

SPOTLIGHT - MARQUIS 720

RIDING HIGH

WORDS RYAN SWIFT

The new Marquis 720 is the flagship yacht from the US builder with Italian styling, and it features plenty of interior space and a spectacular flybridge that's perfect for entertaining

Photo: Henry Chiu



“Marquis Yachts is the merging of US production and engineering, with Italian design firm Nuvolari-Lenard, based in Venice”

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► **AS THE NORTHEAST MONSOON WAS MAKING ITS PRESENCE FELT ON A BLUSTERY MID-OCTOBER DAY, WE HAD THE CHANCE TO TAKE THE MARQUIS 720 OUT FOR A SPIN TO SEE WHAT SHE WAS LIKE ON THE INSIDE, AND HOW SHE HANDLED.** Gusts of wind were making their presence felt at the south end of the Aberdeen Typhoon shelter as the crew made the boat ready for departure. It was therefore time to begin the tour.

Approaching the 720, the exterior lines stood in stark contrast to the aging looks of the surrounding superyachts. Marquis Yachts is the merging of US production and engineering, with Italian design firm Nuvolari-Lenard, based in Venice. Nuvolari-Lenard have made quite a name for themselves in superyacht design, penning the exterior and interior looks to several of Oceanco's most distinctive boats, as well as to several sleek Palmer Johnson superyachts.

Nuvolari-Lenard have given aggressive lines to the 720, with a steep shearline of the superstructure rising up quite far forward. The angled windows continue the aggressive looks further aft – the end result is the appearance of a yacht that is in motion.

For the build, one need only consider the legacy of Wisconsin, USA. Most Asian yacht buyers have come to think of quality yacht building as being in Italy or perhaps the Netherlands. But the state of Wisconsin has a unique boating history, as Marquis Robert Van Grunsven once told me. He noted that generations of boat builders from the Baltic Sea region of Europe had, over the years, emigrated in droves to the state, which borders the Great Lakes – to this day, Germans and Norwegians count among the top ethnic groups. Marquis prides itself on

building all of its yachts to CE Class A Ocean standard, and the list of hull construction techniques they claim to use would bear that out.

GOING ABOARD

Stepping aboard at the transom, the owners of this yacht, in this case Omnia Marine (dealers for South China, though not Hong Kong), had opted for a Sea-Doo jet ski at the powered transom. Crew quarters and engineering areas have access at this transom door, though as with most Chinese owned yachts, overnighting is not a premium, and therefore most crew wouldn't actually be staying onboard the yacht.

The main aft deck is a simple but sturdy affair, with large settee and stylish table.

“The main deck on our test boat reflected the degree to which Marquis is willing to customise”



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Entering in the main deck saloon, it's nice to find that the curved sliding doors open with ease and are simply constructed. An extra sliding screen has been added to let in the breeze and keep the bugs out.

The main deck on our test boat reflects quite strongly the degree to which Marquis is willing to customise. The standard layout has the main saloon with pop up TV on the starboard side, and a galley further forward. Instead, Omnia Marine had opted to place the galley down below, in a room that can be sealed off to prevent the smells of cooking from entering into the main deck. In its place, there is a sizable dining area that easily sits eight guests with elbow-room to spare. The table has been constructed to extend on either side. The pop up TV has been shifted to provide a divide between the dining area and the saloon sitting area. With the TV down, the whole main deck feels as one area.

Thanks to the forward-orientation of the superstructure, there is plenty of headroom and space going forward. One of the most endearing features about Marquis Yachts is the American generosity of space combined with the Italian sense of style. Nowhere aboard a Marquis yacht do you feel cramped, and this is true of the 720.

The main deck helm station is centrally-aligned, with a comfy and adjustable captain's chair well-suited to long stretches at the wheel. Though sunshades were fastened to the outer windows, the angles of the dash seemed to indicate that glare wouldn't be an issue. However, while the view was certainly reasonable on our test model, the large supports from every



The main cabin is truly roomy, with the full beam offering a lot of space, and the bed aligned athwartships – the two-metre headroom adds to the feeling of comfort and space



angle could cause some visibility issues. Thankfully, there were sizeable windows to both port and starboard.

The designers of the 720 evidently thought that the captain could use some company during longer voyages, as the helm station is on a raised platform with a very open entrance, and a circular settee to the port side. This area is actually quite comfortable, and could easily be a secondary socialising space.

In addition to the changes to the layout requested by Omnia, the 720 we tested had a simple yet elegant interior colouring. Dark woods with glossy finish were set against pale tans in the fabrics and in the deep pile carpeting that was used throughout. While this was certainly nice to the touch and pleasing to walk on, it will certainly age quickly in the main saloon area with all the foot traffic. The cabins in particular also make use of mirrors to create a greater feeling of space, without over doing it so that one feels self conscious below deck. The designers at Nuvolari-Lenard have worked out several combinations of stone, wood and fabrics for the buyer.

