

review

Don Senior
17.2m

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PHOTOGRAPHY
SUPPLIED

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he Maori name *Wawata* roughly translates as 'hopes and dreams,' says owner Peter Dickinson, the driving force behind this Kiwi-designed and built luxury sportfishing cruiser.

Taking a design by Don Senior and working with Marine Evolutions and Donna Maree Yacht Interior Design, Peter has realised a stunning vision of superyacht quality in a thoroughly Kiwi-style motoryacht.

Marine Evolutions founder, Daniel Dickinson, Peter's son, used to lead construction at Alloy Yachts. Along with business partner Mark Boyce, Daniel is well-versed in high quality custom boatbuilding: Marine Evolutions' bread and butter is refurbishing superyachts. *Wawata* was built alongside several such projects and subjected to the same exacting standards.

Peter grew up with Kiwi-style launches – efficient, easily-driven hulls with layouts that suited the Kiwi boating lifestyle. He wanted to replicate those attributes in his dream boat, turning to Kiwi designer Don Senior for a hull that combined stability, sea-worthiness and planing efficiency, but adding European styling touches to the custom interior, courtesy of regular Marine Evolutions collaborator Donna Maree Yacht Interior Design.

Wawata is built from cold-moulded marine plywood with decks and superstructure laminated from ply-foam-ply or reinforced fibreglass and foam. The vessel's high-quality interior, featuring ziricote, teak, bleached oak and Kyoto timbers and veneers – Oberflex, Greenlam, Laminex and Formica laminates – and Casamace, Sunbrella, Ultrafabrics and Elitis fabrics, is a credit to the craftsmanship of the builders.

Hopes and dreams

With her exceptional craftsmanship and modern interior, *Wawata* is a good example of how a custom-build can precisely deliver the boat of your dreams.

BELOW The large galley is superbly appointed and well laid out.

RIGHT The helm station offers space and comfort, with control at your fingertips. The luxurious master cabin features particularly striking decor.



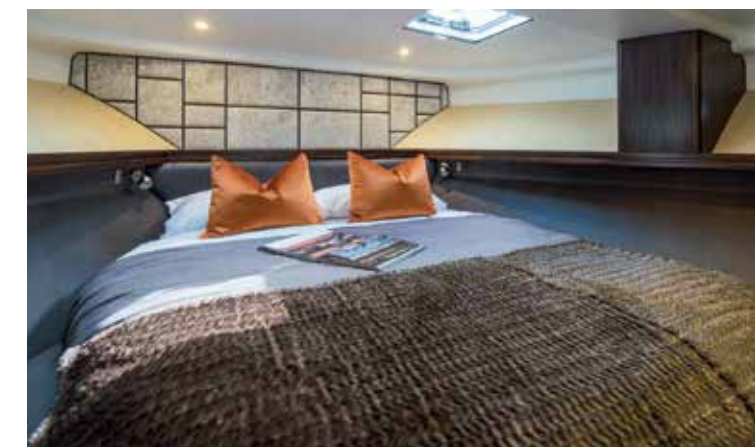
INSIDE-OUTSIDE

Peter is a keen fisher and diver who loves cooking and entertaining, especially on the water. *Wawata* is designed to fulfil these roles without any risk of the messy stuff that attends fishing, diving (and BBQ cooking) finding its way into the boat's plush interior. The swim platform, where all the messy stuff goes on, is vast, leaving the cockpit for al fresco entertaining.

Wawata's transom area is brilliantly set up with a large aft-facing stainless steel BBQ. Housed in a locker, the hooded, twin-grill BBQ pulls out on rails over the swim platform. It's part of a comprehensive outside food preparation area that includes a stainless-steel bench, a sink with hot and cold running water, stainless steel BBQ splashback and secure gas bottle storage.

Also accessed from the swim platform is the boat's dive bottle storage locker, Bauer dive compressor, saltwater washdown, cockpit shower and a couple of massive live wells. Removable cavity transom doors open onto the swim platform either side of the cockpit.

Between them, the platform and cockpit present an almost level expanse of warm teak, complemented by the cockpit table and teak treads on the flybridge stairway. Access to the enclosed flybridge is via traditional cockpit stairs rather than from the saloon. A large freezer makes good use of the space under the stairs and there's a cockpit day head – no need for fishers to track scales through the saloon to use the head.





LEFT *Wawata* is an impressive looking vessel from any angle.

TOP RIGHT An OCTenders dinghy takes pride of place on the foredeck.

BOTTOM RIGHT Engine room and lazarette are superbly laid out.

