

A new

Tradition

Trawlers are decidedly back in fashion and a few classics from the past are being rediscovered by contemporary buyers. With its Cordova 48, the iconic Clipper brand strikes the right balance between old and new.

Words Kevan Wolfe





About eight or nine years ago, Darren Berry could see the market changing from pure displacement hulls back to the traditional trawler-style vessels. It was the start of a new era. While customers wanted a boat that was easy on the fuel and comfortable to cruise at around 10 knots all day, they still wanted the security of a boat that had a respectable turn of speed when it was needed. In other words, today's owners want the best of both worlds.

This new era also marked the return of the iconic Clipper series, particularly the Clipper 34, which was popular as a charter boat with holidaymakers on Sydney's Pittwater and in the Whitsundays in the 70s and 80s.

In the course of his then business of importing and refurbishing displacement boats, Mark came across the Chinese factory that had originally produced the Clippers. The factory still owned the moulds.

The Clipper 38 fitted Darren's philosophy for the design of a boat he would like to own himself. Primarily it would have a semi-displacement hull with walk around decks, stairs to the flybridge, classic teak interior with a contemporary design and still retain an ageless look that remained impressive over time.

Darren and his business partner, Brit Mark Champion, who grew up in Hong Kong and is based at the Chinese factory to oversee production, quality control and new product development in China, modified the Clipper 38 and extended the cockpit out to make it a 40-footer. The 40-footer proved popular and now the Clipper range includes the single-engine Heritage 36 and 40 and the Cordova 45 with either a single or twin-engine configuration, as well as the twin-engine Cordova 52 and 60 – and now a brand new twin-engine Cordova 48.

There is still a concern by many owners that a boat over 50 feet may be a little too big for a husband and wife team to handle, although with today's technology, bow and stern thrusters and remote yacht controllers, this is generally not the case. The 48 is a size that many owners, even experienced ones, are comfortable with.

OCEAN managed to jump aboard only the second 48 to come out of

the factory – the first one went to Hong Kong – in the short time before it headed south to its new home. The Melbourne-based buyer had originally ordered a 40 but after seeing the 48 he immediately upgraded, despite having to wait another 12 months for it, so he was naturally quite keen to take delivery.

The 48 is not just a scaled down version of the 52, it's a design in its own right. As with the larger Clippers, the 48 hull shape and running surfaces were drawn by Canadian naval architect Trevor Bolt in the classic double chine configuration developed by one of the world's legendary naval architects, Ed Monk Senior. Trevor Bolt spent many hours with Ed Monk Junior modernising his father's designs to obtain the optimum displacement and cruising performance from the hulls.

The double chine design has two main advantages for a semi-displacement vessel. It allows the boat to have a wider planing surface with the stability of a displacement cruiser at around 12 knots and under while creating a second narrower running surface with hard chines when coming onto the plane for cruising above 14 knots. More stability is achieved in the turn as the vessel has two hard chines and "walls" that stop the boat from rolling and even at full lock the turn is flat like a small direct drive ski boat. The vessel is also designed to have more weight down low under the waterline. That's why the twin Cummins QSM11s are mounted in the centre of the boat under the main cabin. This promotes stability and also keeps the boat quiet at anchor, in other words it doesn't roll or swing around on a mooring.

The design clearly works as the 48 is just as comfortable at 10 knots as it is at 16 or 18. When it came to what I call the "Chardy turn" the Clipper 48 scored 10 out of 10. A Chardy turn is one in which the boat is put into a turn at cruising speed and the gauge is how much chardonnay is spilt as the boat completes the turn. The 48 sat perfectly flat and not a drop would have hit the deck.

This 48 was the two-cabin, two-bathroom version with the typical main saloon and the well-appointed galley on the same level beside the lower helm station. The quality of the workmanship stands out as you



Beautifully finished teak has been used extensively throughout the interior, with nice attention to detail on cabinetry such as fiddles on the edges and rounded corners.

step on board over the aft platform and into the generous cockpit. There in front is a striking stainless-steel-framed sliding door that opens into the main saloon.

As good as Chinese boatbuilding workmanship is there are still a few things that they haven't got right yet, and that includes stainless steel work. This door, that would grace a superyacht, has been sourced from Aritex in Taiwan, who just happen to supply the superyacht industry. In fact, all the stainless fittings have been sourced from Taiwanese suppliers including the sliding hatch over the stairs up to the flybridge. There's no pushing up a heavy hatch; this one is in three sections that slide back smoothly with no more than a fingertip push. And the big stainless scuff plate for the anchor chain on the bow is impressive.

The teak woodwork throughout the boat – and there is a lot of it – is beautifully finished with little touches like moulded fiddles on the edges of the cabinetry and rounded corners.

One of the features is the high-gloss woodwork around the top of the bulwarks. It looks great and it looks as if the rails had been finished with many coats of varnish. When I remarked that they would keep someone busy every few months, as anyone who has had anything to do with varnish in Australia's sun would know, I was told not so. The 104mm-wide rails have been finished with an oil called Biopin sourced from Germany, which just wipes on with a cloth. There is no sanding and it takes about half-an-hour to go around the whole boat.

The main cabin is very comfortable with its ultra leather upholstery and has that feeling of being nice to come home to. Many of the components are sourced from outside China. The lighting is Cantilupi from Italy, the switchboard is from New Zealand and all the wiring is double insulated and colour coded to comply with Australian standards. All the tapware is Grohe from Germany and all the electrical equipment such as the microwave, fridge/freezer, cooktop, TVs and sound systems are all sourced

in Australia and sent to China for installation.

