

VISION



HORIZON'S CASCADIAN DREAM YACHT



The new Horizon Vision 68 is a no-expenses-spared, modern luxury production motoryacht made to go toe-to-toe with even larger vessels.



I appreciate sneaking out of our office to hop on a boat during work hours, and the quick drive to the docks of Emerald Pacific Yachts on South Lake Union is always a pleasure. I'll never take for granted the perpetual boat show Seattleites enjoy when making the hop across the ship canal, an appreciation that's only deepened over the years.

This day was particularly auspicious, for I had a date with hull #2 of the brand-new Horizon Vision 68. Also known as the V68, the build is the newest and most diminutive of Horizon's Vision series and a radical departure from the more traditional lines of its larger sisters. My research revealed a vaguely spaceship-looking yacht with that ultra-modern plumb bow and massive entertainment-



conceptually cool ideas can be a bit overbearing. You can only cram in so many mini bars and add so many sun lounges before you feel less like you're boating and more like you've isolated yourself in a floating corporate lobby. Bottom line, the V68 looked like it could go either way for me, and I was eager—and anxious—to get the real experience.

I shook hands with Brett Aggen, an owner and yacht broker of Emerald Pacific Yachts, and we hurried to the boat. A hired skipper was on the clock.

"We're very excited about this yacht," Aggen says. "Not only have we (of Emerald Pacific Yachts) been collaborating on the design with Horizon for years, but also primarily with the design firm here in Seattle, JQB Design."

Call me slow, but I had not connected the dots of local talent that made the V68 a reality. Between the team at Emerald Pacific Yachts and the yacht's designers at JQB Design, there are plenty of fingerprints from local talent on this build. Granted, Horizon yachts are built in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, but the various add-ons and commissioning goodies that complete the build are mostly by Pacific Northwest professionals giving their all. From inception to today, the V68's development covers a span of around a decade.

This newfound appreciation of local expertise takes a hold of me as I approached hull #2, the Emerald Edition, waiting patiently for us at the dock.

HOPPING ABOARD

The skipper fired up the engines and Aggen cast off in earnest as I explored. Simply put, that inner pearl-clutching traditionalist started *oohing* and *ahhing*. Right

away, the combination of the large swim platform (calling it a step isn't fair) and the dual stairs up to the covered cockpit with seated dining area drew me in. The beach club, a trending feature still relatively uncommon in the industry, is admittedly impressive. I'm not sure if it's designed to open slowly for dramatic effect or not, but the day galley, seating, and stowage below melds very well with the goings on outside.

The engine access is behind the beach bar, where the twin Caterpillar C18 ACERT (1,136 bhp each) engines and two 20 kW-Northern Lights generators live. The sound insulation was about as good as it gets as we made our way through the Montlake Cut and into the open waters of Lake Washington. The head turns from kayakers and other passersby were not lost on me.

From the cockpit, there's more exterior to explore. Two wide, deep-set walkways lead forward to a truly massive entertainment-focused foredeck, complete with padded seating around a dining table and large, padded sun lounge space. It's not hard to imagine guests spending most of the boat trip in this space.

If you want to go up to the flybridge, a set of stairs with a port bias leads up from the cockpit. Once up there, you again find yourself in another hangout space with more of an elevated, al dente dining vibe. An integrated BBQ grill is just outside the enclosed flybridge to port, and a fully enclosed day head is on the port side aft. Under the cover of the bridge hardtop is a day head and bar to port, large dinette to starboard, and where the only helm sits. Opting for a single helm on the bridge is another modern feature that's becoming more common, freeing up space in the

Left: The new Horizon Vision 68 (V68) underway on Lake Washington. This semi-displacement hull can get on-step with relative ease.

Below: The view from the V68 flybridge. Note the helm, as it is the only one aboard. The seating directly behind the captain's chair can be adjusted to face either forward or aft toward the dining table.



focused foredeck combination, a sleek cabin almost entirely encased in glass windows, and a hydraulic garage door that opens to a beach club in the transom.

My inner traditionalist was clutching his pearls. When done well, these forward-looking, innovative features are the vanguard of marine technology, real tributes to the best of what this industry can produce. When done poorly, these



Top Left, Clockwise: The airy, open-feeling single helm in the flybridge has great line of sight; The salon is massive, with a modest partition from the forward galley and dining area; The full-beam stateroom amidships; View from the foredeck seating area; The aft cockpit serves as a central crossroads of sorts where one can hop off the swim platform, step up to the flybridge, walk into the salon, or venture forward along the walkways to the foredeck; A full profile shot, what a beauty!

main cabin for more goodies. And goodies there are. A walk-through of the cabin reveals one continuous, well-lit, modern space for relaxing, partying, cooking, dining, and whatever else one could possibly want short of a jacuzzi.

