesting to watch the mainsheet load progressively rack up along with the shroud loads!

The mainsheet is hydraulically governed and there is a little red button located in a few strategic points around the helm station. The little red button will dump the mainsheet hydraulics rapidly which is very different to the big red KILL button. The Kill button immobilises ALL systems onboard - you will be left with a mute ship until you reboot the system. So basically - DON'T touch unless you have an extreme emergency on your hands.

At about this point, most people say "it's too complicated" but lets finish the story first. The regenerative hybrid energy system is a fantastic idea but it too adds to the complexity and to outline what it is...

Two large electric motors are connected to the prop' shafts. When you leave the





dock, it will be silent thrust. When you are sailing you can extract power from the motion by simply trailing the props in the water and electrical power to the tune of 5Kva is yours to be had. In the picture above, the port motor is generating 1amp while the boat was sailing at about 9 knots. So in theory, if you lived in an area of abundant wind power you might never need to top up your diesel tanks! On the trip to Xiamen we covered some 2000 nm's and burnt only about 100 litres of fuel, then again we did run out of wind and so the generators were called upon to top up the 48 cells that are onboard.

While the concept is fantastic the drawback is that when you run out of wind you will have to rely on electric motors for motion. The amount of current consumed requires the generators to kick in to top the cell levels up to appropriate levels. Governing the state-of-charge is the brains of the system and whilst things are automated it does require more monitoring than a conventional propulsion system.

The consumption figures are something like, the re-gen process of trailing the shafts will rob the boat speed by 1 to 5 knots depending upon how fast you are traveling. The flip side is, it takes about

2 hours of fast sailing to top all the cells up.

In Southeast Asia we suffer from erratic winds and long periods of no wind - just like on the delivery from Singapore to China. During the down periods the generator is called upon about every 15 minutes to top the cells up.

Hybrids in boat - it's a brave new world! Did I become a fan of the system on the trip? You'll have to read on to find that out!

Of course the real plus to having all this electrical current lying around is, loads of hot water, 200 litres of fresh water/hour and ultimately - FRESH muffins daily from the galley of Sophie!

#### In the pit...

Perhaps the most prominent feature of the Gunboat design is the forward cockpit and central helm design. The cockpit is over waist deep so is a very secure area and contrary to popular opinion, not wet as one might assume. The helm station is just aft of the cockpit and behind a flat glass panel with two side doors. The central helm station was incorporated to keep the owner/driver involved with the social atmosphere onboard.

With this Gunboat being so solidly constructed you get the feeling from the forward cockpit that you are the commander of a Sherman tank! This image is exaggerated as the bow pole extends from the main beam to beyond the bow.

The forward cockpit access doors create a great amount of flow through ventilation but at the expense of cabin volume as the cockpit uses up a fair amount of space. The Iren's design is also a cab-aft shape which keeps all of the bridge deck cabin further than half way back. Whether this is good or bad depends upon your own perspective but in our view this only encourages and aft weight bias. Any items which find their way onboard are generally stored within the living space. Having the living space more aft encourages the weight to move back and this in turn pushes the transoms further down. But it's a point of personal preference.

The front decks are heavily radiused and in keeping with Nigel Iren's work on great boats like Sodebo, end in a nicely scalloped feature. The radiused crown looks like a jewel and whereas on the mega-trimarans it serves a very necessary water shedding purpose, on the GB60 if you manage to submerge

# a study of the colour GREY

worst haze in history, visibility 300m, that is a ship in the background



the front deck to that extreme, you will be in a world of pain! Suffice to say, it's a design detail that gives the boat a very distinctive and purposeful look.

Moonwave's finish is exemplary and we've even been told that photos "don't do the boat justice"! We would have to agree. The paint has a deep luster and has only been buffed once in six months although suffering under the harsh Southeast Asian conditions of heat, humidity and high UV.

The chine which runs the length of the hull helps to turn any spray downwards and really keeps the forward cockpit dry. The flare also helps to create more interior volume in the hulls while keeping the waterline beam as narrow as practical. Bow penetration is as clean as anything creating minimum bow wave. The bows also lift very easily as the boat accelerates... That's a good thing. The bow section back to about the front beam is a safety crash box with a water tight bulkhead. All nice and safe.

