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DRIVEN BY AN INNOVATIVE OWNER
WHO WANTED HIS SAILING
EXPERIENCE TO COMBINE
COMFORT AND PERFORMANCE

PH3

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Contest Yachts in the Netherlands is edging ever closer to joining the superyacht market in terms of length. Its largest yacht to date, the Contest 72CS *PH3*, is already premier league when it comes to its looks, finish and performance.

In the market for powerful yet classical-looking sailing yachts with sophisticated equipment and interiors, Contest Yachts in the quaint Dutch harbour village of Medemblik has a distinguished history. As the third generation of his family at the helm of a yard founded in 1959, Arjen Conijn embraces both the past inherited from his father and grandfather and a future based firmly on the twin towers of traditional craftsmanship and ultra-modern technologies.

‘We have been a pretty innovative yard over the decades, including being among the first to introduce central cockpits, wing keels and the vacuum injection method,’ he says. First developed in cooperation with Dutch research institute TNO in the early 1990s, vacuum injection is used for the composite parts of *PH3*’s hull, deck, main bulkheads, bracket frames and superstructure. ‘While other yards have now started using the technology, ongoing developments in materials and methods have kept us a step ahead,’ Conijn contends. ‘Contest is also one of only a handful of semi-custom yards in the world able to meet Lloyd’s hull specifications.’

It’s not just the innovation that attracts adventurous clients such as the owner of the new Contest 72CS. An increasing emphasis on performance and design has resulted in a string of new models that build on the traditional craftsmanship values that gained Contest its name. ‘Responding to market demands’ has become somewhat of a cliché, but Contest does seem to have faced pressure from fans of the brand looking for a yacht outside the available range.

The owner helped design a clean upper deck optimised for performance and handling ease (below). All equipment can be hydraulically operated from the aft cockpit



The most obvious example was the decision to break with tradition and build a Contest motor yacht after years of turning down requests. The first of this new line was unveiled at the recent Boot Dusseldorf and there have already been follow-up orders. Austin van ‘t Wout, owner of *PH3*, was coming from a very different angle but his desire to go larger than the status quo was one of the key drivers behind Contest making the move to a new flagship sailing yacht that has extended its range by three metres.

An avid Optimist sailor class as a teenager, Van ‘t Wout previously owned a Jeanneau 43 and a Contest 55CS, while also chartering larger boats in the Med and Caribbean to gain experience. ‘I liked the existing Contest 62CS but wanted a small superyacht rather than a large family yacht,’ he says. ‘It’s great to build the first of a series – you don’t have the expense of a one-off yacht and yet can provide lots of input. I did a great deal of research, including visiting local ports during my many business trips to examine the options. Having been spoiled by chartering larger yachts, I wanted to have everything I had enjoyed there on board my Contest 72CS.’

Van ‘t Wout acknowledges that his constant stream of suggestions and ideas must have been challenging for



the Contest engineers and design team. 'All my extra demands for equipment usually found only on larger yachts continued to increase the weight of the boat and, as I still want to compete in regattas, we had to shed the kilos elsewhere. *PH3* is the first yacht of this kind to have an all-carbon mast with in-mast furling system, a carbon boom, and full carbon rigging, all by Hall Spars.'

Van 't Wout enjoys pushing the envelope of innovation in his work offering raw material solutions for the steel industry. 'Leveraging on my experiences in business and sailing, I set out to own the ultimate boat in this size bracket not only in terms of equipment innovations but also with hydraulics, data communication and electronics. Contest was keen to do the same in its own areas of expertise and the final result is astonishing. During the sea trials we crossed the Channel in a Force 8 gale and I felt completely safe at all times.'

