

AS SEEN IN
tradeboat



POWERBOAT TEST

Ocean Alexander 26R

MODERN ART

The way we use our boats is changing, and demand for extra space is leading designers down innovative paths to yachts like this 26 Revolution from Ocean Alexander.

WORDS **John Ford** PICS **John Ford and Supplied**



It was wandering around, kicking fenders on a lost afternoon at Coomera a few months ago, when I first saw the new Ocean Alexander 26 Revolution, and I was a bit underwhelmed. As much as I hate to admit it, I'm a traditionalist with boat lines, and the blunt bow and opposing angles didn't really sit happily with me. I just didn't get it.

But after a day cruising from Brisbane to the Gold Coast on hull No 3, I just might admit I could have been wrong. I'm starting to get on board with the styling and realise that, like a lot of modern art, first impressions are meant to get in your face and challenge your perceptions.

Ocean Alexander's blunt bow, sharp window shapes and maze of opposing angles might not be your first impression of a serious seagoing yacht. Still, under the gleaming gelcoat, there's more to the name because there's a genuine revolution going on in boat design. The 26R isn't the first big boat to display the wide bow and slab-sided look. If anything the style is being adopted across many brands in the boat world — we had better get used to it.

Ocean Alexander built its first boat, a 50-footer, in 1978 and over 2000 yachts have now launched from facilities in Taiwan and the USA. Currently — as well as a range of smaller Divergence models — the company builds around sixteen boats between 84ft and 150ft each year, making it the sixth-largest builder in this category in the world.

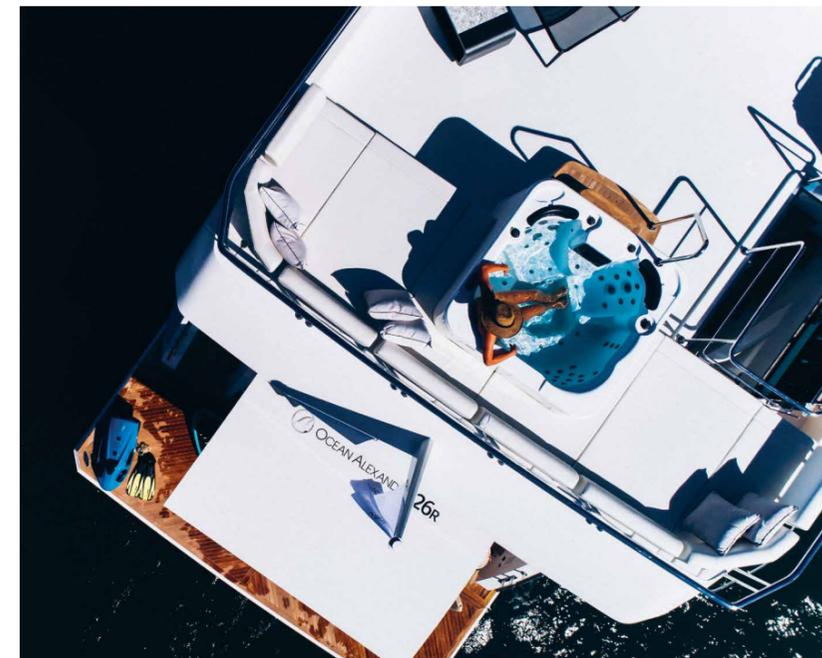


Over 70 per cent of production goes to America, but the company owns dealerships across the globe, including in Australia, demonstrating a significant commitment to the brand's expansion worldwide.

The first of the Revolution range was the 28R, first released as the 90R but renamed to keep the metric sizing in line over different markets. At its launch, Ocean Alexander explained that the first criterion for the new range was “to get more volume in the boat.”

The design was a multicultural effort. In collaboration with the team in Taiwan and USA, Evan K Marshall from the UK undertook the design process with engineering commissioned by Arrabito Naval Architects from Italy.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Family friendly entertaining spaces are all over; Blunt bow, sharp windows, if you don't like the look now, you soon will; That's an inviting aft, if ever I saw one; If you're still unsure, a soak in the spa is sure to win you over



According to Marshall, they “made a conscious decision to cater to buyers who are looking for a yacht that offers a relaxed, family-oriented layout.”

For instance, the main deck is entirely for spending time together. A TV lounge sits fully forward, with an open-plan dining area, galley, and saloon aft. This, Marshall continues, heightens the sense of space, “allowing areas to be distinct yet merging together.”

The 26R is the second of the five Revolution models planned, all offering a real alternative to the more traditional style on which the brand was built.

