

Selene 59

BY SVEN DONALDSON

After nearly a decade as a boatbuilding business, Howard Chen's Jet Tern Marine continues to grow like gangbusters — largely thanks to the burgeoning U.S. market, with its boundless appetite for robust, ocean-capable motoryachts.

Although lately the "trawler" designation has been applied to everything from planing launches to multihulls, Jet Tern produces only moderately powered, heavy-displacement vessels that, in fact, adhere closely to the original trawler concept. The newly introduced Selene 59 was specifically envisioned as a full-sized, fully appointed luxury yacht that would nevertheless be manageable without a professional crew. Some 20 were pre-sold before the first boat was launched, so this model already counts as a major success.

Jet Tern Marine is headquartered in Taiwan, but the 59 is built on the mainland, at the company's enormous new facility in Zhuhai — the largest pleasure-boat plant in the Far East. For now, production of the 57 carries on at Jet Tern's original facility, located in Dongguan, another major industrial zone in mainland China.

The 59 is not simply a stretched version of Selene 57 (reviewed in *Power Cruising*, July/August 2005, page 74). Rather, it's a new design with a more rounded underbody, a slightly longer waterline and a wider beam. Both boats weigh in around 50 tons loaded, but the 59 has a lower prismatic coefficient (.67 instead of .73), which indicates a greater concentration of immersed volume amidships and a hull optimized for lower speed-to-length ratios.

One worthwhile benefit of this redistribution of volume is a full-headroom engine room — an area where the Selene 57 came up a bit short. And as long as the Selene 59 is cruising at an S/L below about 1.1 (equivalent to 8.9 knots), its available bulbous bow is effective at suppressing wave-making — saving fuel while simultaneously improving seakindliness through pitch damping.

Unfortunately, a balmy afternoon in Puget Sound provided no opportunity to assess the Selene 59's rough-water qualities, but its efficiency and overall refinement were readily apparent. At 9 knots, the 12.5-liter John Deere 1625 ticked along at 1,825 rpm, with onboard instrumentation displaying a 60 percent engine-load factor and a 15.1-gph burn rate. Throttling back to 1,320 rpm and 8 knots brought the fuel consumption down to just 5.5 gph — a dramatic 270 percent improvement in fuel efficiency in exchange for a mere 12 percent reduction in speed.

Based on the observed fuel burn at 8 knots, and assuming favorable sea conditions, a Selene 59 with standard tankage offers a 2,880-nautical-

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NEIL RABINOWITZ (3)

Although capable of some 11 knots, the Selene 59 truly shines at 8 knots, where she burns just 5.5 gph and has a cruising range of almost 3,000 miles. Creature comforts abound in the spacious pilothouse (right) and saloon (below, left).

mile range with a 10 percent reserve — easily enough for the vast majority of popular offshore passages. Like other full-displacement vessels, the Selene 59 hits a "speed wall" at high throttle settings, so as a 93 percent engine-load setting pushed fuel consumption above 25 gph, boat speed only climbed to 10.5 knots.

Back at 8 knots, noise levels in the main living areas ranged from 55 dbA in the centrally located owners' suite to 61 dbA in the pilothouse — notably quiet by even megayacht standards. Moreover, the sound control remained impressive even with the engine at wide-open throttle, peaking at just 66 dbA, again measured at the helm. A thick, foam-cored hull and similarly constructed bulkheads; liberal applications of soundproofing insulation; and attention to airtight seals at critical points like engine room doors and cable runs all contribute



to exceptionally quiet living spaces.

As noted, the standard Selene 59 comes with single-diesel power, although the commodious engine room can easily accommodate twins, if desired. The review boat had an owner-specified, hydraulic get-home drive powered by her Northern Lights genset engine and with this rig, she proved capable of maintaining a respectable 6 knots.

As a yacht designer, the multitalented Howard Chen (who also serves at Jet Tern's CEO and general manager) has not strayed far from conservative norms in drafting the Selene 59. Massive bulwarks, covered walkways and the ever-popular Portuguese bridge will keep

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 65' 1"

Beam: 17' 10"

Draft: 5' 8"

Displacement (full load): 123,000 lbs.

Fuel capacity: 2,200 gals.

Power: Single 526-hp diesel

Price range: \$1.35-1.65 million

Information: www.selenetrawlers.com

the crew secure when they're on deck in poor weather; while an expansive, raised pilothouse offers 270-degree visibility and full light-isolation for night running.

Interiors are available in either traditional teak (with ebony inlays) or cherry wood — in either case showcasing some outstanding joinery and varnish work. Granite (or Corian) countertops, Cantalupi lighting, and solid teak/holly soles add to the vessel's luxurious ambiance.

However, Jet Tern has acquired a reputation for quality that extends well beyond the finely crafted furnishings — in years gone by, the Chinese boatbuilders' principle stock in trade. The Selene 59's hand-laid fiberglass hull

incorporates modern, stitched-biaxial reinforcements and utilizes premium gelcoat — plus vinylester resin for the five outer laminations to maximize resistance to osmotic blistering.

Divinycell foam-sandwich construction above the waterline not only makes for a quieter yacht, but also lowers the vessel's center of gravity for a worthwhile improvement in lateral stability and overall seaworthiness. Four watertight bulkheads isolate the engine room and lazarette, further enhancing safety offshore.

Besides John Deere, familiar brands such as Diamond/Sea Glaze, Force 10, Racor, Jabsco, Twin Disc, PYI and Newmar can be found at every turn.

The Selene 59 starts at about \$1.35 million, and buyers typically add another 10-20 percent in options/customization. Ultimately, Jet Tern's success appears to depend not so much on pricing alone, but on its proven ability to produce rugged, high-quality trawler yachts like the 59 in a cost-effective manner, thanks to both efficient management and low labor costs. ❁

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