

LOCAL REVIEW

Ocean Alexander 88

ALEXANDER'S GREATEST

With true ocean-going abilities and a vast lineage, Ocean Alexander yachts are built strong and the 88 model is no different

STORY AND PHOTOS **James Dumergue**





“The 88 Skylounge is a beautifully finished yacht with a high level of detail that is both palpable and subtle”

Ocean Alexander has been around since 1977 when Alex Cheuh gave the marque its name. He set the exacting engineering standards to adhere to and attain to produce a high level of fit and finish that would see their vessels stand the test of time.

Now in its fifth decade, the lofty engineering principles set by Ocean Alexander have safeguarded its position as a manufacturer of luxury motoryachts on the world stage. When you look into the company ethos, you discover the foundations are solid, and there's a good reason they are inside the top 10 manufacturers building boats over 70 feet.

The company's principles have been about both developing a luxury brand and developing advanced building techniques for superior results. A considerable investment of time and money has gone into continual improvement of the manufacturing techniques and construction methods. Along the way, they have achieved milestones in the quality of the product, construction methods and engineering.

DESIGNING NEW MODELS

When Ocean Alexander designs a new model, they set out to build real ocean-going vessels, and go about it in a way that sets the bar high. Engineering principles and design philosophies are the starting point for any new Ocean Alexander, and if it's not robust and reliable, it doesn't get off the drawing board.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP A lifestyle to envy; the OA88 has a classic look but do not let that fool you, its opulence is inside, where it matters; bow sun pads will appeal to the sun-lovers among us



They know what works and there is a keen eye navigating Ocean Alexander's course — there's a certain pragmatism about these boats that is a compound of progression and innovation, and it accumulates with each iteration.

Currently at the helm is Johnny Cheuh, who took over from his father, and has been there for 20 years. His story is important for understanding how Ocean Alexander weathered the waves of change the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) brought, and it explains why the course ahead looks steady.

Cheuh has an impressive marine industry resume. He's worked in the factory, working with fibreglass involved with the very fabric of the boats — even now he is hands-on addressing improvements — and gained all-important sales experience from running a dealership. This has given him insight into this often disconnected aspect for boat builders — at the dealer level, you

learn a lot about what does and doesn't work for owners, and hear about issues and improvement ideas from the very people who use them.

Apart from this knowledge and his involvement and understanding of boat building, Cheu's economics education has no doubt helped Ocean Alexander weather the GFC that claimed so many other scalps.

Still, what the customer experiences is the final testament, and the 88 Skylounge is a beautifully finished yacht with a high level of detail that is both palpable and subtle.

ON APPROACH

To appreciate the way an owner might enjoy their mothership, Alexander Marine Australia provided their smallest boat in the range, the previously reviewed Divergence 45, as the fun-filled, high octane transport for the journey to the northern end of Whitehaven beach. Built

as a commemoration of 40 years of production, the 88 Skylounge comes from the ever-popular Ocean Alexander 85 — with a few additions — and it's designed for discovery and to a standard that ensures luxury envelops your time aboard wherever you point the bow.

Sitting in picture-perfect conditions just off the entrance to Hills Inlet, the inviting turquoise waters and swirls of white sand are the perfect backdrop for feeling that this is how it should be.

Approaching from a distance at low speed gives time to appreciate the impressively finished hull. At this time of day imperfections in the hull are easy to identify, but if there are imperfections, I am struggling to identify them. The paint coating the hull is no ordinary paint. It originates

from the aerospace industry and has a robust finish. It is highly resistant to water and ultra-violet rays, so will not quickly break down or turn yellow when exposed to sunlight, particularly suitable for our climate — another tick in the longevity column for Ocean Alexander.

STEPPING ABOARD

Once the Divergence 45 is tied up alongside, stepping aboard the 88 Skylounge I am greeted by the crew who were the consummate hosts for my time aboard. Whereas we might typically spend an afternoon reviewing a boat, I am fortunate enough to be staying overnight. Rather than the supposition of flow and functionality of a vessel, I am getting to experience it completely,

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW An awning adds appeal to the already large swim platform; the cockpit lounge is well protected from the elements also; formal dining with a priceless view



“Inside, the interior designers have managed to exude sophisticated elegance”



over an extended period with a couple of meals, the setting of the sun and the rise again in destination paradise.

The moment you pass through the custom boarding gate at the top of the aft deck stairs you notice the superior finish of the stainless work, a clear indication of the fine craftsmanship that goes into building these boats. There's no needle threading of mooring lines through small fairleads at awkward heights. Instead, there are substantial integrated stainless sculptures on each stern quarter with rolling fairleads leading to warping winches and beautifully designed custom stainless bollards, all positioned at ideal working height with excellent sightlines.