THE BUILD

Changing the traditional hull shape to increase the volume inside brings its own issues if we want to keep efficiency and seaworthiness. But because the Revolution range shares similar hull shapes with the Ocean Alexander E series of exploration boats, you can rest easy knowing the 26R is well-credentialed for passage making.

Under the axe style, vertical entry is a bulbous or piercing bow that reaches forward under the waterline. As the boat gets underway, the bow rises, and the bulb lifts clear to act as a sharp entry. This hull extension increases the wetted surface to increase speed and fuel efficiency by breaking the water tension before it reaches the hull itself.

Sea Trials



(Six people on board, 50 per cent fuel /light gear load
8971L fuel tank (calculations using 8073L, 10 per cent reserve)

RPM	SPEED (KNOTS)	FUEL BURN (L/H)	RANGE (NM)
670	6.5	16	3280
800	7.5	30	2018
1000	9.3	60	1251
1200	11	106	837
1400	12	160	605
1600	13	230	456
1800	14	334	338
2000	18	458	317
2200	22	544	326
2340	24	652	297

* Sea-trial data supplied by the author.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT There's nothing quite so satisfying as a clean, well-arranged engine room; The aft deck features a covered alfresco dining area; The twin MAN V12 engines putting in the work



For added safety, the extension is a separate watertight entity fixed to the hull to allow for easy repair and limit any safety issues.

In addition, significant chines run from the transom to amidships, where they rise along the hull to shed any spray.

Modern technology also plays a part in keeping things stable. Standard on the revolution range are Zero Speed Vector Fins from Side Power that reduce roll both when underway and at anchor.

ENGINE ROOM

Access the engine room is from the transom or the port side deck and through the utility room, which also gives access to the crew quarters.

As you might expect in a vessel of this size and quality, everything in the electronics and fuel systems is neatly laid out and well labelled.

Generous standing room and a spacious aisle between the engines help inspections and daily maintenance and give the twin 1650hp V12 MAN diesels lots of breathing room.

The turbocharged 24.2L engines are located well forward in the hull for optimum weight distribution, so long shafts run back to the props. Two 28kV Kohler generators sit either side, and there are clearly visible sight gauges for the two 4585L fuel tanks.

An Optoplex system monitors and controls all electronics throughout the boat and with displays in the saloon, at the helm and on an iPad, there is quick access anytime it's needed. The service provides backup and troubleshooting service from Meriton in the USA.

A blackwater tank has a 757L capacity, and the boat has its own sewerage treatment plant.



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT An impressive open-plan dining area; The skylounge is a bright, relaxing place to spend an afternoon; Captain John on duty; The main deck TV area



WIDE OPEN SPACES

From the cockpit, there's an uninterrupted view forward through the wide-open spaces of the mid-level deck. The design and apartment-style, low-level furniture is unusual and almost a denial of the nautical surroundings. Well, until you look outside. Floor to ceiling windows can't hide a view of the water, and the disconnect between city-style ambience and the ocean surroundings might be unsettling for a moment.

Electric doors lead inside, and they even have an optional foot control for times when your arms are full. Immediately inside the saloon is an expansive U-shaped lounge to port, while opposite is a granite-clad cocktail bar that

includes a wine fridge and unique drawers for glasses. The dining area takes up the starboard side of the middle section, and it's a quite formal eight to ten-seater with a large ebony and teak table. Eco-responsible Alpi timber and Cambrian stone mix with tactile fabrics in the ultra-fashionable joinery.

A 55in Samsung television folds from an unobtrusive panel in the ceiling, and with a Marantz sound system and Satellite receiver, there's plenty of entertainment wherever you travel.