Accessing the lower deck is via a curving staircase on the starboard side just next to the helm station. Though there are no real handholds elsewhere in the yacht, Marquis has made sure to include a good set of handholds when ascending or descending to the different decks. Combined with the

Heading up the port-side stairs from the main aft deck, I was left to look at the layout of the flybridge and wish that I could return on a warm sunny day and spend an afternoon at anchor





The flybridge helm.

decent sized steps and the none-too-steep rate of climb and it makes the stairs on the 720 rather safe, even when the boat is in motion.

The standard layout follow conventional wisdom for yachts of this size, with a VIP cabin in the bow, twin cabins to port and starboard just aft, and the master cabin amidships, all connected by a central-aligned passageway. In our case, one of the twin cabins had been replaced with the galley, while the other twin was used for storage. Omnia normally use their 720 for day trips only.



The VIP cabin was very spacious, thanks to the very wide flare in the bow. There is decent space on either side of the bed, with plenty of storage and a fine bathroom. The main cabin is truly roomy, with the full beam offering a lot of space, and the bed aligned athwartships - the two-metre headroom adds to the feeling of comfort and space. The main bathroom is located to starboard and spacious - the shower is big enough for two - while to port, there is a walk-in closet. Both are located aft of the actual main cabin, which provides some sound insulation from the engineering areas further aft.

HEADING UP AND OUT

After the extensive tour, it was time to head out of the typhoon shelter and find out how the 720 coped. The winds seemed to be picking up, gusting Force 5 or better, so this was sure to be fun. I decided this was also time to check out the flybridge.

Heading up the port-side stairs from the main aft deck, I was left to look at the layout of the



Photo: Henry Chiu

flybridge and wish that I could return on a warm sunny day and spend an afternoon at anchor. The fly on the 720 features a simple, effective layout that's been wonderfully built. It is a spacious area, and in Omnia's case, they opted for a fixed top sunscreen that features four skylights. Here, one is shaded, yet enjoys the scenery in full glory. I am of the view that the flybridge is the place to be on a yacht (in the right weather of course), making this an important area to get right.

The helm station is slightly off centre, but with the relatively forward position, the captain has excellent visibility. Two, helm-style seats have placed next to the captain's chair, letting guests enjoy the wind-in-the-hair ride if they wish. Just behind the seats on the port side is a very nicely laid out wet bar and BBQ area, with all the necessities for serving up drinks and appetizers. Opposite is a curved settee and table, with the settee extending up to the just behind the helm seat. The whole layout is open, effective for service, and pleasing to the eye.

As we motored out of the typhoon shelter, the captain slowly powered up, then hit the engines full bore. With RPMs peaking at just over 2300, we managed nearly 29 knots speed-over-ground, with a hefty breeze hitting us on the forward port side. Settling the engines down, we managed a steady 27.5 knots at 80 percent throttle. Handling

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS – MARQUIS 720 FLYBRIDGE

LOA	22m
Beam	4.7m
Draught (with MTU 10V 2000 engines)	1.55m
Bridge clearance	7.2m
Fuel capacity	4921 litres
Water capacity	757 litres
Holding tanks	580 litres
Weight (at half load)	52.25 tonnes
Cabin headroom	2m
Engine options	MTU 10V 2000 (1360hp) CAT C32 ACERT (1470hp) CAT C32 ACERT (1622hp) CAT C32 ACERT (1723hp) MTU 10V 2000 M94 (1600hp)

was straightforward, and the helm controls are easily laid out. Sitting at the helm, the spray guard worked well, with little to no splash getting up to the fly.

There was a bit of bouncing about, particularly at higher speeds, and this was certainly in part due to the fullness of the bow. In calmer waters, the 720 would be a graceful ride to be sure. Marquis make a point of building their 720s to CE Ocean standard, so even if caught out in tougher conditions, the boat should hold up well.

In short, this is a yacht that offers a lot to the prospective buyer looking to own a first yacht with crew. The on-board space is plentiful, and the hull construction standards are high. There are lots of little extras throughout, from the stylish water clearance channels that drain water from the foredeck, to the recessed alcove on the internal staircase that can be used to house artwork, flowers or a vase.

For buyers thinking of a superyacht, but not having spent much time on the water, this would be a good first step. Marquis also produce a 720 tri-deck, which is essentially an enclosed flybridge 720 with extra access stairway located by the helm station. A complete list of specifications, including options, is available online. The 720 we tested was the first to arrive in Hong Kong, but likely won't be the only one to find a home in Asia. ☐ ☐ ☐

With special thanks to Omnia Marine

www.marquisyachts.com
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