BOTTOM FAR RIGHT There's a second helm station in the cockpit.

BELOW Let's BBQ!



The 17.2m Don Senior launch *Wawata* is a fine looking flybridge sportfishing cruiser designed, built and equipped for Kiwi-style boating.



Engine room access is excellent, via the cockpit sole and stairs that let down into a separate lazarette. This area contains tankage, a washer-drier and ample storage for large or bulky items. The lazarette is adjacent to the brightly lit machinery space extending under the saloon, separated by a dogged hatch.

Wawata is a large, sophisticated motor launch, so there's plenty going on in the engine room, but the engineering and general layout are superbly executed. There's not quite standing headroom, but it's spacious enough with good access to the engines, machinery and various systems. Foam mat engine room sound deadening, also on the bulkheads, contributes to an exceptionally quiet saloon when the boat's underway.

STYLISH INTERIOR

Step through custom Sea Mac tri-fold glass and anodised aluminium doors and you are immediately struck by the saloon's high-quality feel. Well-chosen fabrics, soft-touch vinyl wall and ceiling linings and subtle LED lighting combine with dark laminate and timber veneer cabinets and contrasting bleached oak panelling, to create a stylish, luxurious space.

The gourmet galley is aft and features expansive Hi Macs countertops,



Oberflex cabinetry, Bosch appliances, including a full-sized domestic fridge-freezer, and a pull-out pantry that wouldn't be out of place in a high-end domestic kitchen. The dishwasher on the end of the counter unloads straight into the crockery drawers, a sensible design.

Reflecting Peter's interest in cooking and entertaining, the galley takes up perhaps half of the saloon's total floor area. A single step up demarcates the vessel's carpeted lounging zone, which is comfortable and stylish. The ziricote saloon table has folding leaves to save space and there's a flat-screen TV on the port bulkhead, along with a high-quality Fusion Link multi-zone stereo system.

Donna Maree has put her stamp on *Wawata's* interior in the best possible way. Like Dan, she worked with Alloy Yachts for many years and their connection has remained strong: Donna consults on many of Marine Evolutions' superyacht projects. With a boat like *Wawata* the scale is different, says Donna, but the quality remains the same.

Peter's brief was for a European-style interior but with a Kiwi twist. Using 3D modelling, Donna kept the details simple, to make building easier, choosing a colour palette that's not overly fussy to reflect the boat's clean lines and allow the timbers and fabrics to shine through.

This theme continues below where three sumptuous, but simply styled, cabins accommodate owners and guests.

To port a large, double cabin features a good-sized double berth bathed in light shining through an opaque skylight from the saloon. To starboard the second guest cabin features one fore and aft single berth and a second berth lying across the beam, tucked into an alcove at the rear of the cabin.

Guest cabins share a well-appointed wet-room style bathroom with concealed drainage and a classy-looking grey Hi Macs floor.

The owners' cabin in the bow is the largest and takes full advantage of opening ports and overhead hatches. Storage is provided under the bed, in drawers and in hanging lockers. All three cabins have custom Sleepyhead Sanctuary mattresses and

are heated for year-round boating.

The master ensuite bathroom, also a wet-room style with concealed drains, Hi-Max floor and counter tops, is filled with fresh air and natural light from the skylight/hatch. A Sea Recovery water maker means there's never a shortage of fresh water.

Like the rest of the boat's interior, the master cabin is clean and simple, but also luxurious and beautifully finished. Decorated in charcoals and greys, with a striking fabric-covered bulkhead and copper accents, the cabin is a welcoming space.

Up on the foredeck, a sharp-looking OCTenders GRP tender with a 10hp Mercury outboard is deployed using a Davco crane. There's ample room left over on the foredeck for enjoying a bit of sunshine in a sheltered anchorage. Anchor duties are carried out by a Muir VCR3000 windlass (with chain counter) and a 40kg Maxclaw stainless steel anchor.

CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP

Peter was very much in charge sitting at the helm on *Wawata's* impressive flybridge. There's a second helm station in the cockpit for docking duties, which was also useful when transferring various bodies between boats during our review and photo shoot.

The flybridge is fully enclosed but stacking Sea Mac rear doors open it wide to the aft deck, rocket launcher, full-width bench seat and Ocean Signal EPIRB. Sliding side windows provide ventilation and a glass hatch closes off the stairs to keep the weather out.

The flybridge mirrors the light greys and bleached oak of the saloon, right down to the silver-grey carpet. There's ample seating under the windscreen and a pair of black leather-upholstered High-Tech helm seats on gas pedestals behind the helm console. Cube chairs supplement the seating, indoors and outdoors.

