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ENCORE

Christensen 160'

Primadonna

The owners of the original *Primadonna* bear all the signs of happy customers. They cruised frequently aboard their yacht, kept it for a good long time, and—most importantly—returned to Christensen when it came time to build its successor.

Photo: Jerry Stansfield Photos: Stephen Cridland



SINCE THE 2002 LAUNCH

of the first tri-deck yacht to bear the name *Primadonna*, Christensen's Vancouver, Wash., yard has built a succession of all-composite designs representing a continuum of refinement that has paced steady increase, both in the dimensions and sophistication of the vessels, and in the frequency of their completion and delivery. Whereas *Primadonna* the first measured 145' in length—at the time Christensen's largest yacht to date—its successor comes in at 160', second only to the 164' *Casino Royale* delivered last summer. The Vancouver, Wash., yard's Custom Series yachts have grown larger, first to 150', then 155' and 157', incorporating a few enhancements along the way. With hull 26, launched in 2004, the yard augmented the beam by a foot and a half to 29' 6", then in 2007, starting with *Barchetta*, adopted a bulbous bow to help attenuate pitch and allow achieving maximum range at a higher speed. *Casino Royale* is the first Christensen yacht to carry the "Millennium Edition" sobriquet, indicating that it features a widebody skylounge among other accoutrements. The new *Primadonna* features yet another Christensen first, a helicopter pad aft on the sun deck for touch-and-go operations.

What hasn't changed is an array of signature characteristics that according to more than one happy owner have placed Chris-

tensen squarely in the pantheon of top-drawer builders worldwide. Perhaps the most visible of these is the flawless woodwork—sapele in this case—that embellishes interior and exterior venues in the form of cabinetry, paneling and moldings, often finished to a gloss so mirrorlike that it reflects directional light patterns, undistorted, onto adjacent surfaces. According to Christensen Project Manager Robert Emerson, nearly all joinery is produced in-house; the remainder typically arrives from suppliers unfinished so that the yard can duplicate surrounding tone and surface precisely. Another attribute evident throughout its Custom Series is the priority that the Christensen design team places on crew well-being. Accordingly, *Primadonna's* crew accommodation, forward on the lower deck, features large, functional and comfortable spaces that include a mess area with expansive lounge, four good-sized ensuite double cabins, and conveniently located utility areas housing laundry facilities, housekeeping storage, extra freezers and a walk-in cooler. Service access to guest suites on the same level permits efficient stateroom make-up.

Invisible to all but the most deliberate scrutiny is the manner in which operating systems—electrical, hydraulic, plumbing, air handling and mechanical—have been installed. The removal of a Whisper Wall panel in *Primadonna's* skylounge overhead, howev-

Top and left: Impeccable high-gloss finishes reflect interior features and lighting

***Primadonna's* helicopter pad doubles as a storage deck for water toys**

er, reveals a system of mounting, support and routing that borders on the obsessive. Bundles of neatly parallel wiring (each strand clearly labeled) and piping (blue for cold water, red for hot) crisscross ceiling bays in logical and geometric fashion to and from switches, breaker panels, manifolds and pumps, all readily accessible and secured with sound- and vibration-isolating hardware as necessary. Even the wooden framework to which finish panels are secured has been sanded and stained to match cabinetry finishes, leaving some to wonder why Christensen even bothers to conceal workmanship of this caliber. It's said that an owner once insisted, as a condition of making his boat available for display at a southeastern yacht show, on replacing a fabric overhead panel with a clear plastic equivalent, the better to show off the functional artwork that lay within. True quality zealots would understand.

Primadonna's owners collaborated with Christensen regular Carol Williamson to create a décor that, while discernibly more subtle than its predecessor's, is no less elegant. A muted but contrasty palette in upholstery, window coverings and sculptured carpet is right at home with the raised-panel woodwork, and imparts a welcom-

Semi-gloss joinery offers a soothing influence in the owners' suite (bottom and top right) and guest staterooms; the master bath gleams with white onyx stonework



ing, low-key ambience consistent with a cruise agenda weighted in favor of family and friends. In lower- main- and upper-deck foyers, stone floors by Jeff Homchick feature detailed medallions accented with stainless steel inlays and rope-style borders, a theme repeated in the etched treads of the curved central staircase.

Williamson takes care to establish and preserve an appropriate scale in her selection and arrangement of furnishings, and in *Primadonna's* main-deck salon, chairs, sofas and tables are invitingly large and comfy. A comparably-sized island cabinet with four columns and a pop-up television screen separates the salon from a gleaming 10-seat dining table set beneath a domed ceiling with indirect lighting and two suspended fixtures playing on the platinum and silver-leaf surface. "We wanted to capture a sense of elegance throughout the boat," Williamson says, "but in a warm, inviting manner following traditional influences." The commercial-grade galley provides distinct areas for cooking, prep and plating; provisioning space includes a large pantry in addition to the cooling units on the lower deck.

