

# GC Blue



The Activa is different to any production motor yacht offered in Australia



The helm has a unique step down



The saloon is compact



The hardtop flybridge is where the entertainment takes place

# Activa is all smooth sailing



**Kevan Wolfe**  
BOATING

been searching for in China at a place called Suzhou.

Activa Marine has been operated by naval architect Charles Chang in Taiwan, and more recently in China, for more than 30 years and has an established reputation.

More importantly, the company offered a vessel that was unique and entirely different to any production motor yacht offered in Australia or New Zealand.

Activa filled the bill perfectly. Activa sells its boats in the US and Europe under the brand names of Altima and Histar.

However, they don't have the same specification level of the yachts that find their way Down Under.

A lot of thought and boating experience has gone into the interior fit-out of Activa 5300, as I was to find out, when Kevin showed me around.

The first impression is how big the interior of this boat is for a 53-footer.

I doubt whether there is another boat of this size that offers this level of spaciousness.

Fresh off the ship, the new boat hadn't been fully commissioned and there were still a few items to arrive and fitted on the Gold Coast, such as some of the electronics for the lower helm station and the inset features in the galley cupboard doors.

But these could be excused as they were happening and didn't detract from the overall top-class finish of the fit-out.

The main cabin, entered through a large stainless steel-framed sliding door from the cockpit, with large picture windows, is compact with a lounge and an electrically operated table that sits opposite a huge TV screen and entertainment centre.

The cockpit is large with a curved staircase, providing one of two ways to get upstairs to the flybridge. The other is by an internal staircase.

That takes up some of the room. Then there's the galley up a

couple of steps and set amidships.

This is bigger than usual and accounts for some more of the room, so much so, the lower helm station is probably a little further forward than most.

The design is well proportioned with the cockpit, galley, lower helm station and the forward accommodation contained in their individual areas that connect seamlessly to each other.

The cook will love the galley with its granite preparation and serving tops and there is more draw and cupboard space, including overheads, than in the average family kitchen.

The dinette features a nicely finished table with an inlaid burl timber surface and a discrete rail around the edges to stop things sliding off.

The lower helm station is compact, it doesn't need to be big because most of the driving will be done from up top – and when we get up there you will see why.

A unique innovation is the step down at the helm, it's one way to give the driver room to stand up and see out the windscreen without having to drive sitting down all the time.

The one thing missing here is the side-door access to the deck, on this boat it would be nice to have.

It's standard on the 58-foot version and an option on this one. With the lower helm station well forward, it's just down the steps to the guest cabin in the bow and the third cabin with a couple of Pullman bunks.

The layout also provides for a big bathroom with a walk-in shower.

The feeling is made all the more spacious with the marble floor and mirrors set in the ceiling.

The master stateroom gets the same treatment – this is super yacht stuff and not normally found on a boat this size.

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## BOATING



The Activa moves off smoothly when power is applied



A lot of thought and boating experience has gone into the fit-out

# NO NONSENSE CRUISER

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The configuration has the master stateroom under the helm and galley taking advantage of the full beam of the boat.

This is also surprisingly big with a walk-around bed that comes with side tables, a vanity table and a walk-in wardrobe.

The timber finish throughout the boat is superb.

From the solid teak doors to the cabin furniture, all the corners of the furniture in the master stateroom are curved – there's not a sharp corner anywhere.

As Kevin said: "We were very particular about the woodwork."

Another thing I noticed was there were no of screw heads showing, not even in the doorframes or the cabinetry, they are all hidden.

There's not a hint of vinyl anywhere either.

"The days of vinyl in a boat of this calibre are gone," said Kevin.

"All the headlining is cloth and the upholstery is leather."

Upstairs on the flybridge under the hardtop is where most of the entertaining on a day out with guests will be done.

But before we talk about that, as you walk up the back of internal stairs the first thing noticed when you step on to the flybridge are the very classy chairs at the helm – they virtually hit you in the eye.

They are replicas of the US-made Crown chairs that cost a fortune.

These are built in China by Activa for about \$200 a piece and look the goods.

As to be expected there is a big

lounge and table, and the mandatory wet bar, fridge and barbeque are on hand. The whole area can be filled in with Strataglass clear fitted in Australia.

The flybridge sits tall above the boat and because of its size the lines are not as streamlined as other more sporty types.

But this boat is not meant to be sporty. It's a no-nonsense, long-distance gentleman's cruiser that, despite its size, is easy to drive and handle by a couple – and very comfortable under way.

The twin Volvo Penta D9 diesels sit in one of the neatest and best laid out engine rooms I have ever walked into.

The roof and walls are lined with perforated soundproofing and the fuel manifolds and wiring looms are laid out to super-yacht standards.

The D9s will push the boat along at a steady 12 knots for long distance cruising. Top speed at 2600rpm is around 22 knots in semi-displacement mode.

It will drop off the plane at 15 knots and assume a displacement mode. Take a look behind, even at 20 knots the hull is not dragging half the ocean behind it.

In fact, the wash is surprisingly small and very friendly for a boat

this size. A testament to the hull design, which doesn't dig a big hole in the ocean as it moves off smoothly when the power is applied.

It doesn't take long to see that people with a hell of a lot of boating experience have put this boat together.

Things like the solid 32mm bow rails set into the gunwales and not screwed down with deck plates and the water drains from the upper deck that run through the superstructure and exit under water.

The anchor windlass is mounted on a tray to catch the mud that comes off the anchor chain when it's raised, so it doesn't run down the deck and you spend the rest of the afternoon washing that down too.

There's a chain tensioner to stop the chain whipping if it comes up too fast and the anchor is a hand-built 100-pound Ultra sourced from Turkey.

They are a must-have in Europe. "We considered all the problems you could have in a boat and went about fixing them," said Kevin.

"We went through all the engineering too and fitted the best equipment we could source to give us a boat that doesn't need much maintenance and one that would give an owner trouble free boating."

## Specifications

- Length: Overall 16.71m (54ft 10in)
- Beam: 4.7m (15ft 5in)
- Draft: 1.19m (3ft 11in)

- Displacement: 22000kg (48000lb)
- Fuel: 2450 litre (650US gal)
- Water: 225ltr (60US gal)
- Price: Base: \$1.25m
- As tested: \$1.4m



The timber finish throughout is superb



The engine room and galley are impressive



The quality of the stateroom could be found on a super yacht