With all that navigation business staying up in the flybridge with the single helm, the V68 could be categorized as a desirable charter candidate. Access to the staterooms and berths are forward and below. The VIP stateroom, in particular, enjoys more space thanks to the plumb bow design choice, making it similarly desirable to the full beam master stateroom farther aft.

PERFORMANCE

As we entered the lake, I joined Aggen and the skipper in the flybridge as the

skipper let the V68 run. You may or may not guess by looking at her, but the V68 is a semi-displacement hull, meaning she'll be lighter on her feet than her full displacement hull contemporaries. All of this was evident as soon as we hit the throttle.

On our various runs about Lake Washington on a calm day, we often went full throttle at 2,370 RPM and reached an impressive 23.4 knots. A rounder, high-performance number was a 2,200 RPM with 21.5 knots of speed. We hopped on- and off-step with minimal effort as the V68 showed off its planing abilities. Speed should be slightly higher in salt water.

A more casual cruising speed at around 1,800 RPM yielded 15.5 knots. Handling was very smooth as well, and the V68 took circles and sudden turns over our wake eas-

ily. The wind kicked up a bit at our return, and the bow and stern thrusters were put to good use to get the yacht back safely. A wireless remote yacht control system was used to great effect, allowing the skipper to roam the boat as needed in order to dock.

THE SOURCE: JQB DESIGN

I left the dock thoroughly impressed with the V68. But the story of this yacht seemed incomplete without a visit to JQB Design. I only knew the basics about JQB Design, such as they worked out of an office in the Belltown neighborhood. They started in 1995 and have been swinging high ever since, scoring high profile contracts like the interior design of Paul Allen's famous superyacht *Octopus*. I reached out shortly after my boat ride, eager for insight. They were gracious enough to open their doors for a tour and talk.

Surely, with accolades like these, I was in store for a big corporate office with dozens of worker bees diligently buzzing between phones ringing off their hooks. What I found instead was an elegant, but decidedly quaint, brick building on Vine Street. Upon entry, robust wooden beams and more brickwork spoke of a building with decades of history. Scale models of yachts of all shapes and sizes, both sail and motor-powered, adorned work desks and display cases like a maritime history museum. Massive line drawings of boats—of a glorious past and of a future in progress—individually rested on stands like works of art.

EMERALD PACIFIC YACHTS

Emerald Pacific Yachts is a yacht brokerage on South Lake Union in Seattle that was founded in 1997. Among their professional team is Brett Aggen, one of the owners of Emerald Pacific Yachts and a broker who was part of realizing the Horizon V68 project with JQB Design. Credit is also due to company partner Randy Buckell as well as their entire veteran staff. Aggen started as a yacht broker after graduating from the University of Washington in 1990 and hasn't looked back. He loves boating with his wife and two daughters.

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JQB YACHT DESIGN

I shook hands with the three-man team: Jonathan Barnett (principal designer, firm's namesake), Chris Barnett (general manager and Jonathan's brother), and Michael Givens (lead designer, digital focus). The two Barnetts also own and operate Yacht Style, the marine supply company where JQB finds the talent needed to pull off their contracts.

"It's nice to be able to talk about what we do," joked Chris. "You see, we generally have to keep our projects a little hush-hush for our clients. As a result, not everyone knows about all the work we've done. A yacht designer is a lot like a ghost writer in that respect."

Jonathan leaned in to give me the full JQB story.

"I moved here in 1994 after working in yacht design in England and started JQB in '95. My brother Chris joined the company as the general manager, and it was just us in my small apartment on Lake Sammamish. Our first big project was a conversion of a 1902 car ferry called the *Kirkland*." The owner, Don Stabbert, had a dream of turning it into a floating coffee shop and passenger ferry between Kirkland and the University of Washington that would circumvent SR520 traffic across the lake. The *Kirkland* ultimately lived its new life as an Argosy tour boat, but the job was a great jumping off point. Jonathan continued.

"Another important early project was a custom teak diving board for none other than Bill Gates." The budding JQB Design was contacted by Thierry Despont, a well-known New York-based designer, to create something special for the pool area. To work on the important internal core, JQB even teamed up with sailboat design legend Paul Bieker, Admiral Marine (before they were Westport Yachts), and Platypus Marine in Port Angeles. "I like to say that diving board was the springboard of our career," Jonathan adds. I had a hunch Chris had heard that one a few times.

As the years passed by, JQB Design kept knocking high profile projects out of the park. Of course, they designed the interior of *Octopus*. They were pivotal in the design of superyacht *Aerie*, create from a modernized Delta Marine hull mold that won a ShowBoats Design Award (*Aerie* is 124 feet) in 2002. To date, they've worked on six large Delta Marine projects.

