



ICONIC OFFSHORE

Formula Icon 54

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THE ICON 54 is a New Zealand built offshore express cruiser with an impressive hull design and blue water pedigree.

The express cruiser is a new release for established New Zealand builder, Formula Cruisers and makes its Australian debut at the 2008 Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show. The first of the Icon 54s was built in December 2006 and our test boat was hull number five.

Why is this express offshore so different? There are many reasons, not the least being that the entire boat is built to survey standards including USL and NZMSA. This means the Icon 54 is built with a solid fibreglass bottom and foam cored sides.

Construction involves a combination of resin infusion and vacuum bag technology and feature one piece moulds including hull grid liners and deck moulds. Every aspect of the build process is independently inspected and certified to survey standards. This construction process produces a higher quality, more consistent, better finished boat with maximum strength for minimum weight.

There is however much more to this impressive New Zealand cruiser. The hull has been designed with a pronounced Carolina flare, full length reverse chines and strakes which deliver a soft, dry ride even in adverse conditions. In fact, the ride is so soft, it has to be experienced to be believed. The Icon 54's

performance is no doubt directly related to the cruiser's exceptionally wide beam - some 18 feet 7".

Formula's designers and naval architects have delivered a distinctively different express cruiser. The Icon 54 features, without doubt, the widest and safest side decks of any boat we have tested in the 50 - 60 foot class while still delivering a spacious saloon and flying bridge, complete with enclosed hardtop.

The Icon is powered by twin MTU Series 60 turbo diesels producing 825hp. She has stainless steel shafts, four blade ZF props, rudders and gearboxes and has a surprising turn of speed. At wide open throttle







(2350rpm), the super quiet MTUs gave the express cruiser a top speed of 32 knots. At a comfortable cruising speed of 25 knots, the MTUs run at 2,000rpm burning a very acceptable 113 litres of fuel per hour. The underwater exhaust systems used on the Icon 54 are excellent and deliver a whisper quiet ride.

While the design of the Icon 54 admirably meets the requirements of those who require a canyon runner or long distance coastal cruiser, the interior design and quality of fitout is nothing short of luxurious with sensible levels of practicality.

The cruiser is built to an exceptionally high standard. Everything about the Icon 54 spells class with a capital 'C'. The cockpit and swim platform feature teak decking. The transom accommodates a live bait tank on either side while a concealed gas barbecue

and sink have been set into the transom as well. There are twin hatches, both fitted with gas lifts, which provide access to the lazarette. Rod lockers are located under the coamings on both sides of the cockpit and forward of the cockpit below the electric drop down alfresco window, is a massive 160 litre freezer concealed under a comfortable bench lounge.

On deck, the express cruiser is simply brilliant. The self draining cockpit with its stainless steel grated scupper system quickly dispels water even when backing up. A starboard side moulded stairwell with teak treads leads to the flying bridge. The stairwell moulding houses a washer/dryer as well as a large locker for ancillary storage. Steps which lead to the side decks are the safest I have encountered on a cruiser in this class. Normally when canyon runners are fitted with game poles, the poles can

interfere with forward passage however the outriggers are perfectly positioned and don't intrude on the side decks. Safety rails run aft to the cockpit and curved grab rails follow the contour of the bridge superstructure.

The foredeck is expansive and houses a tender cradle and 24v electric crane. Extra safety is provided by the raised bulwark upon which the bow rails have been mounted. The anchoring system is powered by a Lofrans windlass with 100 metres of chain and a 60kg Delta anchor, to meet survey requirements. The anchor rests in a recessed stainless steel channel while a second anchor can be set using an above bow roller system.

The Icon 54 is controlled from the flybridge with the helm set in the aft port quarter on a raised teak section. Vision from the helm forward is superb and benefits largely from



narrow support struts separating each windscreen as well as curved quarter glass. Vision to the cockpit is somewhat interrupted because of the placement of a teak bench seat behind the helm. The dash is uncluttered although it does accommodate a wealth of instrumentation. Raymarine systems have been preferred and these include twin E120 GPS chartplotters linked to radar. In addition, an E80 display is used for camera scans to the bow, engine room and cockpit.

ST 60 Series instruments have also been used including wind direction and MTU digital engine diagnostics are also located on the dash. The helm is also equipped with auto pilot, bow and stern thrusters, VHF radio, chain counter, QL trim tabs and ZF electronic throttle and gear box controls.

Rocker mounted system switches are

mounted overhead as well as a touch pad control for the spotlight.

