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A TALE OF TWO MARLOWS

More than just options, these 53s have been customized
to fill a real need.

By Tom Serio





Marlow's take on the Portuguese bridge deck allows for forward seating.

There's more than a fine line between checking off the boxes of available builder options versus having the ability to customize your new yacht. Driving customization is understanding how the owner plans to cruise and use the vessel. Considerations include, but are certainly not limited to, will this be an owner/operator setup or crewed; heavy entertaining or just a few occasional guests; long excursions or day tripping; marina bound or anchorages; etc. Don't forget the general desires of the owner. High on the list typically is making it comfortable, perhaps with a feel of their land-based home. To expand on these points, let's take a look at two new-build 53-foot Marlow Yachts.

At first glance, these two 53s have the same profile, and to no surprise. Not many custom builders will make structural changes above and/or below the water line on the same model yacht. A lot of time, money, research and development, and basic sweat go into designing an optimal hull. And let's not forget about the laws of physics, center of gravity, buoyancy...you get the picture.

Not Quite Identical

Let's call the two Marlows in this story "Marlow A" and "Marlow B." Both have been commissioned and will soon be with their new owners. Marlow A is headed to a U.S. East Coast cruiser, favoring

anchorages over marinas when they can, travel with family, utilize "mobile" office space, and a galley that feels like home. Finished in an Oyster White hull and superstructure, all this was desired within a fixed budget, so tight controls over any potential overruns had to be in place.

Conversely, the familiar Flag Blue-hulled Marlow B is owned by a retired couple who will use the yacht like a vacation home with an occasional guest or two. Preferring marina docking to staying on the hook, ground tackle requirements differed, and they were more flexible with their budget, allowing for changes to the original specs.

Marlow A

Looking at Marlow A, there were specific owner specs that needed attention. First, due to an expanding family, a three-stateroom layout was necessary. Not a problem for the Marlow designers, but it does change some of the dynamics on the lower level. The companionway from the foyer forward is a bit narrower to give more space to the starboard twin-berth stateroom. This layout also locates the forward VIP head to port, with a basin sink and walk-in shower stall. It's a solution based on needs and comfort.

Using teak strip paneling instead of ultra-leather panels on the upper walls in the staterooms is a



Marlow B's salon and galley are similar to Marlow A's in layout, but counters, tables, and flooring choices differ.



Marlow B's designers used burlwood inlays for the master stateroom and designed a flowing staircase to the main deck.

custom touch that adds a warm, homely feel.

The midship full-beam master is a lesson on utilizing storage space to the max. Pocket doors are used, saving space versus single or double swinging doors. Four-drawer dressers with hanging lockers are to port and starboard. On either side are lockers with curved façades and doors. This is a great example of the level of detail Marlow will go; not only are the solid doors curved on a gentle 90-degree radius, but the interior fiddles are too. It would have been easier and likely cheaper to make these squared off, but where is the fun in that?

Standard curtains can cover the side hull windows, but this owner opted for the Shoji screens, opaque material on six sliding panels that allow ambient lighting and privacy.

Inner Feelings

The salon is a clean canvas. Marlow A went for a long starboard ultra-leather sofa with curved end forward, perfect for lounging or catching a movie on the port aft corner 50-inch TV. The teak coffee table has a hi-gloss fiddled top with satin finish base. To port are a pair of plush sofa chairs (provided by client). Custom cabinetry includes spaces for a wine cooler, storage, end table, and beverage center.

The galley is smartly designed and esthetically pleasing. This U-shaped setup has generous mitered Cream Marfil marble countertops for prepping meals and pass-thru to the dinette. Beneath are the four Subzero fridge/freezer drawers, dishwasher, and oven. Above is the built-in microwave and cabinets for food provisions and a 32-inch drop-down TV.

A three-burner cooktop has an accompanying overhead vent. There's a nice contrast between the satin-finished woodwork and glossy teak-and-holly flooring. Forward is a U-shaped dinette with hi-lo slide table.

Just because an owner asks for something doesn't always ensure they will get it. The Marlow sales and brokerage teams want to deliver the dream but within reason. One time, a client requested on their specs that their yacht have only a single stateroom. Marlow pushed back as that could affect resale value while lowering the value of all the other yachts in that size range.