Access to the sleeping accommodation is via a set of stairs beside the lower helm station. These lift up for access to the engine room located under the main saloon floor. Because of the location it is virtually a stoopway to get in to service the twin Cummins 425hp QSM11s. With the engines in the centre of the boat there is a lot of room under the aft cockpit for a lazarette that houses the battery bank and also plenty of room for a washer/dryer.

In the companionway leading to the sleeping cabins are a series of hatches that give easy access to much of the ship's systems such as pumps, tanks and the like. It must be remembered that this is only a 48-footer and a lot of sophisticated gear has been installed, so Clipper has thought about access for service and maintenance.

A sea door beside the lower helm station opens onto the 400mm-wide side deck for quick access to the bow. The steps up to the flybridge have been well designed for those of us who don't need to climb

ladders anymore. There are many cases where owners whose knees or hip joints are not so good have had to sell their boats because they can no longer climb up and down the flybridge ladder.

The stairs leading to the flybridge on the 48 are graduated, so it's an easy climb. The angle is such that I was able to walk down front on safely. The flybridge is the entertainment centre with an icemaker/fridge combo, an s/s sink and an electric lava rock barbeque.

On the water the Clipper 48 is smooth and quiet. At slow speeds it uses the widest part of the hull in displacement mode and at speed the chines in the narrow section of the hull come into play. It's the best of both worlds.

At 1,400rpm the boat is sliding along at seven knots and the QSM11s are using around nine litres per hour/per side. And the sound level reading on the flybridge was a quiet 66.9dBA. Up on the plane at 15 knots the

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Simplicity and functionality rule the outdoor spaces, with a spacious flybridge enclosed in clears.

hull felt very efficient and with a touch of tab it sat flat and didn't feel as if it was pushing a lot of water. The QSM11s were purring along at 2,500rpm and the fuel usage was 53 litres per hour per side with the sound level a very acceptable 72.8dBA. Top speed was a respectable 21.2 knots at 3,000rpm. The boat wouldn't be driven at this speed often, but it was there if needed.

Even though the 48 has a bow thruster it could benefit from a remote yacht controller when coming into a tight berth. The superstructure can catch the wind and make it difficult to come alongside a marina berth in windy conditions, especially when only two people are working the boat. A remote operated from the aft cockpit would be so much easier and the "first mate" could then just step through the side door onto the dock and pass a line across, once one line is on, the rest is easy. It's an extra well worth considering for any boat of its size or bigger.

Unlike some manufacturers who quote a base price and then present a prospective owner with all the options that have not been included on half a dozen sheets of A4; the Clipper 48 has just about everything. Add a watermaker, clears for the hardtop and a tender and the boat is ready for

extended cruising.

"A Clipper is good value initially and then we like to give a prospective owner a nice surprise. Everything is quoted in the original price, and that includes the Raymarine E120 navigation gear and a 48nm radar there are no expensive extras," says Clipper Motoryachts Australia managing director, Brett Thurley.

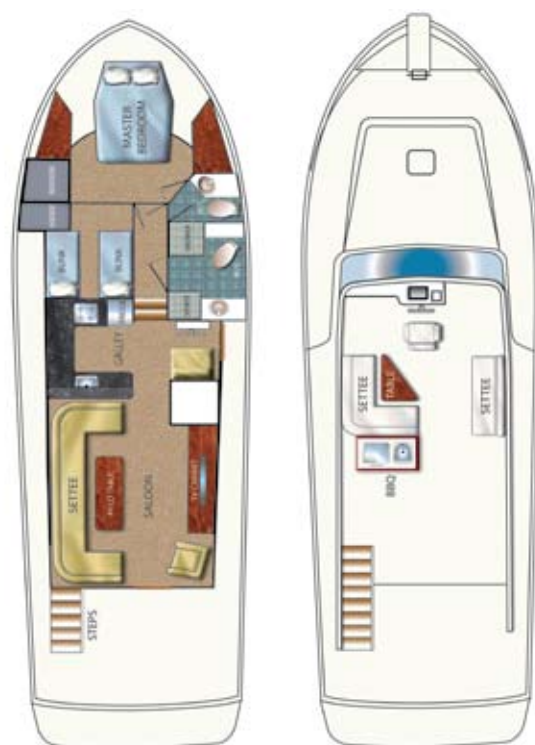
"When it came to what I call the "Chardy turn" the Clipper 48 scored 10 out of 10."

The new generation Clipper Cordova is manifest in the Cordova 48. It's an ideal boat for people who want to enjoy cruising in style and comfort and is the right size for a couple to handle.

It's virtually a home away from home with plenty of space in the aft cockpit and on the flybridge for entertaining and outdoor living, which is complemented with the rich teak and leather of the main saloon. With the option of two or three sleeping cabins, there's more than enough room onboard for a family and their friends. ○

For further information contact Brett Thurley at Clipper Motor Yachts, Tel: +61 (0)7 3890 5000, email brett@clippermotoryachts.com.au or visit www.clippermotoryachts.com.au

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



The Fuhau Shipyard	BUILDER
China	ORIGIN
Clipper Motoryachts	DESIGNER
Trevor Bolt	NAVAL ARCHITECT
2009	YEAR OF BUILD
15.6 metres (50ft 2in)	LOA
4.51 metres (14ft 10in)	BEAM
1.1 metres (3ft 7in)	DRAFT
Hand-laid moulded fibreglass	CONSTRUCTION
18 tonnes (20 tons US)	DISPLACEMENT
2 x Cummins QSM11	ENGINES
316kW (425hp)	OUTPUT
Onan 11.0kW	GENERATOR
21.2 knots	SPEED (MAX)
12-15 knots	SPEED (CRUISE)
2060 litres	FUEL CAPACITY
1030 litres	WATER CAPACITY
4	BERTHS
\$1,012,460 as tested	PRICE