

# A Kraken sail

Kraken Yachts believe that their new 50 footer is the ultimate blue water cruiser. What makes them so confident? **Sam Jefferson** finds out

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Anyone who has spent a long time on passage will know that by the end of the trip, you have a list as long as your arm of ways in which the boat can be improved. It's natural. Next thing you know, you're sketching out a few plans of your dream blue water cruising yacht. And that, of course, is as far as it goes. There are exceptions however and Dick Beaumont, CEO and founder of Kraken Yachts, is one of them. After many years of blue water cruising, he decided to make that dream boat a reality, launching Kraken Yachts. Some years later and he now has a line up of blue water cruising yachts crammed with clever ideas garnered from years afloat. Beaumont has pursued his vision of producing the ultimate blue water cruiser with Ahab like monomania.

Just a spot of history before we get started though; readers may remember that the original Kraken 50 was actually launched out in China in 2018. Since then the company has enjoyed something of a metamorphosis, with production being shifted to Turkey in 2019. New moulds were made for the Kraken 50 with hull shape, deck layout and interior all tweaked. So this makes the boat at least a MK2 but perhaps something more than that.

So anyway, what makes Mr Beaumont so confident this is the ultimate blue water cruiser? Well, it starts from the keel up with a stubborn unwillingness to compromise. The hull lines were drawn up by Kiwi designer Kevin Dibley and the first requirement was an integrated keel and a single rudder protected by a skeg.

This means that in the event of a collision, you are in the best shape possible to retain both your keel and steerage. Integrated keels (as in a keel moulded into the hull when the boat is laid up in the mould) are a rarity these days but Kraken has gone further with what it terms the Zero keel which boasts a lead bulb right at the foot of the keel, precisely where it's needed, which is moulded in when the yacht is being built. This means zero bolts and a torpedo bulb keeping almost all the weight of the keel in the most effective spot – right at the tip. On top of that, the rudder skeg with a massive steel frame is also moulded in, providing excellent protection. The lay up of the yacht is extra thick with a minimum of 18mm thickness of laminate and is reinforced with Kevlar in vulnerable spots. There is a crash bulkhead at the bow for further protection.

It's an interesting start, brimming with good ideas. Yet the road to hell is paved with good intentions and the next step is to see if that hull can be married to an alluring yacht. A first look at the boat on the water is promising; this is a handsome boat that looks stylish. Although Dibley's lines are conservative, with relatively modest beam and plenty of taper aft, the boat does not look dated. The smart wraparound deck saloon windscreen makes the boat look purposeful and the slightly jarring mullions from the Kraken 50 MK1 are gone, as too is the much more upright bow. Combine this with a powerful rig and this looks like a boat that means business.

### ***On deck***

Step aboard and the first thing to note is the centre cockpit and single helm position. This is, of course, the most practical solution for a blue water cruiser but it is becoming a bit of a rarity. This is a comfortable area with the helm slightly raised up above the seating area for better vision. The helm features a supremely comfortable seat because, as Beaumont notes, this is where you're going to be sitting for a long time on a blue water passage. From the helm you can control everything. The chart plotter is directly in front of you where it should be and →

## Boat Test ~ Kraken 50



there are a total of six very beefy winches, three to each side. The mainsheet and traveller are just where it should be, right behind you and there is a feeling of tremendous control when you are sat at the helm. There are two rather pleasing seats to either side of the helm, ideal for keeping an eye on sail trim. Forward is the cockpit table with seating for six. The cockpit sole has three massive drains, hugely overspecified, which mean that in the event of the yacht taking a wave over the stern, the cockpit will drain within five seconds. The cockpit sole also features cut out section that is Sikaflexed in for removing the engine should the need ever arise.

Aft of the cockpit there is a modest bathing platform with very substantial bathing ladder plus beautiful stainless steel davits for the dinghy. The aft lazarette is huge and there is a dedicated locker to starboard for the liferaft. The lazarette features exceptional access to the rudder quadrant and is probably unique because you can actually access the top and middle rudder bearings and change them at sea. I do not know of another yacht that offers this feature. The emergency tiller also has its own dedicated storage space.

Out onto the side decks and it's immediately noticeable that there is an integrated toe rail with stanchions bolted into it. These are

**ABOVE LEFT**  
The cockpit is secure and features a really comfortable helming position

**ABOVE RIGHT**  
Masses of storage forward and a beautiful and very strong steel bow plate

**BELOW**  
The 50 moored alongside one of her big sisters, the Kraken 66

actually designed and bolted so that if they do shear off in a collision, they will snap at deck level without ripping out a chunk of you toe rail. The guard rails themselves are a good 30cm higher than the normal and the stanchions are very solid. There are two nicely crafted solid drop down gates amidships on each side. The genoa tracks have also been set outboard on the toe rail which reduces clutter and provides a good lead for the sail while reducing chafe. The shrouds look monstrously overspecified and the chainplates are laminated into the hull.

