



Boréal 70

Earning a Special Mention in our [REDACTED], this expedition yacht leaves no detail unattended and no dream unimagined.

BY [REDACTED]

Some designs are so much more than their physical existence—they let us dream. I had a tough time imagining the limits of those visions with the Boréal 70. As I stepped on board for a sea trial after the Annapolis Sailboat Show last fall where this boat made its U.S. debut, in my mind's eye the docks melted away and icebergs floated a few hundred yards off. The coast of Greenland was just out of sight, and when my eyes followed the mast upward, I was at the opposite pole, where the aurora australis danced across the sky.

The name of this first Boréal 70, *Ulvetanna*, references a 9,616-foot peak in Antarctica that the owner, also a mountaineer and climber, has yet to summit. The owner's enthusiasm for the boat was contagious, as was that of the designer, Jean-François Delvoye, who conceived Boréal after six years sailing around the world with his wife and four children. Boréal was his pursuit to build the perfect adventure yacht. Jean-François Eeman, now the managing director of Boréal, was his first customer, building a Boréal 44. There's a pattern here: The owner community and the team at Boréal live and breathe adventure sailing.

The passion can be seen in every polished weld and the zeal with which they talk about any aspect of the build.

This expedition yacht is crafted from 5086 and 5083 aluminum with plate thicknesses up to half an inch. While aluminum is tough, the real safety advantage is that it's inclined to deform, and not break, in the event of a major accident. With the addition of an ice breaker stem, the Boréal 70 is dialed in for high latitude cruising, as her name suggests (Boréal is rooted in Latin and ancient Greek and conveys "of the north"). Fortunately, the Boréal 70 can be just as comfortable in warmer weather too; the insulation and double-paned portlights keep the interior comfortable in all climates. This hull proved that by exploring the Caribbean after sea trials in France and stopping off in the Canaries and Cape Verde. From there, she pushed on to Newport and then Annapolis.

Crossing the Atlantic displayed performances of up to 240-nautical-mile days, with a daily average of 200 miles: Cape Verde to the Eastern Caribbean in 11 days. And that was all in impressive comfort. The deck and interior of the Boréal 70 are beautifully finished and expansive. Over 82,000 pounds of displacement, 26,455 pounds of ballast, and a very conscious effort to keep all weight low,

also translate to a seakindly motion.

At only 4 feet, 5 inches of draft with the centerboard up, there are few places that *Ulvetanna* can't anchor when she makes landfall. Offshore, the draft increases to 13 feet, 5 inches with the centerboard down for upwind work.

The details throughout this build are impressive and start from a high-level view. For example, the hull, deck, stringers, bulkheads, and frames are welded together to form one contiguous structure. The only exterior fiberglass portion of this boat is the cabintop. Not only does this mean that the Boréal 70 is stiff and watertight, but it requires every component installed within the boat to pass through the watertight companionway door. So, when a piece of equipment needs to be serviced or replaced, including the engine, it can be accomplished without complications.

While the topsides are left as bare aluminum, creating their own oxidation layer for protection, the deck and cabintop are sealed with seven layers of epoxy and then two layers of polyurethane paint. It takes three months just to complete this thorough coating process. Other steps in the building process are just as intense, like the 3,000 hours of careful welding required. All in, it's a two-year build cycle, among 11

other Boréals under construction at any given time.

Forty-five degrees Fahrenheit and 10 to 15 knot winds are mild for this boat, but those were the conditions on the Chesapeake when we departed Bay Bridge Marina for our test sail. It was still cold enough, though, to realize the benefit of *Ulvetanna*'s titanium steering wheels. Titanium's relatively low thermal conductivity, heat capacity, and density meant the wheels felt comfortable to the touch and gloves weren't needed. In more extreme environments, a gloved hand would still benefit from this feature. In a similar vein, the helm seats are raised and stylishly crafted out of laminated doussie wood, ensuring a warmer spot to sit, too. Details, always the details.