The aft deck table is a cosy booth with fixed seating on three sides, seating eight with additional occasional seating. For entertaining support, the bar forward on the starboard side takes care of this outdoor area without the need to head inside. Just above deck level on the inboard side of the bar is a small black button which operates the electric actuated doors. Entering and exiting the saloon handsfree is

a nice touch for when your hands are full and makes a positive contribution to maintaining the interior climate control with automatic closing doors.

The doors are worth noting too for how effortless they are to open. Often large custom stainless doors can require some effort to open due to the sheer weight of the frames and glass. Electrically actuated doors are not an issue — a slight blue illumination around the button in the centre of the doors requires only a light touch for the doors to open safely.

HEADING INSIDE

Inside, the interior designers have managed to exude sophisticated elegance. They have finished it with some of the most beautiful finishes and blends of textures I have seen on a semi-custom vessel, giving the saloon a subtle grandeur blended with comfort and big views. The mixtures of high gloss coffee table, satin-finished walnut cabinetry, stand-alone furniture and modern fabrics of multiple textures and hues are masterful, bringing an elegant yet homely feel.

The beam of the vessel allows the formal dining table to be positioned athwartships for the views either side to be enjoyed by all eight diners seated at the exquisite high-gloss dining table. Opposite on the port side is the service bar with plenty of glass and drinks storage for self-service.

Just forward of the service bar is a nicely concealed day head negating the need to go below to the accommodations deck. Opposite this the country-style galley with dedicated casual dining forward. Here is where the 88 differs from the 85 as both the galley and the dining area ahead are bigger.

The galley's design is for everyday living. It's got a big French door fridge with an excellent sized freezer drawer below, marble inlaid bench-tops, full-size cooktop and under bench oven, but what stands out is the homely feel about the space. Having the dedicated dining area forward gives it that everyday comfy feel as food can be shared and enjoyed here with the intimacy and interactions found in the family kitchen.

Stairs on the port side lead up to the full Skylounge, an impressive zone in its own right, again displaying another masterful and elegant blend of fabrics, textures and modern furniture with expansive views. Three magnificent Stidd



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE The bridge deck will appeal to party-goers; step inside the bridge and a semi-formal lounge awaits anyone looking for respite from the outdoors; the helm is a study of simplistic elegance; the galley, although not the biggest, is well appointed and laid out

helm chairs have excellent forward views, and Ocean Alexander's treatment of the dash is stylish and sophisticated. The Multi-function screens are housed in a slim freestanding pod supported by three stainless posts, through which the hard wiring runs. It resembles a modern multi-screen video editing suite rather than a built-in moulded helm station.

The skipper's central helm chair has a complete Garmin grid controller of the three Garmin 24-inch screens with the left hand. The right side has full joystick control for manoeuvring courtesy of the Glendinning Station Keeper system, which combines the hydraulic bow and stern thrusters with engine controls to give precise control here or via the wired control in the cockpit. The station holding feature is like a handbrake on the water. If you're shorthanded, it will hold your

position while you prepare the lines and fenders for berthing and is handy for bringing a tender onboard off the anchor.

To head out to flybridge deck you use the same foot-operated kick switch used to enter and exit the saloon — it's not until you try it that you realise how useful this feature is.

The Flybridge aft deck is an entertaining venue of excellent proportions. The rear bulkhead protects an L-shaped lounge and providing further protection from the elements are removable shade sails, supported by substantial posts, that can shade the entire deck. The welcome shade in summer opens up the alfresco entertaining options. An electric BBQ, wet bar and sink and more cool drinks storage combine to make this rooftop entertaining at its finest. Stairs from the main deck allow access for

Facts & Figures OCEAN ALEXANDER 88

PRICED FROM
A\$9,300,000 (landed)

OPTIONS FITTED
Hydraulic hi/lo swim platform, spa, Glendinning Station Keeper, main deck timber floors, heated stone floors in master ensuite, Ecomar sewage treatment system plus much more

GENERAL
LENGTH (OVERALL) 27.05m (88ft 9in)
BEAM 6.12m (20ft 1in)
DISPLACEMENT 78,000kg
DRAFT 1.63-1.8m (5ft 4in-5ft 11in)

CAPACITIES
PEOPLE 8 plus crew
FUEL 9463L
WATER 1325L
HOLDING TANK 757L

ENGINE
MAKE/MODEL Twin 1600hp MTU
TYPE V10 turbo-diesels
RATED 1600hp each

SUPPLIED BY
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Sea Trials



Twin MTU M96L V10's, light load. Fuel consumption is for both engines combined.