Mid way along the deck is another nice feature which is a fuel filler inset into the deck under a flip up lid with the filler caps themselves then raised up to ensure water ingress is minimal while also getting rid of the problem of fuel spillages on the deck. Port and starboard tanks can be filled from here, getting rid of the problem of dragging the fuel hose across the coachroof. Up forward, the decks are uncluttered and the most noticeable feature is the massive stainless steel bow plate which integrates the anchor roller, and windlass and looks hugely overspecified. The bow roller also features a small sprit for the Code 0 although this sprit can be removed to provide an emergency second roller. Aft of this is the anchor locker and then a huge storage space that could double as a crew quarters →



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but has been dedicated as storage. This also doubles as a crash bulkhead as it is completely watertight, being sealed off from the rest of the hull.

In terms of the rig, this is generous and optimised for blue water cruising with a keel stepped mast from Z spars carrying a fully battened main plus the Solent rig with a large genoa set ahead of a well dimensioned blade jib. This gives you another string to your bow and means you can run butterfly under the two for mile upon mile on a trade wind passage.

### **Down below**

Having tested the Kraken 66 back in 2018 I recall it was a smart yacht that featured 'classic' styling which contrasted with some of the starkly modern styling of other yachts I tested. This is not the case with the 50. The company has enlisted the help of a New Zealand design team to do the interior and they have managed to strike a nice balance with a space that feels modern but not jarringly so. The other thing that hits you is the sheer quality of the woodwork; Turkish boatbuilders have long had a reputation for superb carpentry and steelwork skills and these are much in evidence

throughout the boat. The quality of woodwork was truly exceptional though, with panels matched for grain to the most absurd extent and beautiful levels of finish. Perhaps the ultimate test though was the floorboards which, when you lifted them up were sealed around the edges. For some reason, the number of manufacturers that do this is virtually nil.

Kraken describes itself as semi custom but in actual fact their very strict rules on certain aspects of what makes a Kraken a Kraken means that they are less flexible on some details. Ultimately they take a modular approach to the interior with the boats divided into three sections; bow, midship and aft section and you can order modifications in those three areas giving you a good range of layout permutations.

Entry to the saloon is via a companionway that features a very nifty vertical sliding arrangement designed in house and that can be held at whatever height you like by friction. It works a treat and is a lovely piece of engineering. Once below, the deck saloon arrangement ensures you are in a light space with ample room.



#### **ABOVE**

The powerful rig comes from Z Spars

#### **BELOW**

The interior finish is absolutely top notch and the styling was modern but not jarringly so

One key feature, not unlike most Discovery yachts, is the skipper's chair which is set to port and fully adjustable, giving great views out forward and to the sides while a strategically placed hatch also means that you can keep an eye on the rig above. To starboard is a comfortable and generous seating area. Moving aft, the galley is linear and ideally dimensioned for bracing yourself while cooking. The galley features many clever touches, particularly a sink arrangement with two bins to either side; one for biodegradable waste and one for normal rubbish, plus a strategically placed portlight meaning you can hand food, cups etc straight from the galley to the cockpit. There are twin drawer fridges plus a drawer freezer and an





boisterous conditions were bound to be at a premium. In a way this was a blessing as it's fairly clear that this is a boat designed to excel in whole sail, booming trade winds. The big question was, therefore, how would she perform in fickle conditions when her 18,000kg displacement might well hamstring her. In the end we had 7kn or wind in the morning and a maximum of 12 in the afternoon. This was genoa weather and the boat performed astonishingly well. That powerful rig is a real boon and, despite the fact the Code 0 was still at the sailmakers, the big fore triangle and ample mainsail meant that we bowled along and 6kn plus. The boat is designed to put the first reef in at 15kn so that gives you a measure of the power of the rig. Unfortunately the blade jib was not required but the concept behind this as opposed to a cutter set up is that with a Solent rig you have a sail that sets perfectly for upwind work and also has the power to drive you upwind. The problem with a cutter rig is that beautifully shaped headsail is often too small to give you adequate power.

A skeg hung rudder is always going to be heavier than the finger light touch of a balanced rudder and this was, of course, the case with the Kraken 50. Yet in the modest conditions it had a good amount of feel and was very light under power. It would be good to test the boat in a heavier blow, but this was definitely not possible. The boat was very nicely balanced and poised and also had a very pleasant motion. Under power the boat was well behaved. All in all, I ended the day looking for the distant horizon and wishing I was off on a longer adventure. →

induction hob – no gas at all on this boat. One final thing to note is just how much storage there is in here.