The testing weather conditions on this maiden voyage also instantly showed the value of a clean deck that has been optimised for performance and ease of handling. Highlights include a hydraulic code-zero furler on the bow and many below-deck features such as the flush inner forestay furler, the magic trim solution for the

genoa sheet cars, a foldable anchor and the flush-mounted capstan. All equipment can be hydraulically operated from the aft cockpit steering position, which offers easy access to all the sail-trimming systems. And because *PH3* is dedicated to cruising as well as racing, there is a second adjacent cockpit for guests featuring a wealth of home comforts, including dining with a view for 12.

This lounge cockpit is also our first encounter with the calm contemporary style that is to come below decks. Contest Yachts already has a very good reputation for the exclusive finish of its interiors, and a new partnership with Amsterdam-based British designer Gillian Brown from Wetzels Brown Partners, has upped the ante still further. Although Brown has spent the majority of her career creating select homes, restaurants and furniture, over the past decade she has styled impressive interiors, including the 30.5 metre CNB *Cbrisco*, the Wally 164 *Better Place* and the refitted Feadship *Heavenly Daze*.

'Arjen and I had been talking about working together for several years and were waiting for the right time to synthesise the Contest quality template with a contemporary new look that would redefine the Contest of the future,' she says. '*PH3* is the first yacht in which we have preserved

Gillian Brown's design offers a calm and contemporary interior, emphasising soft edging and high-quality joinery. Bright oak panelling contrasts pleasantly with the dark floors

and enhanced “traditional” Contest details such as the curves, the exquisite joinery and soft edging, while adding modern options in different wood types, padded panels, leather touches and so on. Our goal was to ensure the design supports the owner’s lifestyle, while at the same time creating a unified image for the Contest family.’

As the first offspring of this new generation of interiors, *PH3* is fascinating to walk around. The overall theme is bright and light oak panels offset by dark floors, combined with innovative design features such as streamlined joinery, recessed hand grips and doors with a more modern look than Contest’s traditional styling. The simple lines and symmetry of layout create a calm ambience, a peaceful place to reside that is practical and carefully thought through, yet at the high end of the quality scale.

The social centre of the yacht is her spacious saloon, which features two very large sofas, a big table, a compact coffee area and colourful fabrics by Missoni. This is a very airy spot, made even more so by the leather panelling and mirrors adjacent to the portholes that reflect the light, and the way Contest’s characteristic curved windows ensure maximum natural light. Located aft, the master suite is also surprisingly voluminous (you really do have to remind yourself that this is ‘only’ a 22 metre vessel) with a king-sized bed, a vanity table, two long sofas and a large en suite. Carpet enhances the sense of luxury and gives a distinctive identity to this impressive space, which also offers the owners direct access to the aft deck whenever they fancy a morning swim.

PH3 also has guest cabins with separate en suites all detailed with wall-mounted taps, new colours of Corian and large showers, which is again quite a remarkable degree of comfort for this size of yacht. The guest cabins have double beds and the option to use a Pullman bed above. To enhance onboard logistics the large galley is positioned forward to connect with the captain’s cabin,

The large master suite aft features two long sofas and an en suite – and direct access to the aft deck



The saloon is the social centre of the yacht



the crew lounge and the extra crew cabin. As well as giving a considerable degree of privacy, flexibility is built in so that should the owners choose to sail the yacht themselves – which they are perfectly capable of doing and for which the yacht is eminently suitable – they can do so with up to nine friends or family members.

‘From the traditional quality and comfort to the modern design and performance, this is the best example of the steps we are making towards building superyachts,’ concludes Conijn. With *PH3*, he and his Contest yard certainly seem to have found the formula for success.

The yacht has her own dedicated website at syph3.com.



PH3 Contest Yachts

LOA 21.9m
LWL 19m
Beam 5.7m
Draught 2.8m
Displacement
44.3 tonnes

Engine
Perkins 161kW, 216hp
Fuel capacity
1,650 litres
Freshwater capacity
1,600 litres

Sail area
Main 1,332m²;
genoa 129m²
Owners and guests 6-8
Crew 2
Construction
Composite

Builder/year
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