RPM	SPEED (kt)	FUEL BURN (L/h)	RANGE (nm)
850	5.5	15	3154
1200	10.5	76	1159
1600	12.5	202	532
1800	13.5	303	383
2000	15.5	374	357
2200	18.5	484	276
2450 (WOT)	21.5	626	295

* Sea-trial data supplied by the manufacture. Fuel figures calculated leaving ten percent in reserve.



TOP DOWN The full-beam master suite will appeal to the most discerning owner; a classic marble finish in the ensuite adds brightness while highlighting the exquisite woodwork in the vanity



anyone wanting to join in — they can come straight up from the main deck or the water to jump straight into the jacuzzi with a view.

The full-beam owner's cabin is a highlight of the four-cabin arrangement of this boat. Well-lit in the day by light flooding in through the enormous picture windows either side of the king-size bed, when you step inside you don't feel like you are in the belly of a yacht. The full-beam bathroom has his and her entries. Both sides have a vanity and a head each, and they meet in the middle with dual entry to the shower sporting a precisely cut marble floor.

Port and starboard cabins with twin berths side by side can be slid together for queen berths, both with an ensuite. The VIP cabin forward is also with ensuite, and I can attest to the comfort of the beds — I had a magnificent sleep, albeit a bit short due to the desire to catch the early sun reflecting off the hull.

The crew accommodations are two cabins, a crew mess and a shared bathroom. The crew quarters have the same fit and finish as for the guests, so this is perfect for guest overflow or as a teenager's retreat when the crew aren't onboard.

SETTING OFF

Jesse, the skipper, had the engines warmed up and ready for the morning run right at sunrise. The ride was impressive. The glistening hull sliced the tranquil water in two as the indiscernible engines powered the approximately 85 tonnes up to 20 knots with absolute ease.

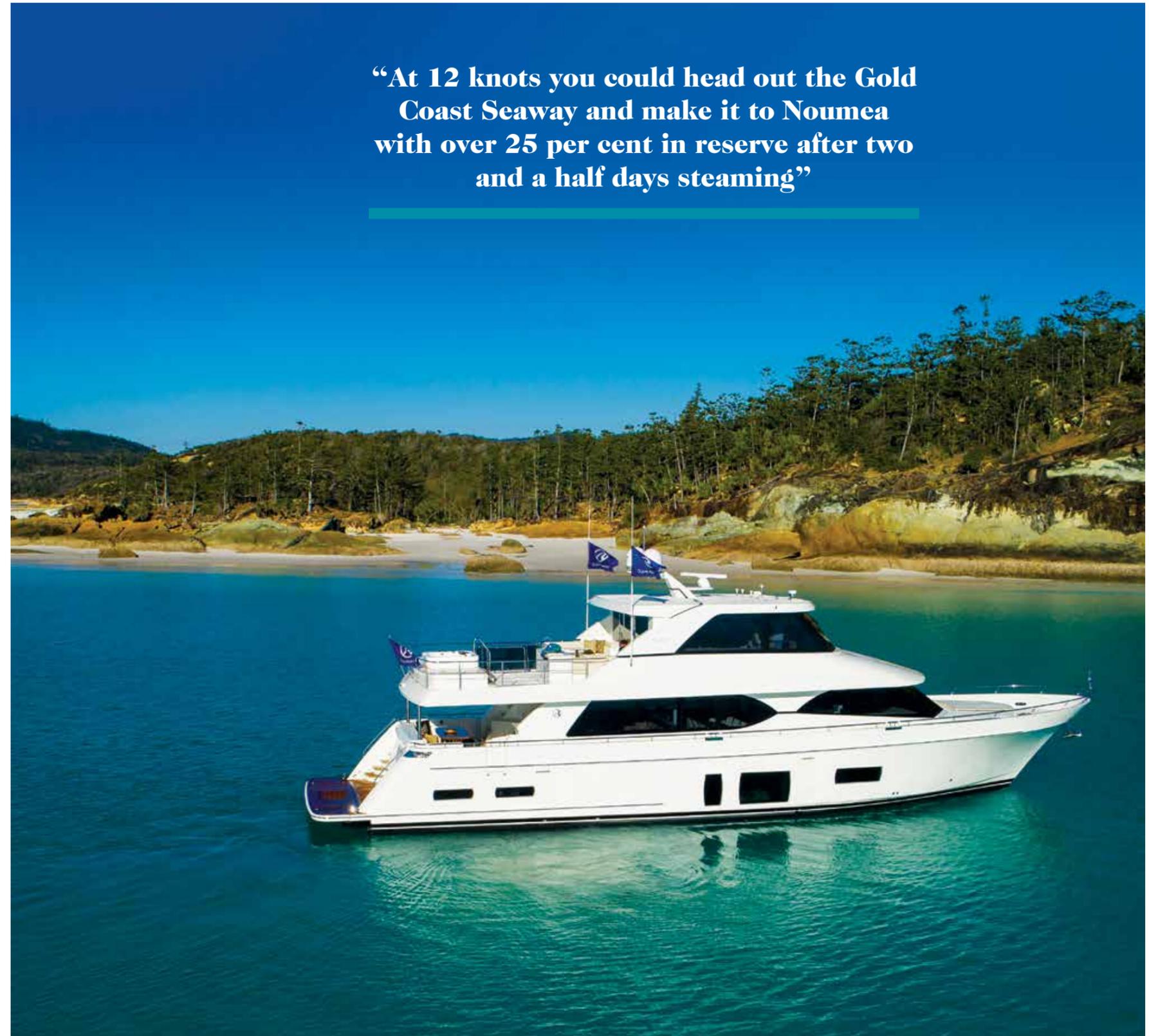
Engineering solutions are evidenced on the Ocean Alexander by what is not noticeable as well as what is. To meet their ocean-going standards, Ocean Alexander has tackled strength and safety head-on by creating a very rigid hull structure, using aircraft-grade Aluminium I-Beams which have more strength and less