Electrically operated OceanAir blinds mean the flybridge can be utilised for sleeping; it provides four six-foot berths extending inside the flybridge 'eyebrow'.

Unsurprisingly, the helm console is clean and uncluttered, dominated by three 15-inch Raymarine MFDs. *Wawata* runs Raymarine's Empire Bus system, including digital switching control, remote access via smartphone with SMS alerts.

Peter has set up one of the MFDs to show engine data from *Wawata's* twin 575hp Caterpillar C9 engines, but the three screens can be configured in any number of ways. Typically, Peter uses the second to display navigation data (Navionics bathymetric and Lighthouse raster charts) and/or radar, and the

third for sonar and/or feeds from onboard, thermal and reversing cameras. However, any combination, including multiple split-screens, is possible.

"It's all quite intuitive," explains Peter, "and the combination of touch screens and scroll wheel makes navigation easy."

The vessel has a pair of wireless Marincos searchlights on the roof, alongside the radar dome and satellite TV aerial. There's a smaller Raymarine ES 98 Hybrid Touch unit in the saloon, and a full set of Caterpillar gauges in the flybridge helm console hidden under a lid, for full redundancy.

Wawata is steered by joystick at low speeds and autopilot when cruising. The Caterpillars are good for a top speed of close to 30 knots and a relaxed cruise speed of between 18 and 22 knots. There's a sweet spot at around 2,000rpm; 2,200rpm gives 25 knots. A low idle function is useful for close quarters manoeuvring, as is the bow thruster.

Underway the boat feels very smooth and from the quiet haven of the flybridge it's easy to underestimate her speed. Stand in the cockpit, however, and the sensation of speed is more

immediate, but there's no mistaking this is a 20-plus tonne vessel with authority and presence on the water.

MOVING ON

The 17.2m Don Senior launch *Wawata* is a fine looking flybridge sportfishing cruiser designed, built and equipped for Kiwi-style boating. Exhibiting exceptional craftsmanship and a fresh, modern interior style, she is a good example of how travelling the custom-building path can deliver the boat you want, to a degree impossible to replicate in a production yacht.

Wawata has been a happy collaboration between Peter Dickinson, Marine Evolutions and Donna Maree Yacht Interior Design. And while the vessel was exactly what Peter wanted when he began the project, he is now has even more ambitious plans.

Wawata is listed for sale with 36 Degrees Brokers: info@36degrees.nz. She should prove highly attractive to anyone who appreciates good design, a comprehensive specification and top-quality construction. **ENZ**



Don Senior 17.2m

PRICE AS REVIEWED
SPOA

BUILT BY
Marine Evolutions
www.marineevolutions.co.nz

HIGHLIGHTS

Sleek, easily-driven
hull and enclosed
flybridge

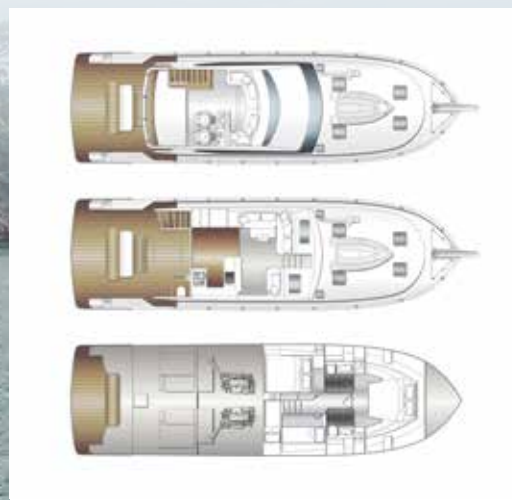
Vast swim platform

Stylish Euro-inspired
interior, but
with a Kiwi twist

SPECIFICATIONS

loa 17.2m (56.5ft)
beam 4.9m
draft approx 1.3m
weight 20,000kg dry
deadrise aft 8°
construction
timber and composite
cabins 3
bathrooms 3
engines 2 x Caterpillar
575hp C9 Accert
gearboxes and transmission
ZF 286a (1.9:1 ratio)
propellers Bri-Ski four-blade
31 x 31
fuel: 2,400 litres
water: 700 litres
holding tank 320 litres x 2 tanks
cruising speed 18-25 knots
max speed 29.5 knots

WATCH IT



INSET *Wawata's*
general arrangement.

BELOW *Wawata* is
now offered for sale
through 36° Brokers.