Aft of this is a very well appointed master cabin. Being a centre cockpit boat, this is roomy with excellent headroom and lots of light. Storage is, again, excellent and the double is notable for having lee boards that can be folded up. A novelty but also very important for ocean sailing. Forward and to starboard is a very generous ensuite head with room for a separate shower stall. Up forward is a bunk room to starboard, a second heads – also with separate shower stall - to port – and a modest single berth beyond that. There are a number of layout permutations up here but it's better to refer to the website and some diagrams to be honest.

The final coup de grace down here is the engine room. This is a fully walk in affair and you can walk around it. There is superlative access to the engine, prop shaft – everything. Most importantly, there is access to the fuel filters and each tank features Racor fuel filters and fuel transferred from either of the main tanks has to go through a fuel polishing system before it's transferred to the day tank. This drastically reduces the risk of the dreaded diesel bug. There is ample room for the generator and watermaker which come as standard.

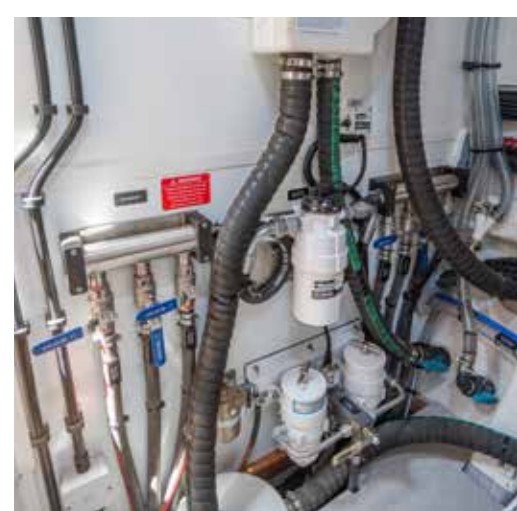
### *Under sail*

All that remained was to go sailing and, given I was testing the boat in the Sea on Marmara in August

**ABOVE**  
The fixed bimini is incredibly solid and several cuts above usual set up

**BELOW LEFT**  
The galley is well set up for cooking on an ocean crossing

**BELOW RIGHT**  
The walk in engine room provides superb access to all systems, in this case the fuel filtering system





## SAM'S VERDICT

Kraken's quest to produce the ultimate blue water yacht has led to a no compromise approach that serves them well. A few years of experience under their belt and a switch to production in Turkey has also unquestionably improved the product. The quality is exceptional but so is the clever attention to detail. The boat was enjoyable to sail and performed strongly in fickle conditions and left me just wishing that I could have sailed in the 20-30kn conditions that, I suspect, this boat would revel in. From small details such as the set up of the kitchen sink and bin layout, through to fundamentals such as access to the engine and the keel and rudder set up, this is a boat that just demands the attention of any sailor

looking to make ocean passages. I came away very impressed with the product.

The big question is price: this is a boat that is extremely well specified yet also very competitively priced - if any boat priced in the £700,000 to £1m price bracket should ever be called that. The sail away price boasts generator, air con, bow thruster, water maker, fuel polishing system, Solent rig, electric winches - essentially everything you need to set off for blue water - as standard. Low production costs in Turkey is obviously part of the driving force, but can that sort of price tag be retained?

PERFORMANCE: ★★★★★

BLUE WATER ABILITY: ★★★★★

COMFORT: ★★★★★

## THE SPEC

**Length Overall** 15.24m 50'

**Waterline Length** 13.68m 44'8"

**Beam Overall** 4.5m 14'7"

**Beam Waterline** 3.8m 12'5"

**Draft** 2.3m 7'5"

**Displacement** 18,250kg 40,234lbs

**Ballast Weight** 6,500kg 14,330lbs

**Ballast Ratio** 35.60%

**Sail Area** 134.2sq/m 1444 sq/ft

**Engine Power** 80hp

**Fuel Tank** 850L 187 gal

**Fresh Water Tanks** 670L 147 gal

**Price:** €979,000 'Full sail away' specification

**Contact:** krakenyachts.com



## ALTERNATIVE BOATS



### HALLBERG RASSY 50

For many, the ultimate in blue water cruising yachts the 50 is brand new and surprisingly sporty, featuring twin rudders and relatively broad aft sections. Quality remains superb.

[hallberg-rassy.com](http://hallberg-rassy.com)



### AMEL 50

Amel built its name on the iconic Super Maramu ketch. The 50 was a bit of a game changer for the company but retains the blue water credentials while switching away from ketch rig and also moving to twin rudders.

[amel.fr](http://amel.fr)



### RUSTLER 42

Somewhat smaller, but probably closest to the Kraken in terms of hull shape and general ethos. Rustler also sticks to the ethos of sea kindly lines and a skeg hung rudder plus good levels of bespoke work.

[rustleryachts.com](http://rustleryachts.com)

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