TOP 100
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The 145 ft. Cat Hemisphere
20 KNOTS UNDER SAIL!

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The world's largest catamaran, sail or power, Hemisphere is an exceptional yacht for world exploration. This 145-foot sailing catamaran offers an enormous amount of space and a décor that is utterly luxurious without being ostentatious.

STORY
Cecile Gauert
PHOTOS
Superyacht Media and Bruce Thomas
HEMISPHERE is, by all measures, an amazing vessel. Seven years in the making from the first concept drawings to her launch at Pendennis in 2011, she has a 54-foot 6-inch beam and an awe-inspiring 174-foot (53-meter), 5.8-ton carbon main mast by Lorima, supporting 9,321 to 12,037 square feet (according to the setup) of sails woven from carbon and spectra. A 499-tonnes gaffe of a sailboat, she displaces 500 tons and can reach a top speed of 20 knots under sail. This awesome vessel is her owner’s first yacht.

Before she was launched, there was much ballyhoo about HEMISPHERE being the largest-ever catamaran. However, building a record-breaking yacht was never the intention, according to naval architect Mac Van Peteghem, a founding partner of French architectural firm Van Peteghem Lauriot Prévost (VPLP). HEMISPHERE simply is what she is today because the owners wanted to be able to accommodate all their needs and desires. During the construction, Van Peteghem and his colleagues worked closely with the yacht’s owner and his representative, Captain Gert Blaauw.

VPLP does not exclusively design multihulls but has earned a solid reputation with projects running the gamut from ultra-light carbon racing cats to the groundbreaking 138-foot custom catamaran Dower Finnie—once the world’s largest luxury catamaran—built in Alumarine in 1999. HEMISPHERE’s owner, who chartered often before building his own yacht, had actually cruised aboard Dower Finnie. Competing against a number of other architectural firms, VPLP eventually earned the business.

As for Captain Blaauw, he met HEMISPHERE’s owners when he was a charter captain and dive instructor. As is often the case of people who share a common passion, they connected. Eventually, the owners
and Bladen started talking about boats. Bladen says the owners always showed a fondness for two-hulled sailboats, so when the talk turned to building his own yacht, a sailing catamaran is what these owners had in mind.

How do you get from this point to building a 145-foot yacht? Interestingly, according to VPLP's naval architect Matthijs Marnot, it was a much smaller boat that became the focal point of the design, a 27-foot tender. This all-important auxiliary vessel (a speedy, custom 8.2-meter Scorpion RIB housed in a center garage during navigation) is, in fact, what determined the yacht's overall length and beam. "We worked from there, adjusting the length and beam to achieve a good balance and attractive lines," Marnot says. From an initial 130 feet, the project grew to accommodate all that the owner envisioned on the yacht, which was not only to be his family's recreational island but also a luxurious charter vessel, user-friendly to guests and crew. More discussions helped refine the project. Divin, naturally, was part of the brief. "Other key words were Pacific, family, cruising, private yacht and charter," Van Peteghem adds.

While a catamaran, particularly one as large as Hemisphere, offers a huge deck surface (the main deck is 1,324 square feet), the layout can be a challenge. A vast, open salon is attractive, but how do you create areas for guests who may want a little privacy on the upper deck? And how do you accommodate everything you need, including a fully equipped galley, in two relatively narrow hulls below? A tour at the yacht's debut in Monaco, courtesy of charter management company Burgen, and a follow-up visit at the Antibes Charter Yacht Show, made a convincing case that the designers met that challenge head on. Working with interior designer Michael Leach Design, VPLP's architects—who were responsible for the layout—created a great flow through a long deck that runs from the bow to the stern, a roomy main deck that marries the open salon to the main cockpit, and a master suite that overlooks the bow. The design is all about open spaces and flow, with the saloon opening onto the deck to the port and starboard, and the main cockpit running the length of the yacht.

The vast tactile and visual appeal of the interior—wood and leather, stone and glass, a mix of textures and colors—is a testament to Van Peteghem's attention to detail. The salon is a study in textures and contrasts, with an emphasis on natural materials and finishes. The teak ribbons and the polished stainless steel around the windows and doors create a sleek, modern look. The salon is a place where you can relax and unwind, with comfortable seating and a large, open floor plan.

The galley is located on the lower deck, and is designed to accommodate a large crew. It is well-equipped with all the necessary appliances and tools, and is open to the main saloon, allowing the chef to interact with the guests and the crew. The lower deck also features a spacious area for the crew, with separate quarters and a large, well-equipped laundry area.