Whilst the hulls are narrow by caravan standards they are a good compromise between volume and performance. Remember, more volume in the hulls will only detract from the overall performance

of the boat. The Gunboat has great performance and still manages her interior space very well. The port hull has a crew cabin forward with bunks for two crew and has a separate entry from deck level complete with a private head. Midships has a double berth and another double berth aft. The Starboard hull has a more generous head forward with a big storage area forward. Midships has a double berth then the owners head and another double berth aft.

She's a clean hull that offers a plush ride that has more Cadillac ride qualities than a hard edge full sports machine. The hull rocker endows her with a smooth motion through waves with little pounding.

At the top of the boarding steps are two black steps that lead to the side decks. While these look like regular steps they are in fact a very cunning way of creating space in the aft double berth cabin. The black glass also gets light into the aft cabin in a very nice way. In many designs, the aft cabin is always up against the rear bulkhead and relies on side lighting.

In the Gunboat 60, the step lights offer a great view aft and especially when your making speed, it's really nice to watch

the ocean pouring out the back of the transom. Room with a view!

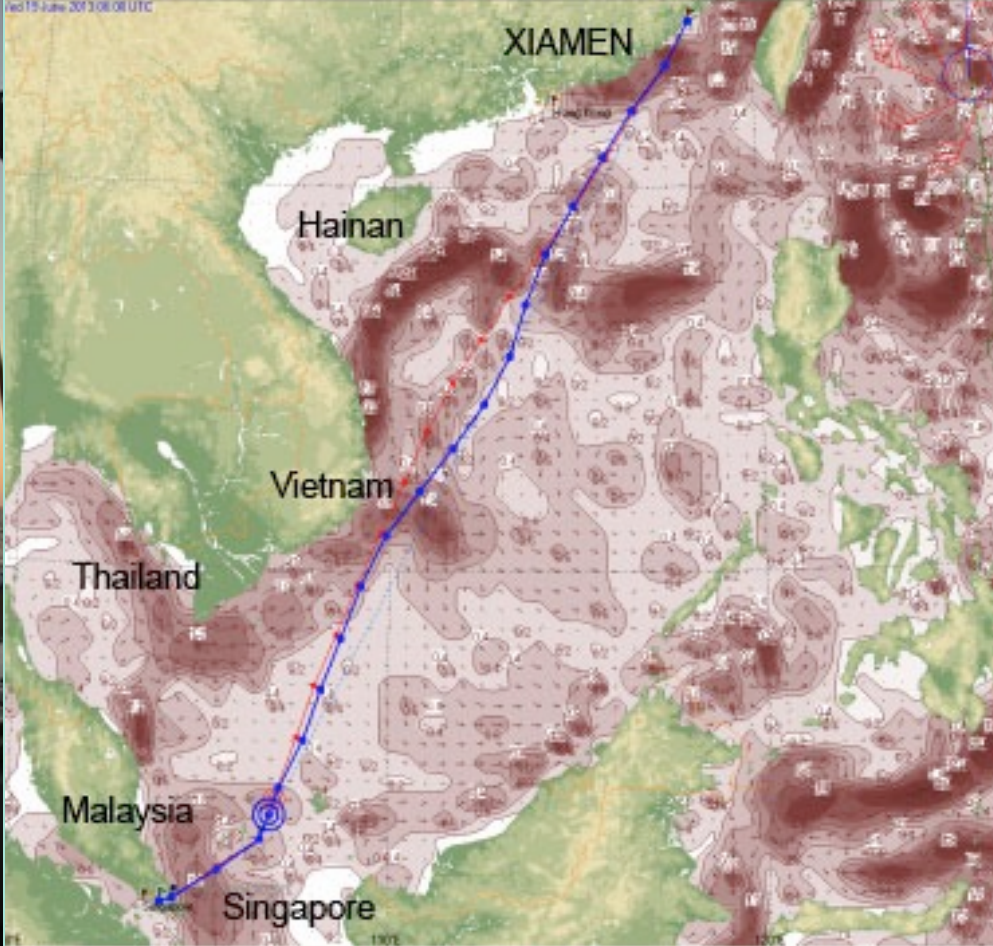
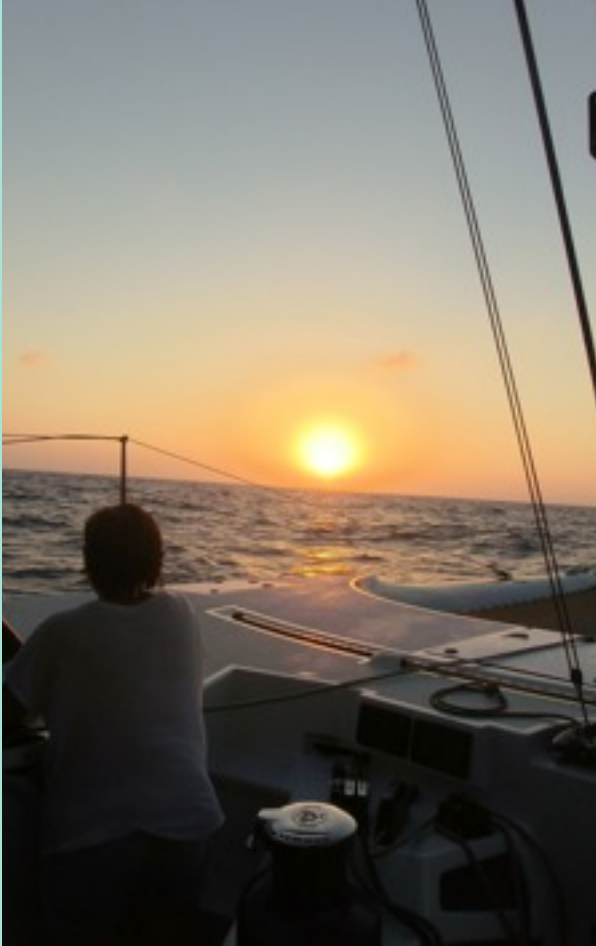
## 1700 miles on a Gunboat 60...