Although we never heeled any more than 15 degrees, the lifting helm platforms provided a welcome height advantage when standing and undoubtedly reduced fatigue by leveling the deck. We comfortably tacked through 90 degrees and settled in at 8.5 knots boatspeed in the 15 knots of wind on a close-hauled course. A full-hoist composite North main, set up with slab reefing for simplicity and performance, balanced nicely with the jib of the cutter rig. The staysail remained furled, but like the jib, was also on a traditional ProFurl drum furler. These were operated from powered XT76 Antal winches in the cockpit and offered a robust headsail furling solution for remote and unforgiving climates.

The five identical powered cockpit winches (offering redundancy and common replacement parts) are all within reach of the helms (two forward, two aft, and one central) and each can be entirely freed by soft and traditional clutches. Lifting covers, providing clean access to the sheets and halyard troughs, added safety and more seating options near the helm. This smart layout is designed for shorthanded sailing, which also aids in quick and safe maneuvers in cold weather.

Aft of the twin helms is a slightly raised and large working deck with access to the integrated dinghy davit



The Boréal 70 is a long-legged global traveler, capable of taking her owners to high latitudes or shallow waters, top. Looking aft from the galley, the salon is a comfortable yet roomy space, laid out with offshore sailing in mind, left.

PHOTO BY JEAN-MARIE LOT, COURTESY OF BOREAL

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arch and a cavernous lazarette. Despite the neat organization, I almost missed that two inflatable dinghies were rolled up and stored there (the second dinghy was back-up in case of polar bear damage to the first). A push-button deployable swim platform cleverly incorporates steps that also drop open.

The forward cockpit is formed by an inviting set of benches that wrap around a folding cockpit table. This area is secluded from the working portion of the cockpit and side deck and is protected by the spray hood that hangs off the back of the doghouse. Just over 1,200 watts of solar panels cover the top of the doghouse.

Stepping through the watertight companionway door brings us to the interior of the doghouse, with a full navigation station and dining area, complete with wraparound and overhead views. In rough or cold weather, this raised position offers a haven to the on-watch. The large plotters onboard are Furuno, and due to the expedition sailing that is expected *Ulvetanna* is equipped with an inertial navigation system; this integrates with the navigation system and autopilots and keeps the boat on track when there is no GPS signal (this technology is typically used by submarines and high-latitude vessels).

Three wide steps, with a secure handhold, lead down to the salon that features a French oak finish throughout. Plush seating wraps around a large table to starboard, and a slight elevation provides views out the cabintop ports. The table even drops down to create an additional berth, and a lifting TV is hidden in the adjacent cabinets amidships.

The galley complements this space to port. Food and cookware storage is extensive, and fiddles on the counter and a well-proportioned corridor reveal its seaworthy ergonomics. A gimbed propane stove sits near a trash com-

pactor and the primary fridge and freezer. Long term dry food storage is underneath the stained oak floor panels.

Just aft of the galley rests a beautiful and functional Refleks heater. Powered by diesel, this stove is part of the redundant heating systems onboard and incorporates a heat exchanger in the stovepipe. On the other side of the heater, a workshop showcases a full-size workbench, tool and parts storage, and a secondary two-drawer fridge/freezer.

Hull No. 1 of the Boréal 70 is fitted with two aft cabins, one crew-style cabin with bunks and the other with twin beds that can slide together. Each suite has its own head, with the luxury of a separate shower in the head to port. A washer and dryer are installed behind sliding panels in the crew cabin.

Forward of the salon is another guest cabin, with en suite head with separate shower. All of the guest cabins are not only spacious but include plenty of storage space for clothing and other adventure gear.

The owner's cabin is forward and past the third guest cabin but aft of the large watertight sail locker, providing plenty of width and ensuring a good sense of space. The double-pane portlights and hatches provide a great deal of light and a cozy feel is maintained by the tasteful joinery. The owner's cabin also includes a desk, a vast amount of storage, and a head with a separate shower.

Eberspächer heating radiators are set in the floor of each cabin. The glycol loop from the Eberspächer system is also tied to the Refleks heater, so that the Refleks may be used to heat the entire boat when at anchor. The Boréal 70 is also outfitted with air conditioning, which may be operated as a heat pump. As a further benefit, the heat from the engine is ducted to warm the salon and a wet locker when needed.