The owner's cabine and adjacent VIP can form one huge suite. The aft deck can be used even in inclement weather thanks to removable glass doors that protect the alfresco dining area from the elements. One of the key features is the three spacious guest cabins. Each cabin is well appointed with plenty of storage, a well-equipped bathroom, and comfortable bedding. The owner's cabin is the centerpiece of the lower deck, and is designed to be a private sanctuary. It features a large bed, a spacious walk-in closet, and a private bathroom.

The overall design of Hemisphere is one of balance and harmony, with a focus on functionality and aesthetic appeal. The yacht is designed to be both a luxurious cruising vessel and a comfortable place to live, with a focus on creating a welcoming and inviting atmosphere for all the guests on board.
For all of its beautiful interior, this yacht is really about the outdoors: the sprawling sun deck is about 930 square feet with Jacuzzi sun pads and a beautiful etched glass table. Below, which spot is the best seat in the house? The aft sunpad watching the wake, poolside with a cocktail on the surfboard or indulging your inner child on the carbon trampoline stretching between the hulls.

Speakers, the mood is one of utter relaxation. Confirming the intent, Maurice describes the space as the “chill-out room.” Put a movie or game on, and the kids will enjoy themselves away from but close enough to their parents in the nearby main salon.

Downstairs, VPLP’s earlier luxury catamaran, has all the guest suites accommodated in its twin hulls. The setup on Hemisphere differs thanks to that intermediary deck mentioned earlier. In addition to two guest cabins in the foredeck hull and cabins for 10 crew accommodated in the starboard hull, the designers created two luxurious suites a couple of steps down from the main deck. Panels, impossible to detect unless you know they are there, discreetly divide the two cabins. These rooms can transform into a huge suite, a great option for a family with younger children, or can be left as separate rooms for couples travelling together. The two 344-square-foot suites open onto a private forward deck with seating on each bow. Stretched in between is a massive and inviting net. Lying there—staring at the sky and the sail, with the occasional spray of the waves cooling you off—is one of the real joys of sailing on a catamaran.

While the interior is undeniably attractive, the flybridge deck proves irresistible. Revealing the owner’s love for the outdoors, it is a 956-square-foot playground with a large spa pool decorated with colorful mosaic tiles and plenty of lounging areas with springy cushions. Elegant sail-shaped biminis provide shade as needed over the substantial dining table. It’s a great conversation piece with its custom glass top engraved with a world map. Who wouldn’t enjoy planning their next trip over a five-star meal with a cool breeze wafting across the open deck? This beautiful—and impressively large—table exemplifies Hemisphere’s purpose: to help her guests enjoy the world.

This all-aluminum (with the exception of the carbon spars and foredeck beams) catamaran is meant for exploration, fun and, of course, diving. The yacht carries full equipment for 12 divers of all ages (with wetsuits in seemingly all sizes) and Nitrox air. There is a full-time diving instructor aboard, in addition to the captains. Fun is also part of the picture. A hydraulic system deploys a swim platform for easy access to the water, and a springboard, affixed to the stern, has to be a great favorite. The yacht carries dive scooters, two Seabobs, wakeboards, paddleboards and mountain bikes for onshore exploration. A 54-foot F&S custom sporthunter is the most recent addition to a full array of tenders and toys.

In other words, there is just about everything to keep guests entertained for days in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean and in the Pacific later on.

There are big plans to explore the world and to do it in the right manner. Recently, a charter week aboard Hemisphere brought a record bid of $150,000 at the Christie’s Green Auction: Bid to Save the Earth in New York. The owners of this superb yacht just won’t do anything halfway.

Erica Cooper contributed to this report.

For more information, visit burgessyachts.com, vplp.fr, michaelleachdesign.com or pendennis.com

**Pendennis Hemisphere**

**LOA:** 145’ (44.2m)  
**Beam:** 54’ 6” (16.6m)  
**Draft:** 10’ 6” (3.2m)  
**Max. Hull Height:** 4’ 11” (1.5m)  
**Rig:** Slosh  
**Sails:** North Sails  
**Engine:** Volvo Penta  
**Speed:** 20 knots (max.)  
**Distance:** 3,000 nm (5,400)  
**Width:** 10’ 6” (3.2m)  

**ENGINEERING:**  
**Architect:** Van Metre  
**Machinery:** David Perry  
**Inboard:** Robert White  

**DECK RANK:**  
**Finish:** Van Metre  
**Materials:** David Perry  
**Furniture:** Robert White  

**INTERIOR DESIGN:**  
**Furniture:** Van Metre  
**Materials:** David Perry  
**Furniture:** Robert White  

**MACHINERY:**  
**Engine:** Volvo  
**Speed:** 20 knots  
**Distance:** 3,000 nm (5,400)  

**BUILDER:** Pendennis Shipyard Ltd.  
**Year:** 2011

*Original images are provided in the same aspect.*