Departing Singapore on Friday in the worst haze in history. The haze is created by the burning of the rainforest on the Indonesian Island of Sumatra. With visibility in the 400m range, it makes navigating one of the world's busiest shipping lanes a tricky business. The blanket of haze wouldn't totally lift until we hit Thai waters - that's a huge area under a foggy haze and that is millions of trees up in smoke!

But the haze's cloak also indicates that the SW Monsoon is in place and quite uncharacteristically, Singapore was experiencing a steady breeze of 20 knots. "You guys will fly up there" Clive commented as he handed us a track based on the wind. Head out to the Anambas Islands then head more north to the Vietnam coast before cutting out to the China coastline.

At this time of year, typhoons move westward blasting the Philippines first then turn north and whack into Taiwan. But they don't normally come to far south unless, you leave on a Friday. Moving through Singapore port with poor visibility





was a slow affair with a constant lookout for moving ships obscured by the grey haze. Singapore has some 300 ships within port limits at any given time.

The reason for Moonwave being delivered back to the factory in Xiamen was to have upgraded Hybrid engines installed. This was an undertaking by Moonwave's owner and Hudson Marine. The originally specified motors were air-cooled and the new updated motors are water cooled. Whilst air-cooled motors might be ok in other climates they suffer in our hot environment and as such, the sink temperatures soar. The only way to keep temperatures at palatable levels was to not use maximum throttle. This generally restricted motoring speeds to 4 knots, but it's a Gunboat and is capable of sailing much faster given any breeze.

This is a huge undertaking to replace the motors but as Paul Hakes explained "we want to get this exactly right as we are building more of these Gunboats and to get it really right is the most important thing to us". Most builders would shy away from such an expensive exercise so it really is respect to Hudson for insisting that it is perfected. The new water-cooled

motors are already being installed in the current builds and that will greatly improve the motoring performance of the craft.

Teething problems are common amongst all new designs so it is quite fortuitous to have Moonwave covering so many miles and then having all the feedback built back into subsequent models. That's a great thing for all the other owners as well and at the end of the day, Moonwave will be updated and then leave Xiamen in much better form than when she first left. It's also par-for-the-course as far as hybrid systems in boats are concerned as the technology is still really in its infancy.

Are we fans of the system?