weight than wood or fibreglass. The hull and components are vacuum infused, a technique Ocean Alexander has mastered, being one of the first adopters of this method in hull construction.

The power plants are set atop unidirectional carbon fibre capped stringers. Noticeably smooth, the twin 1600hp MTU 10V engines have plenty of torque propelling the 88 to cruise speed quickly. Installed with plenty of working space around them and mounted in a well laid out, impeccably finished and expertly soundproofed engine room. All of this results in the most important feature on the unnoticed list — a lack of vibration and noise.



**CLOCKWISE FROM-
FROM ABOVE** Our author could not fault the quality of the OAB88's finish; On-location in The Whitsunday's; Even the smallest detail oozes luxury and comfort



“At 12 knots you could head out the Gold Coast Seaway and make it to Noumea with over 25 per cent in reserve after two and a half days steaming”



About the author

JAMES DUMERGUE

James got his start in sailing young, learning the ropes on a P Class at just six years of age. Since then he has captained both catamarans, ranging from 56–82 ft, and monohulls up to 92 feet, out of Europe and the Caribbean. He's also worked as a chef on US and Caribbean superyachts, along with stints as a divemaster in the Caribbean and New Zealand's Bay of Islands. Along the way he has tried his hand at roles outside the maritime world, such as managing boutique hotels and as a private island manager, but even during those times he was never far from the sea, and always inevitably returned.

James can even brag of a trans-Atlantic

crossing made with his pregnant partner, just before the birth of their first child in the Caribbean; another generation born with sea salt in their blood, just like Mum and Dad.

Beginning in 2013, James worked in the marketing side of the marine industry, based on the Gold Coast. That role allowed him a valuable insight into the client side of the industry, up until 2019 when he changed tack again to offer his services as a photographer, videographer and writer focusing on the world of boating. Since 2014, James has been putting his wide and varied experience to good use, bringing readers of *Trade-a-Boat* magazine authoritative reviews, predominantly on the latest in power boats.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE With a massive range, any idyllic location is in reach; the jacuzzi commands the best view on board; the OA88 with her sister vessel for our trip, the OA45 Divergence



The thinking behind the design of the fuel tanks is class-leading too. They emulate the military with the thickness of the aluminium used because they want them to last, which is an excellent way to go — there are still first-generation Ocean Alexanders plying the waters of the world over 40 years after they first splashed down. With a fuel capacity just shy of 9500 litres combined with the ocean-going structural integrity it's designed for refined exploring. At 9 knots you could travel for five days around the clock and still have over 10 per cent in reserve. At 12 knots you could head out the Gold Coast Seaway and make it to Noumea with over 25 per cent in reserve after two and a half days steaming. These speeds allow you to point the bow and make easy targets of discovery in the South Pacific Islands and South-East Asia's archipelagos.

The Ocean Alexander 88 is particularly suited to the home away from home feeling. The tropical strength air conditioning, effective insulation for both temperature and sound plus the enveloping comfort and luxury will have you wanting nothing more than incredible views and inviting waters. It's a vessel that reassures you that it will get you where you want to go, and encourages you to enjoy the journey as much as the destination. [🌊](#)