Entry to the full-beam master suite is by way of an owner's office and sitting room whose coffered overhead offers a decidedly club-like feel. Here, large view windows with agreeably low sills frame a panoramic view. The master bedroom features a forward-facing island king bed, vanity, intimate seating area and lighted ceiling dome, and the his-and-hers bath includes a shared shower, spa tub and, tucked into the port-side wardrobe, a washer and dryer for personal use.

Five guest suites surround a central hallway on the lower deck, and include a full-beam VIP accommodation aft with king-size bed and, to port, a large bath with spa tub and shower amid a lavish display of blue achelio stone. Forward are four mirror-image suites, two with king-size beds and two with double and single beds plus a fold-down Pullman berth. Also opening to the lower-deck hallway are a service pantry, the central stairway and an elevator for access to main, bridge and sun decks.

Christensen habitually earns high marks for its pilothouse designs, which in this case features a centerline helm, raised observers' lounge on the port side and to starboard a navigation desk. For optimal forward visibility, designers have lowered the helm display panel into an angled recess in the console, and have extended side windows well aft to offer the pilot a panorama of nearly 270 degrees. Just aft are the port-side captain's suite, a day head and hallway leading to the skylounge. Here, guests may choose to relax in a television viewing area, at a game table, in comfortable occasional seating or at a sunken full-service bar. Just outside through double doors is a covered deck with a dining table that seats twelve. Further aft is a tender storage area directly below a crane mounted on the top deck; a second davit on the foredeck handles a crew tender.

A stairway from the boat deck ascends to flybridge level, where a composite hardtop shelters an open-air bar with adjoining grill and, opposite, a large banquette with cocktail table. A jettied tub is angled into the forward port corner between expanses of sun pads and the





Hinged stanchions fold away for touch-and-go helicopter operations; the skylounge has a relaxed feel

upper terminus of the elevator. The aft deck area/helicopter pad is surrounded by stainless steel stanchions that hinge down to accommodate landings and take-offs. A ladder leading to the substantial signal mast swings upward when not in use to lock against a door set into the aft face of the mast, where it offers ready access to antenna and electrical cabling within.

The swim platform and adjacent engineer's space are designed to serve as a functional base for active watersports, especially SCUBA diving, underwater photography and fishing, and should prove a popular feature during the yacht's planned exploration of South

Pacific islands. A freezer is recessed into the transom on the port side just below the Sanguinetti hydraulic passerelle, and large lockers on either side of the main transom door conceal generous gear storage space. Just below are a complete Brownie's nitrox compressor and hanging lockers for dive suits and foul weather gear. The centerpiece of the engine room, of course, is a pair of 1800-hp MTUs, in this case painted a bright Ferrari red (like those of the original *Primadonna*), a nod to the owner's passion for the legendary Italian automobile. Robert Emerson, who also served as project manager on the earlier *Primadonna*, is quick to credit the owner for the smooth progress and timely completion of its successor. "He's easy to work with and open to new ideas, but decisive in his planning," Emerson says, "so there were very few changes during the build." Indeed, the finished yacht reveals an admirable continuity in appearance and purpose, and clearly indicates that it has fulfilled its owners' vision.

LOA: 160' 0"
Beam: 29' 6"
Draft: 7' 10"
Tonnage: 499 gross tons
Displacement (full load): 835,000 lbs
Main engines: 2 X MTU 2V4000 @ 1800 hp

Fuel capacity: 14,300 gal.
Water capacity: 3,600 gal.
Speed (maximum): 18 knots
Speed (cruise): 14 knots.
Range: +4,000 nm

Generators: 2 X 125 kW Kohler, 1 X 65 kW Kohler

Shore power converter: Hyak integrated system

Air conditioning: CruiseAir 30 ton reverse cycle

Watermakers: 2 X Village Marine @ 2,000 gpd

Stabilizers: Quantum QC1800 Zero Speed

Bow thruster: American Bow Thruster 100 hp electric

Steering system: 2 X Jastram with emergency manual helm pump

Fuel separator: Alfa Laval MAB-103

Sewage system: FAST Systems MX-IS, IMO approved

Dive gear: Brownie's nitrox dive compressor

Radar: (1) Furuno X-band; (1) Furuno S-band, both with ARPA

Gyrocompass: Anschutz Standard 22

Magnetic compass: Delta Magnetic

Autopilot: Anschutz Pilotstar D

Depth sounder: (1) B&G; (1) Furuno FCV1200BB Color Video

GPS: (2) Northstar NS006061 with plotter

Ship's computer: VEI

Electronic chart plotter: Transas NS3000 ECSi with World Chart Folio

Night vision camera: NVT model 5100 Thermal Imaging Camera with Stabilizer

Classification/certification: ABS +A1-AMS & MCA Unlimited Cruising

Naval architecture: Christensen Shipyards

Exterior styling: Christensen Shipyards

Interior design: Carol Williamson & Associates

Builder: Christensen Shipyards (USA)

For information visit www.christensenyachts.com

A recessed display panel allows unrestricted forward visibility; the MTUs are Ferrari red