Not exactly. This has as much to do with the erratic winds of our sailing environment as it is to do with the system itself. One thing for sure, in Southeast Asia it will always be easier to service a Yanmar diesel and sail drive than a hybrid. Or maybe we just hang on to the old way of 'simpler is better' when it comes to boats!

Our departure out of Singapore was held up awaiting a generator part to show up. Unfortunately this put us just behind a great weather window that

would have seen us run in 20 knots SW almost all the way up.

**Things that go bump in the night.**

First night out plain sailing was interrupted by a loud bang as if we had hit something but, there was no noise of something scraping its way down the hull. The morning check of the bilges revealed that the centreboard shear pin had, sheared! "We must have hit something with the centreboard" was the general consensus.

But a week later and 5 shear pins down, the common thought was that the centreboard simply over loads the pins. That's a design specification not a build quality issue and fairly easy sorted.

It was slow going from Singapore and up the Malaysian coast seemingly dragging the haze with us. Of course the positive spin on the haze is that it creates a spectacular red ball sunset and it does keep day time temperatures lower than normal!

It was like bursting into a new environment as we crossed into Thai waters. The haze lifted, the water was emerald blue, the sky was clear and the fishing aeroplane started singing as the lure was snapped up by a bonito.

*“like fighting some  
unholy war” . . . RIP Amy Winehouse*

0600 hours and one of the first draw backs of the Gunboat 60 comes to light!

“Slow it down, slow it down” Sebastian is yelling! “I can’t fight the fish at this speed!”

And so it was that we ended up with a beautiful Yellow Fin Sashimi for lunch.

During the trip, we caught fish in Thai and China waters this is despite all the hundreds of fishing boats that you see every night dragging everything out of the ocean. In fact it is the fishing boats that will play havoc with your safe passage and not the hundreds of commercial ships that ply the shipping routes. Super bright lights on the fishing boats mask all or any navigation lights so it’s virtually impossible to see which way they are moving. It’s pretty easy to see why the less wary get run down by trawlers.







## dodging tropical storm RUMBIA

a long night for Sophie watching the anchor scribe a seahorse on the screen



But our real unholy war came in the form of Rumbia, a tropical storm that had been brewing east of the Philippines. Sebastian had been keeping an eye on this and by evening mentioned that Rumbia had moved much more south than is normal. We'd spent the last two days eased off allowing Rumbia to pass in front but with its southern turn, we'd have to go to the fall back plan - run away! Simons words echoed true "never leave on a Friday"!

And so it was that we found shelter behind Hainan Island and to Sebastian's credit, we found the perfect anchorage. The brunt of the storm came with just 40 knots of breeze at about 0300 and by dawn, it had dropped to 20 knots from the Southeast.

We left the anchorage with 2 reefs in the main and the solent flying. With 20 knots behind her the GB60 just feels powered up like a spirited cat. The north channel of Hainan is filled with traffic and, according to the charts, lined with a mine field! No wandering off this channel then!

Rumbia's diversion added some 400 nmiles to our track. That pesky TTD gauge was now reading more hours than when we left! Darn it! Just ahead of RUMBIA, a fabulous sunset lit up our neighbours for the evening - a whole bunch of coastal freighters also taking refuge in an area of very interesting fish farms.

We'd successfully averted the storm with no real excitement. Our next target would be Hong Kong. The few hundred miles to Hong Kong were pleasant sailing. The calm behind the storm induced some big patches of windless zones, not good for progress especially considering the air-cooled hybrids couldn't be loaded up. This gives you the feeling of being a duck in the shooting gallery as hundreds of big ships lined up the entrance to Hong Kong.