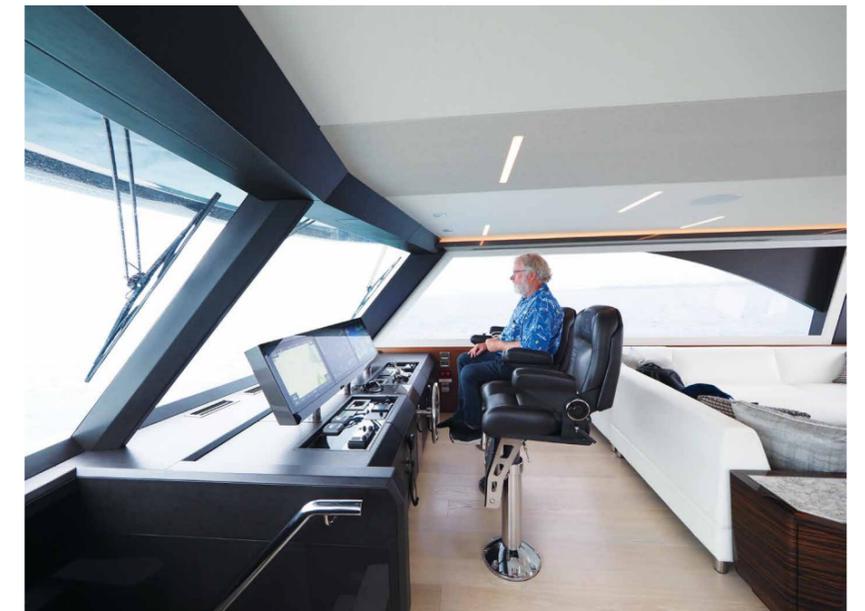
The well-equipped walk-in galley includes an island bench with a servery to the dining area. Appliances include Miele induction cooktop, oven, microwave and dishwasher as well as

an Adema trash compactor and a full-height refrigerator freezer.

Further forward is a second lounge room complete with another television and a corner office. A day head sits discreetly alongside the pantographic watertight door to the port side deck and a large bow precinct with another spacious lounge that converts to a four-person sunpad.

Just as the designers envisaged, by having a layout where the dining and galley separate the two lounging areas, the saloon gives a level of privacy to family members when needed. At the same time, larger gatherings can easily mingle here or spread out even further to the outside spaces or to the helm deck upstairs.

“A flick of a remote in the cockpit raises the transom to reveals a beach club complete with a shower and a wet bar”



GET ON BOARD

In a preview of more innovations onboard, a surprise greeted me at the swim platform. A flick of a remote in the cockpit raises the transom to reveal a beach club complete with a shower and a wet bar with fridge, sink and storage for water toys. Because the platform lowers below the water and is wide enough for deck chairs and a table, it should be immensely popular at anchor.

Steps to starboard of the bar lead forward to the crew quarters and engine room, while

on either side substantial staircases lead to the cockpit and the second of numerous entertainment venues scattered through the 26R.

In the corners, I was impressed with sizable big boat hardware of stainless-steel bollards, fairleads and warping winches. These mundane working features take second fiddle though because an expansive transom lounge behind a granite table dominates the cockpit. There's another wet bar against the saloon bulkhead, an icemaker and a set of steps to starboard for access to the flybridge.

Facts & Figures

OCEAN ALEXANDER 26R

PRICE AS TESTED

A\$9.8M

GENERAL

MATERIAL: GRP
TYPE: Monohull
LENGTH: 25.45m (83ft 6in) LOA
BEAM: 6.29m (20ft 8in)
WEIGHT: 85,000kg
DRAFT: 1.8m (5ft 11in)

CAPACITIES

PEOPLE: 12 (night) 33 (day)
FUEL: 897L
WATER: 2,498L

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL: Twin MAN V12-1650
TYPE: Turbocharged V12 four-stroke Diesel
RATED HP: 1650hp (1212kW)
DISPLACEMENT: 24.24L
WEIGHT: 2380kg (dry)

MANUFACTURED BY

Ocean Alexander

SUPPLIED BY

Alexander Marine Australia
 The Boatworks Complex
 200 Beattie Road, Coomera 4209
 P 07 5618 0000
 W alexandermarineaustralia.com.au

FOUR CABINS BELOW

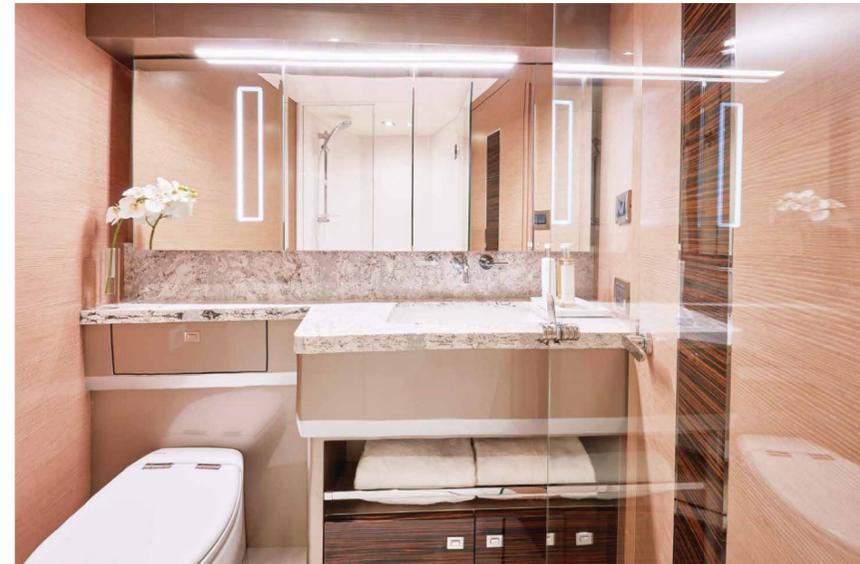
The companionway is forward of the saloon and leads down to a four-cabin layout with a full-beam master amidships, an innovative VIP forward and two guest cabins, each with their own ensuite, either side of the central hallway.