Marlow B

Marlow B's aft deck has a center transom bench with backrests. The fixed-stanchion fiberglass dining table is easily maintained. A grill station is located in the corner or could be on the flybridge. You decide.

Inside, it's evident that each owner had their own input and that of their own designers. All teak on the cabinets and flooring has a satin finish. Repairing any scratches or dents in the flooring needs close attention to match the finish. Too much buffing and the satin turns glossy.

The salon seating is finished in fabrics, not ultra-leather. The matte-finish teak rectangular coffee table is designed to hold two recessed ottomans that have cushioned tops and are used for storage. Twin swivel chairs to port are divided by a center end-table. Choose from electric or manual blinds, tinted windows, or standard teak blinds.

The U-shaped setup in the galley has a large Blanco



Marlow A shows off incredibly comfortable helm seats.

Silgranit split sink, fiddled counters, and drawer-style fridges/freezers. The overhead microwave was subbed for additional storage that also reduced some counter space. But with a yacht set to entertain a limited number of people at any given time, this was appropriate. Thanks to the two-stateroom deck below, the dinette is larger and a solid-base teak table was fitted in the C-shaped seating.

Marlow and the owners had more liberties on the lower level, creating an open atrium at the staircase and companionway. Storage behind and around the staircase became available, too, as well as washer/dryer closets.

The midship master has a queen Sleep Number mattress and is accompanied by owner-selected sconce lighting. Burl wood inserts in the headboard and a swinging entry door trimmed by teak framing gives the master a luxurious, inviting feel. Something not found on typical 53s is a vanity station with swing-out stool. It's here.

As an owner/operator vessel, there's a Garmin display that notifies the owner of anchor drag when sleeping. By comparison, though, Marlow B has only one anchor and ground tackle, while Marlow A is fitted with two anchors and gear.

A Commanding Bridge

The Command Bridge on each yacht means business. Set them up with your choice of helm seats, straight or L-shaped settee in your favorite fabric and color, hi-lo or fixed teak table, preferred array of electronics and displays, fridge/ice, and more. There's great visibility for the operator, and any style of blinds can be added for privacy.

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Marlow A's owner uses this area as an office, so padding was added in the cushion and the table was sized to accommodate a laptop. Marlow B has a folding radar mast and sat dome brackets. There's plenty of room for an Aritex davit for toy and/or tender storage.

As both yachts are fitted with twin 900-hp Volvo D13 diesel engines, suffice it to say that they will run fairly equal. From Marlow's performance data, the 53s have plenty of pep, topping out at 27.3 knots wide open (2,310 rpm, range 342 nautical miles). Dialing back to enjoy the ride, 1,000 rpm will get you 8.8 knots at 1,034 nautical miles. Let's admit it, sometimes the best part of the trip is just cruising. Destination be damned!

Notable is the absence of exterior teak aiding



Volvo Penta D13 engines can propel the 53 to 27 knots.

in maintenance. Custom touches also include moon dust-colored non-skid walking surfaces, forward boarding doors, a second 13kW/16kW generator, CMC zero-speed stabilizers, grabrails around the bridge house, extended flybridge hardtop, and Bluewater watermaker. With Marlow, you can personalize your yacht to make it your own. 📌

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 61' 8"

Beam: 17' 3"

Draft: 4' 6"

Displacement: 66,000 lbs.

Power: 2x Volvo D13 diesel engines @ 900-hp

Fuel/Water: 1,200/300 U.S. gals.

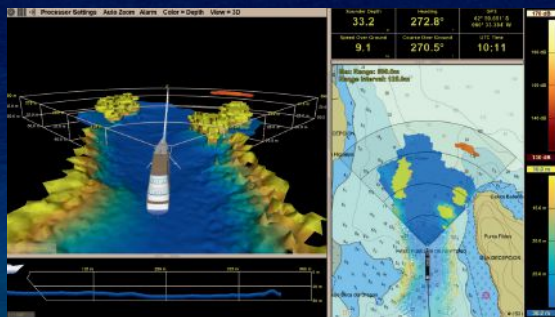
Range: 1,034 nm @ 8.8 knots

Contact: Marlow Yachts

marlowyachts.com

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