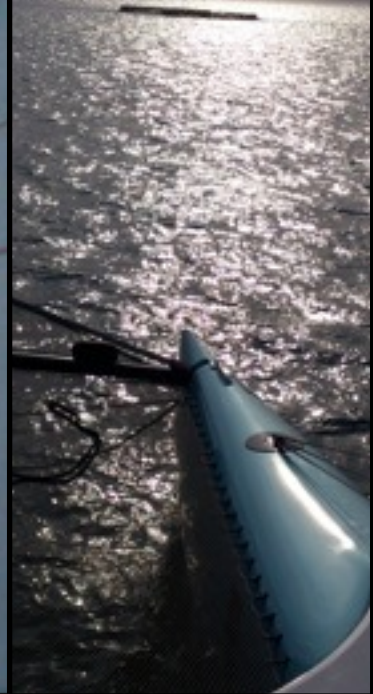
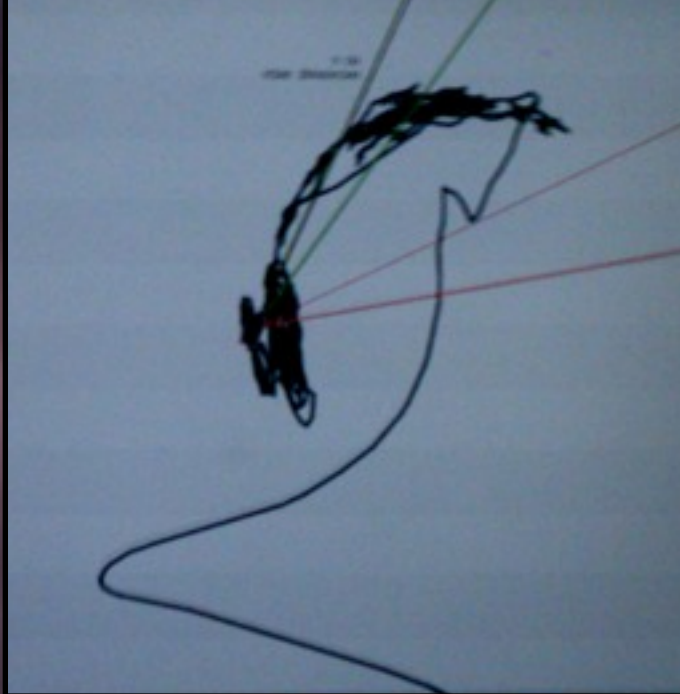
"Moonwave, moonwave, moonwave... This is the Kiran... Could you please alter course and go aft of us?"

A check on the AIS... Kiran is 1100 feet long and fully loaded! Still 10 miles away but there was no debate!

Things changed when there was wind. Closing speeds on ultra large vessels approached 30 knots, the 15 that we were sailing at and the 15 that they were doing in the opposite direction - then it was fun.

As evening approached, dinner was being prepared in the galley as Sebastian and Sophie pumped the boat and red kite up to 16 - 18 knots. That's uncanny. Here you are preparing a meal in the galley as the boat rushes head long into the night. The only sensation of speed you get in the up-galley is the sound of water flowing off the transom or in this case, the sound of a waterfall.





As dinner hits the table, you dial the boat down to about 15 knots and everyone sits for a civilised meal!

Perhaps that highlights the appeal of the Gunboat. She's not a race boat but she is a very capable premiere cruising cat. She can hit high speeds but offers that Cadillac ride. In the days before we sheltered behind Hainan, Scott had been on deck and commented to Sebastian,

"Definitely not a race boat, there's no spare halyards up there"... Not a day later... Scott hooks up the spinnaker halyard and gives it a tug!

Silence followed by "it's okay, tomorrow we can use the main halyard to fetch it down".

During the night dodging fishing traps there's a loud bang as if the rig is coming down! The main has nicely flaked itself into its permanent lazy jack home, without human intervention!

Sebastian likes puzzles "it makes me think of solutions"! So it was scott's fault for bringing up the subject of no-spare-halyard and now Moonwave was giving us the treatment!

"Please pass slowly to our port side, we have a man up the mast" was the radio call to all passing ships as Sebastian took advantage of the calm before the storm to scale the 28 metre

rig. Using the screecher halyard to get near the spinnaker halyard and send that back down with a bunch of nuts on a messenger. Back to deck level and then up again now on the retrieved spinnaker halyard to fetch the main halyard.

The Main halyard after 6000 miles had chaffed itself away in the massive head board. It left a 40 cm long pig tail of Dyneema dangling from the mast. Luckily Sebastian's skills are greater than just sailing and he was able to splice a new butt end onto the halyard and re-affix the whole lot. Great job, just in time.

Any future GB 60 owners out there, please take note... Chaffing of the halyard will occur. Make sure you check it regularly! See it is great to have a type out there sailing so that future models will be improved. Well that and those shear pins on the centreboards.

