

Boat Review: Hylas 48

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A powerful and stately bluewater cruiser

There are boats and then there are those boats that turn heads, and for me, the boats built by [Hylas](#) have always fallen under the latter category. Sturdy ocean-crossers, these capable couples cruisers beckon to those with dreams of voyaging to distant shores in comfort and safety. To this end, the new Hylas 48 is the latest model in what has become an iconic brand, one that makes you look twice, think once and then start planning your retirement.

Design & Construction

From stem to stern the new Hylas 48 is pure Hylas, and devotees of the brand will immediately recognize the boat's lines, sailing characteristics, and fit and finish. The bow is slightly raked rather than blunt, and the nicely drawn reverse transom includes a set of integrated steps leading down to a small swim platform. Beam is moderate, and the sailplan, although generous, is easily managed by two.

Construction is in solid hand-laid fiberglass with a lead fin keel and a rudder mounted on a partial skeg. Watertight bulkheads located forward and aft should bring peace of mind to offshore cruisers. The standard aluminum Seldén rig is available with an air draft of either 67ft 6in or 63ft for those planning to transit the ICW. A carbon spar and in-mast furling are also available, as are a hydraulic backstay and vang.

On Deck

One of the most appealing things about a typical Hylas deck is the bow arrangement. With large stainless steel plates to protect the deck from the anchor chain, a saltwater washdown, beefy 12in cleats and deck padeyes for jacklines, the foredeck of the Hylas 48 has the look of a practical cruising machine. Twin bow rollers also move the anchors well clear of the stem to prevent dings, and the 30in stanchions are plenty high for offshore work.

The cockpit is equally well designed for shorthanded sailing, with bilge pump and navigation-light controls at the engine panel, which is integrated into the aft end of the cockpit coaming, so there's no need to go below to turn on your running lights. The engine shift also is on the binnacle, eliminating the need to bend down to reach the lever when docking or picking up a mooring—a nice touch.

In addition to the Raymarine instruments found at the helm, a [Raymarine Axiom](#) 12-inch MFD may be mounted either under the dodger or by the wheel. There are two schools of thought in this area. Some like their MFD at the wheel within easy reach of the driver. Others like it farther forward for easy visibility from throughout the cockpit when the boat is on autopilot, which is much of the time when cruising. With the Hylas 48, you get your pick. Aft, a split backstay facilitates unobstructed access to and from the water.



The workmanship belowdecks is impeccable throughout

Accommodations

All is as expected below on the Hylas 48 in that it mimics many of the Taiwan-based Queen Long Marine's other models. A rich wood veneer with a flawless finish meets the eye and plenty of light comes through

the large semi-raised pilothouse-style windows. Hull ports and 6ft 4in headroom in the saloon provide plenty of breathing space.

Hylas is a semi-custom builder offering options for modification that make each boat feel unique. The standard layout includes two cabins and two heads, although a third cabin can be fitted in forward to port to accommodate over/under bunks for the kids, a desk for an office, or a utility room for storing all those extra bits of gear required for a longer journey.

The galley stretches down the port side passageway and includes a wealth of counter space, a three-burner Force 10 stove and oven, and refrigeration drawers. Of special note are the Hylas 48's various systems installations, which won it a nod in [SAIL's 2019 Best Boats](#) contest. Well laid out, color-coded and easily accessible, the quality of the wiring and plumbing, in particular, will make all the difference in the world to owners far from assistance.

The master stateroom aft has an ensuite head with a large shower stall, a walkaround split berth that can incorporate a lee cloth, and his and hers overhead hatches overhead. (That's one way to solve the too cold/too hot argument at night.) In order to allow more room in the saloon, the companionway is angled slightly so that it terminates farther aft and closer to the engine, which makes it a bit steep. I wonder whether if it might not have made more sense to give up that extra half-foot or so of sole to make a more comfortably angled set of stairs.

The boat's joinerywork options include teak, light oak and maple. There's also a choice of locker options, with raised panel, smooth or louvered treatments available depending on how traditional you are. Ultimately, though, it doesn't really matter which one you go with, since all are exquisitely executed, in keeping with Hylas's trademark standards.

Under Sail

Our sail on Chesapeake Bay provided a light-air test with 4-6 knots of true wind and flat water. The 1,589sqft of sail area was provided by Doyle sails, and with 8.6 knots of apparent wind, we sailed 5.5 knots at a 60-degree apparent wind angle. When the breeze briefly bumped up to 10 knots apparent, we pinched to 35 degrees and still eeked out 4 knots of boatspeed. The Seldén masthead rig has slightly swept spreaders and can be configured with a self-tacking jib that will give singlehanders confidence. That fabulous deck plate forward also incorporates a staysail fitting with a manual Furlex furler for tough upwind work.

Sheets are led to Antal winches and Spinlock rope clutches, and the genoa is managed by a Furlex electric furler. Because this is a center-cockpit design, there's room behind the cockpit for end-boom sheeting, which in turn allows you to manage the mainsail with little trouble.

When Hylas took on this Dixon design, the keel was changed with three additional inches of draft to make the boat less tender. Thanks to Jefa rod steering, this substantial boat remains agile, and the sailing on our test day was truly lovely, the boat providing the kind of feel that made you wish for 15 knots on the beam and miles to go before your destination.

Under Power

Hylas chose to incorporate a saildrive unit rather than a straight shaft drive on its 48, which serves to push the engine farther aft in the hull, creating more room forward and reducing vibration underway. There's still plenty of room, though, for the 7kW Northern Lights genset.

Auxiliary power is provided by a Yanmar 75hp turbo diesel fed by a dual Racor fuel filtration system. On the flat water of the bay, we managed 8.1 knots at 2,400 rpm and topped out at 8.9 knots at 3,100 rpm. The 24-volt system is made up of AGM batteries and includes four house cells, two for the engine and genset starts, and two for the windlass.

Conclusion

Recently there was a brief pause in the introduction of any new Hylas models while Queen Long sorted out various ownership details. However, the brand is now back online and moving full steam ahead under the capable management of the brother and sister team of Andy and Peggy Huang. We can, therefore, expect to see a lot more of Hylas in the months and year to come. In other words, get ready to start dreaming.



Specifications

- LOA 48ft LWL 42ft
- Beam 14ft 6in Draft 6ft 6in
- Air Draft 67ft 6in
- Displacement 35,360lb
- Ballast 13,111lb
- Sail Area 1,589ft
- Fuel/Water (GAL) 290/119
- Engine Yanmar 75hp (saildrive)
- Ballast Ratio 37 SA/D Ratio 23 D/L Ratio 213
- What do these ratios mean? Visit sailmagazine.com/ratios
- Designer Bill Dixon

- Builder Hylas Yachts, Taiwan, hylasyachts.com
- Price \$846,000 (as tested) at time of publication

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