The master has a king-size island bed along the centreline, taking advantage of the most stable section of the boat. Large windows either side extend sweeping views and bucket loads of light, and the heated floor under the white carpet will take the chill off an early rise. The full-beam ensuite has separate entrances to his-and-hers

heads with sinks, storage and Tecma toilets either side of a roomy and exotic central shower.

Storage is generous with two walk-in cedar-lined wardrobes, vanity table and numerous drawers and there's also a window seat for a bit of quiet time.

Often a VIP cabin falls short of the name, but this one shouldn't score many complaints. With the benefit of the wide bow adding volume below, the bed here is offset at an angle to allow walk-around access. Again we have a walk-in wardrobe, and the ensuite is roomy and beautifully appointed.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Even the secondary accommodation is a luxurious treat; The VIP cabin ensuite; The master suite is a celebration of comfort, with a king-sized island bed and heated floor

“The master has a king-size island bed along the centreline, taking advantage of the most stable section of the boat.”



ENCLOSED FLYBRIDGE

With a wide beam flowing over the bulwarks below, the flybridge is a vast enclosed space mixing the helm with yet another big lounge and an outdoor area with wet bar, barbecue, more lounges, a spa and a discreet stainless-steel rack for a 10-pax life raft. As well as the layout on the review boat, there's an option for an open version, which I feel would have less year-round appeal.

Three black leather clad Stidd helm chairs face a somewhat austere dash with a panel of 24in Garmin Glass displays on three stainless steel supports. An upright stainless-steel wheel sits ahead of the central captain's chair, but most of the action is controlled by the Garmin

Stationkeeper system in the Garmin Grid joystick on the armrest.

Other Garmin electronics include 25kW Open Array radar, GHC2o Autopilot, AIS and cameras in the engine room and aft deck. A navigation table to port is a handy place for the skipper to maintain the log, but I thought a day head would have been convenient, even if there's one not far away one at the foot of the stairs to port.

THE DRIVE

Vision is superb ahead and through the expansive side windows, and with Sidepower 30hp bow and stern thrusters, getting away from the dock is straightforward. Our review

took us from Brisbane to the Gold Coast, so we had a mix of slow running through the inshore islands and speed zones, and fast cruising across the bays.

At slow speeds down the Brisbane River, there was no vibration and hardly a murmur from the big MEN two flights down. Extreme distances are in reach at these low revs — 800rpm should see around 7.5kt and just on 2000nm with 10 per cent reserve.

Out past the leads we eased up to 1000rpm and 9kt where the range will be close to 1251nm. A more realistic long-range cruise for most owners would be at 1200rpm for 11kt and a range of 837nm using 106L/h.

Wound out we saw 24kt at wide-open throttle, but there, fuel use is a less practical 652L/h. Even so, it's good to know the option is there if you need to make a dash for a port for any reason. Even at full effort, the hull and engine noise is very quiet, and the motion of the boat is steady and smooth.

At speeds over 20kt, the boat leaned only slightly into the sharp turns perhaps indicating the stabiliser fins work efficiently on the move. To test them at rest, we found some significant wake and came to a stop in the middle of it. Sure enough, with the hull beam on to the waves, there was minimal roll, just as you should expect.

THE WRAP

My feeling is the Ocean Alexander 26R is a boat for experienced owners who appreciate modern, efficient design and the best electronics — probably also for someone who has moved on from the traditional and isn't frightened of stepping out of his or her comfort zone.

Given the time, they will be just as happy with the family on their local waters as charting a course with them to New Guinea or around Tasmania to check out the view. The 26R will do both and getting there will be half the fun. The view from every corner of the 26R will be superb. 🌊



TOP TO BOTTOM Bold exterior lines allow for greater interior volume; Accents of chrome and hints of black set against a white upper deck present a modern aesthetic