If you think Singapore is a busy port you'd be right. But imagine the same 500 boat scenario at every Chinese port you sail past and you begin to fathom the extent of China's export business. Hong Kong has long been a traders paradise and no where more evident in the shipping channels 30 miles outside as every manner of ship, boat, trawler and Gunboat pass by!

Like a kitten on a pedestrian crossing, we passed Hong Kong longing to visit a shopping mall, at a gentleman's pace of 3,5 knots in no wind at all!

A person in a white tank top is pouring a drink into a glass at a bar. The scene is dimly lit with blue and yellow lights. The text is overlaid on the upper part of the image.


## the real benefit of HYBRIDS

you won't save the world... you won't save fuel... you won't be more green... no... no... no...

The REAL benefit of Hybrid Technology on boats so so that you can recreate this scene time and again! Proper desert with every meal! In all we sailed some 2200 nautical miles from Singapore and although these electric motors were not operating at full capacity we burned maybe 150 litres of Diesel. That's the real benefit!

The current setup has under-spec'd motors really not suitable for the task. The Fischer-Panda generators cut in to keep the State of Charge at optimal levels and then switch off automatically once they have achieved that. Under the current guise, the gen-set will start and run at 2100 rpm instantly. Hudson Marine engineers are changing to water cooled motors and then having load sensing gen-set controls that will determine the exact amount of current required to fulfill the task at hand and then set the rpm to suit. This will reduce ambient heat and noise substantially within the hull confines where the machinery is installed.

We are fans of the Hybrid concept and well, some day all yachts will have it. But the Hybrid technology is something of a specialised field and only the likes of Toyota and Honda have been able to really perfect. Brave new world! Yes. One worth exploring? Yes. But on my boat... KISS... I want to go fast and long under motor too!

A blue cup of soup with a biscuit and chocolate sauce. The biscuit is topped with a drizzle of chocolate sauce. The cup is on a white plate with a decorative chocolate drizzle.





The last stretch of any trip is the longest bit. The anticipation of arriving is a burden. The last sunset was a particularly colourful one with a pod of dolphins making a brief appearance. Boats speeds throughout that day hovered around 10 - 15 knots with the wind at about 135 degrees and 15 - 20 knots in strength. We've always maintained that 10 knots is about the minimum cruising speed, below that well the scenery just doesn't change enough.

By now that pesky TTD gauge was into single digits - FINALLY!

Recreation boating is a relatively new thing to China so the boating laws are really shipping ones. This necessitated Moonwave on going into the commercial anchorage immediately upon arrival. The next day, the agent would come onboard with the Pilot to guide us to the marina.

The system works but it does take some organising again, we are lucky to have many willing hands from Hudson Marine there to assist for without them scaling the mountains of paperwork required would be impossible. Emily and Penny many thanks as when we finally handed over our passports on the dock, things happened as if by magic! No hiccups at all and the whole process was accomplished with great ease disguising the countless phone calls, emails and running around that Hudson's ladies were required to do.

And so it was that our last anchorage was right in the middle of Xiamen Port. Moonwave accompanied by yet more ships! Xiamen is a beautiful island with a well developed infrastructure and a clean atmosphere. We'd been here before when Moonwave first hit the water and now we were back.



Xiamen is a lovely island and when you get this close you start to think of all the things you will do when you get ashore.

We thought we might get land sick, but that didn't happen at all! We could pretty much figure that it would involve food and a lot of it! Not because we were underfed onboard but rather because Hudson himself is a great host and as a great host his mission is to make sure you are well fed. Surely that would add 3 kgs to waistline as that is pretty much normal!

Sixteen days for four people in a relatively small space is probably enough for everyone. As Moonwave was made secure to the dock and formalities finalised, Sebastian steps off, walks

to the next pen where a boat called Flow is berthed. Flow is waiting for him as within the next 4 days Sebastian will load up and sail off to New York.

Flow is GB60-02 and has benefitted from all the sailing that Moonwave has been doing. Upgraded hybrid system, doubled air-con capacity etc...