The engine room is flat-out beautiful. Access to the 175-hp Volvo Penta engine is uncompromised and lighting is plentiful. Part of what enables this is the separate dedicated equipment room beneath the dining table in the salon. This is just as gorgeous as the engine room, for those who appreciate clean and organized wiring layouts with plenty of space to work. Electrical energy is stored in 24V gel batteries; although tempted by lithium technology, Boréal cites that they do not mix well enough yet with the extreme cold this vessel could see.

Back on deck, we were broad reaching at 9.3 knots in 11-14 knots of breeze with just the jib and main. The JP3 transmission-style steering felt smooth, and the perfect amount of weather helm for sailing upwind had shifted to a neutral feel. It made easy work for the redundant NKE autopilots, but we were enjoying hand steering too much and only let them show off their capability briefly.

At 9-10 knots of wind, this design starts to take off, and at 13-14 knots it hits its stride. Less than 8 knots of breeze and the boat is a little sticky, but I struggle to identify a fully laden cruising boat where that isn't the case at such a low threshold, never mind one meant to cruise the Arctic. To provide further perspective, a boat of this displacement and style is more consistent in boatspeed; it powers through rough seas and maintains a much higher average speed (as evident by the Atlantic crossing time). With an asymmetrical spinnaker and open water, it would be fun to see what speeds we could hit.

I strolled up to the bow across the Flexiteek deck. Handholds were aplenty. Leaning bars surrounded the Lorima carbon mast (built in Lorient, France, alongside masts for the Vendée Globe). The boom is also carbon and is deliberately wide to collect the flakes of the conventional main. It also internally integrates the reefing lines to maintain a clean arrangement. Raising and drop-



ping the main was smooth and far more reliable than any type of furling arrangement.

Although there is a capstan at the bow to aid in docking maneuvers, the anchor windlass is just forward of the mast, easily accessible by opening a watertight hatch. This clever design moves the weight of the anchor chain to be longitudinally centered and stored lower than a traditional anchor locker location—benefitting performance and seakeeping characteristics. With quick and direct access to the mast for handling sails, it also makes for simpler shorthanded sailing.

After some wing-on-wing running, we started up the engine, put away sails, and cruised the remaining short distance toward the tight channel. The Volvo Penta pushed us along at 7 knots at 1,800 rpm, the lower end of her cruising range.

Below the water, the Boréal 70 is fitted with a single rudder. This and the propeller are protected by the keel and centerboard box, further emphasizing the careful design focus on simplicity and reliability. It also allows the Boréal 70 to be beached. Twin daggerboards located on either side of the rudder add to the ability to perfectly balance the boat on any point of sail and sail combination. Bow and stern thrusters add to maneuverability and helped prove that this boat can get into some tight spaces as we pulled into her slip at a crowded 6-foot-depth marina.

So many possibilities lay ahead for *Ulvetanna*. We can acknowledge that it was a voyage for the owner just building her; the Boréal 70 is highly customizable, and they opted to be heavily involved in bringing this expedition yacht to life. Now each detail can be enjoyed as she is sailed nearly anywhere in the world. Dreaming is exciting, but there is nothing quite like when those dreams coincide with reality, and the Boréal 70 is an outstanding design to make that happen. *AM*



LOA/LWL
70'10" / 62'1"
Beam 18'8"
Draft 4'5"
(board up),
13'5" (board
down)
Air Draft 96'0"
Displacement
82,673 lbs
Ballast 26,455
lbs
Sail Area 2,347
sq ft (upwind)
Engine Volvo
Penta 175HP
Designer
Jean-François
Delvoye (naval
architect and
designer),
Pierre Frutschi
and Jean-Fran-
çois Delvoye
(interior
design)
Builder Boréal
Yachts SAS
Price €5 million
as sailed (\$5.2
million)

The cockpit comprises three areas, with the protected rest and socializing area forward, the working helm and sail-handling area middle, and the aft space with cavernous lazarette.

The fully enclosed pilot-house is one of the boat's most lovely and ergonomically thoughtful spaces, warm and comfortable for watchstanding and handling all navigation.

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