"We could talk about our different projects all day," Chris interjected. "Basically, we've had about 18 major yacht projects over the last 24 years."

To the big question of what defines a JQB yacht, the answer is simple.

JQB Design is the Seattle-based design firm that designed the Horizon V68. The three-man shop has an award-winning portfolio that has steadily grown since the firm's opening in 1995. Projects include the interior design of the late Paul Allen's famous *Octopus* superyacht and dozens of 100-foot-plus superyachts. The Horizon V68 is one of their few production designs as they successfully break new ground into that realm.

Address: 116 Vine Street, Seattle, WWA 98121

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Clockwise from Above: Michael Gibbons at his desk; JQB's 2018 International Yacht & Aviation Award, earned for deck design on Crescent Custom Yachts' 145-foot *Mucho Mas*; Jonathan Quim Barnett at work

"Quality," says Chris. "There isn't a JQB look per se, because we want to make exactly what the client wants. No two projects or clients are the same, so why should we limit ourselves to one particular look?" The Barnetts picked up Michael Givens along the way, who worked at Delta Marine before making the switch to JQB Design. He knocked on the door himself, showed off what he could do, and was hired.

"I'm a local who grew up boating with my family in our Bayliner," said Givens.

"Boats are my passion." The meat and potatoes of what he does is on the computer, often mixing ideas from clients and line drawings from Jonathan and digitizing them into cutting-edge 3D representations. I'm handed a simple to-scale replica of their most recent superyacht project, the *MLR*. The 175-foot *MLR* was launched from the Delta Marine shipyard on the Duwamish River on January 2019

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Below: The V68 underway. The twin Caterpillar C18 ACERT engines provide 2,272 horsepower to push this semi-displacement hull to a maximum speed into the mid-20 knot range (photo: Alex Kwanten).





Left: The beach club and giant swim platform combo is one of the V68's big draws. **Right:** The cockpit is mostly covered by the extended flybridge above. (Photos: Dan King)

Specs

Horizon V68

LOA: 67' 6" • **LWL:** 19' 6" • **Draft:** 4' 4"

Ballast: 18,735 lbs.

Displacement: 110,451 lbs.

Tankage (Fuel/Fresh/Black):
1,200 gals./300 gals./160 gals.

Engine: Twin Caterpillar C18 ACERT (1,136 bhp)

Learn More: More information with regards to specs of the Horizon Vison 68 can be found online at <https://bit.ly/2vYRFmK>.

"We may be the only yacht design firm that has a 3D printer," continued Givens. "We can go into a meeting with a client with a basic, 3D-printed model of their dream boat."

"Nothing brings out the kid in a client like giving them one of these," Jonathan chuckled. Talk shifts to the V68. "Essentially, we wanted to bring our superyacht knowledge to the production line," said Jonathan. The V68 was originally envisioned as a 62- or 64-foot range yacht. It originally started as a modernized West Bay SonShip, a successful luxury yacht built in British Columbia.

"A huge part of the job is proportions," said Jonathan. "It's often trick-of-the-eye stuff. Also, some yachts these days are opting to overcome their crappy hull designs simply by adding more horsepower. That's why you see these things going past and moving a wall of water while doing it. That's just wasted energy, the boat can never get on step. There's a lot of junk out there." To meet the design brief, JQB extended the length to 68 feet. "It's been very rewarding and we're already working on other Horizon builds."

A NORTHWEST ORIGINAL

My analysis is that the V68 is an excellent design that punches above its weight. A yacht with similar design elements is the Ocean Alexander 90R, and even though

it has a good 20 feet on the V68, I bet potential clients of this budget tier will give both an equally hard look.

Probably the big crossroads for an owner is whether to hire crew or operate alone, as the 68-foot length does sit at that gray area for being a lot of boat to handle solo yet small for a hired crew. But at this

level of quality and price point, the conversation is less about design merits and more about client preferences.

As I left the JQB shop on Vine Street, I took a moment to appreciate the grand sum of the V68 parts.

While there are plenty of reasons to be both optimistic and pessimistic about the future of Seattle's and the greater Pacific Northwest's maritime industry, the fact that three professionals at a design firm down the street can creatively collaborate with an innovative brokerage just a mile or two the other way and homebrew a world-class production yacht like the V68 demonstrates the kind of talent fire-power our community has at its disposal.

Even my inner traditionalist, whose heart yearns for Bob Perry-style double ender sailboats and converted wooden trawlers with stories to tell, can appreciate that. Feel free to slap an "Organically Grown in the Pacific Northwest" label on it.

Below: The well-insulated engine room also provides great access for maintenance or inspections, a perk of the yacht's size. Access is through the beach club.