Sophie, the real captain of Moonwave, has been with her since commissioning now logs 6500 miles and that makes Sophie the most experienced GB60 crew in the world. Mind you, Sebastian is about to smash that by adding 20,000 miles on the voyage to the Big Apple unless, Sophie sails too!





goddess of FORTUNE





They say, imitation is the finest form of flattery. Now look at this. Is one bow just like the other? FLOW and MOONWAVE are twins. Moonwave will head to Australia later on while Flow will make her way to the States. The next GB60 released by Hudson will find its way into Southeast Asia where she will surely appear like a jewel on the sailing scene.

*So what's she really like?*

We come from a racing angle so with that in mind...  
We'd like more halyards in that glorious Maarstrom tree.

*Call us old fashioned but KISS works for us.*

We agree with the concept of Hybrids, it is the way forward but maybe not just yet. When the likes of Toyota get behind a Hybrid boat, you will know the time is ready. Until then, Hybrids in the boating world will remain in the realm of small pioneering builders.

*Centreboards, are not out taste.*

The concept is sound. "If you hit something they will shear and retract". TRUE. Then the object you hit will take out your drive and if that's retracted, take your rudder off. We'll stay with the sacrificial daggerboards thanks, especially curved ones!

daggerboards also mean that you don't drag around a huge open slot that just scoops water out of the ocean and slows you down. In the while trip only once did we try 3/4 board down and you could watch the speed drop as the foil extended opening the cavity with it. There is a reason why all the race boats still use daggers! The other reason is simplicity and reliability.

*Retractable rudders on such a big boat are finicky.* Sure it allows you to get into the shallows. But it will be at the expense of longevity. In the Iren's GB design, a huge drum contains the rudders blade. The foil can be raised through the drum. The engineering of the drum is massive. It adds weight and there is no way to stop the ingest of water into the drum. Invariably, you are dragging around a hundred kilos of water in the drums... At the back of the boat, that's slow. The complexity of the drum etc will only add to maintenance woes later.

*She is a premiere cruising cat.* Name me the cruising cats that can really exceed 20 knots in moderate winds and there's probably only a handful. Gunboat created a new genre of catamaran by having a comfortable platform that moved fast.



honey I'm HOME



Faster than a lot of race boats, in a straight line. Sure Moonwave peaked at 30.1 knots on the delivery from Hong Kong to Singapore during the NE Monsoon. But it's speed that is more of a straight line speed and NOT a round the cans type.

When the double deck cruising caravans are sailing at 9 knots the Gunboat and boats of the genre will be doing double that with the same level of sailing comfort albeit with less space.

Since we stepped ashore we received many comments about how long the trip was. Our anticipation of experiencing 25+ on a GB was sadly never met.

That was mainly the conditions and the fact that the boat was being delivered back to the factory. as such there was no real requirement to push the boat hard but rather, get it there.

From what we could observe and doing it by the book, the shifting points are low. Sure that Maarstrom rig is worth a fortune so keeping the down-shifting points to low airspeed numbers will ultimately protect the rig it does mean that the platform will never be loaded to anywhere near her capacity.

*But the biggest hinderance to our progress was the overheating motor.* I understand from Paul Hakes that those motors are going to make very good mooring blocks very soon!

Now its weird that we rate a sailing boat by its motoring ability. In Southeast Asia we are close to the Equator. That means light variable winds full stop. When you are racing it is fully acceptable to deal with anything that is thrown at you. When you are passage making well it's different. We also suffer strong tides 2-3 knots is the norm' but 5-6 is possible. We also have tight shipping lanes where container ships can do 23 knots. Having good reliable power on hand is a necessity. We look forward to trying Moonwave after she's had the twin heart transplant as we're sure she will be a different creature.

To burn just 150 litres in the 2000 nm journey is remarkable and the

regeneration capability is a great thing - but it does need wind power to shove the boat along.

Making 1 or 2 amps at 8 knots sailing speed is nothing but making 5kva at 18 knots is really something. However It comes at the expense of speed and cost. A hybrid system will be roughly 250,000 dollars more than a conventional drive - in anyone's book, that's a lot of Diesel.

*Comfort wise, the GB60 is cosy.* It doesn't have vast acres and caravan spaces. The hulls are a good compromise between volume for living and slender for speed. That they have managed to get three comfortable cabins into the hull spaces is a great feat.