Twin helm chairs provide comfortable seating for skipper and mate. Behind the stainless steel wheel of the Icon 54, the express cruiser is a delight to drive. Steering is light and responsive. The vessel has an excellent turning circle, requires little trim and planes easily and at speeds as low as 15 knots.

The vessel has superb lift and acceleration, is as previously mentioned, soft riding and there is absolutely no vibration, cavitation or noises of any kind even when in hard turns or at full power. This speaks volumes for the engineering standards of the cruiser.

While the flying bridge is fully protected with a hardtop and fixed side windows and twin overhead hatches, it is also an ideal

entertaining and lounge area. The hardtop has two sliding side windows forward of the helm and a wrap-around fabric lounge. There is a centrally located entertainment system with fridge in the forward lounge with a fixed LCD television concealed behind a removable cushioned insert. Overhead speakers provide a great surround sound effect.

In terms of entertaining, the saloon is a masterpiece. The galley is located aft and to port of the saloon entry and service to the cockpit is possible because of an electrically operated sliding glass panel. The galley is a conventional U-shape with Corian benchtops - all with lips. Appliances include a four ring ceramic cooktop, stainless steel oven and dishwasher, insinkerator, ice maker and plenty of storage options. Opposite the galley is the entertainment system as well as storage for a stainless steel microwave and



bottle storage. There are also two refrigerators and a freezer.

The raised dinette is forward of the galley while additional lounge seating is to starboard. The dining table is large and the solid base allows for drawer storage. Comfortable seating is provided for at least 10 people.

The saloon benefits from large side windows and forward windows over the companionway also add an extra dimension of spaciousness. The mandatory flat screen television is positioned on the starboard forward bulkhead which gives good viewing angles from the dinette and starboard lounge.

Accommodation on the Icon 54 is exemplary. The lower deck configuration consists of three cabins and two bathrooms. The master

cabin is located just forward of midships and to port of the companionway from the saloon. The master has a forward ensuite. Opposite the master is a twin cabin with Pullman style bunks, plenty of storage in the raised bunk base and both upper and lower bunks have access to portholes.

The main bathroom is forward of the starboard twin cabin while a double cabin is located in the bow.

Both the master cabin and forward double feature walk-around island beds and plenty of storage options. Of particular mention is the large wall mounted mirror in the master cabin which conceals a hanging wardrobe while a flat screen television is mounted in an attractive timber cabinet.

All cabins have separate climate control and GPOs. The wet areas are well appointed with

polished cherrywood and holly flooring, Tecma twin rinse toilets, designer bench mounted vanity bowls and mirror fronts to cabinets as well as separate and roomy shower stalls.

The door frames are gloss cherrywood while the cabin doors feature a poplar burl. Carpet throughout the saloon, cabins and flybridge is a luxurious gunmetal grey which blends nicely with the cream leather upholstery and leather bulkheads.

The Icon 54 is a superlative offshore express cruiser with such versatility. It is well equipped for deep sea fishing and the addition of a game chair would easily be accommodated in the roomy cockpit.

The express cruiser has substantial range. Its 4,000 litre fuel tank delivers 500 nautical miles at 24 knots while at a cruising speed of



10 knots, the range is increased to 1,200 nautical miles.

The cruiser is without doubt, a big volume boat with distinctive styling. The build quality cannot be understated and I am very complimentary of manufacturers who offer a 'genuine' hull warranty. Formula Cruisers provide a 10 year hull warranty which confirms my confidence in the build quality of the cruiser.

The Icon 54 has hallmark safety features and practical livability which combines seamlessly with fantastic offshore capability.

SPECIFICATIONS

<u>LOA</u>	58" (17.8 metres)
<u>LWL</u>	54ft (16.4 metres)
<u>Beam</u>	18ft 7" (5.65 metres)
<u>Draft</u>	4ft (1.2 metres)
<u>Displacement</u>	24,000kg
<u>Fuel capacity</u>	4,000 litres
<u>Fresh water</u>	1,000 litres
<u>Accommodation</u>	6 + persons
<u>Engines</u>	Twin MTU Series 60 825hp turbo diesels with four blade props
<u>Cruising speed</u>	20 - 28 knots
<u>Warranty</u>	10 years structural hull plus manufacturer's warranty (two years)
<u>Price as tested</u>	\$2,000,000 delivered Australia

Test boat supplied by Formula Cruisers,
Auckland NZ. Phone 64 9 376 0023.
www.formulacruisers.com