*What we meant about straight line speed is the sheeting points.* The screecher is non-overlapping and comes to one exit block molded into the forward cockpit gunwhale. It also happens to cross right over the access steps! While that is bit of a bug, the real bug is the single point sheeting. If you have 20 knots true at 100 degrees you will go fast. It is designed for that point, the sail will exhaust properly and everything will be super. Change the parameters slightly and then the picture changes. You really need a barber-auler or a tweaker to control the twist in the leech. Then you look around the deck and you realise... It's not a race boat, there are no real tweaker points. Ditto the spinnakers. It will be a quick fix but one that maybe many Gunboat owners won't worry about.

*Setting up a jibe or a tack takes some planning.* A jibe will generally cost you 5 - 10 minutes. It starts with pulling the rotating mast to the centre. Then hauling the main traveler to the centre. Whilst that's not a lot of work, the cockpit has two primary winches. You need to unload any sheets, then reload the rotation lines. Then you unload the rotation lines and load the traveler lines. When you're done. reload the sheets again.

It would be easily fixed with a couple of secondary winches. But there really isn't space on the 'work bench'. The

forward cockpit also robs the salon of interior space. Most people buy cats for... the interior space! So you really have to understand what you want to achieve with your sailing to decide on the forward cockpit arrangement.

*Central helm?* It is true you can see four corners from there. There is a forward wheel so you can stand to one side and sail the boat in fresh air from the doorway. The pain is, you will have to stand!

The dark tinted glass will give you your next challenge. After dark when you shut the doors you will see, nothing! I'm obviously old-school, I like to have my head in the breeze at night!

We have the feeling that most people like to sit to one side while helming, like you do on a mono-maran. This allows you to see the sail trim while you feel the reaction of the boat through the gunwhale. That's impossible to do on the GB. So wouldn't it be nice if they created a cat that you could alter the helm position depending upon how you felt!

*So if she raced in Asia what would the outcome be?* Hmmm, good and tough one.

If the Raja Muda had wind all the way, a good chance. Phuket Race Week, tight track with lots of breeze, she'd be beaten by local cats that can change gears, tack and jibe much quicker as they have been set up for that. Unfortunately they cost a lot less than the GB too!

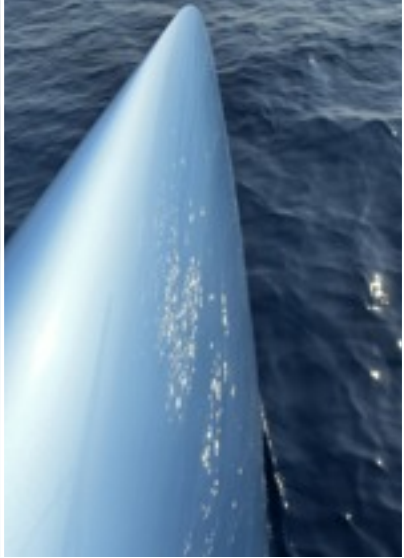
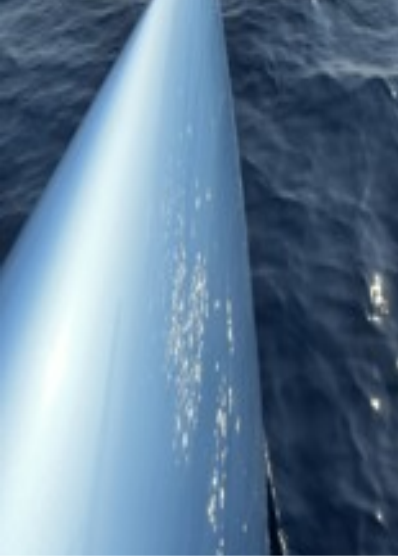
*What's the plus of owning the GB60?*

Like anything, once the emotion of design fades you are only left with the build quality! This is awesome build quality. That Carbon platform will be just as good in 20 years as it is today. When the drip-dry polyester cats will be soft and creaky, this machine will be as rigid as ever.

*Perhaps the negative is...* It is too much carbon! It uses so much Carbon that future generations might miss out!

- scott, team pro sail asia









so this is XIAMEN

it is a bit different from what you expect when anyone says China  
all photos taken with a Sony Xperia S which makes really good phone calls too



