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ON TEST AZUREE 46

Statement of intent

Humphreys Yacht Design drew the lines and hull number one came home 2nd in its first IRC event – the Azuree 46 shows Turkey's Sirena Marine mean business, says Toby Hodges

If you only take notice of one new name in yacht production this year, make it Sirena Marine. They are a relatively young yard owned and run by one of the most influential families in Turkey: think high investment and big long-term goals.

Sirena already have an impressive production facility that has been building Azimut motorboats for seven years. Azuree is not just their first yacht brand, but the first yachting production line in Turkey, and recently Sirena hired one of the world's most reputed designers to restyle the range. Humphreys Yacht Design drew this Azuree 46, the first to launch, and in another statement of intent, German Frers was draughted in to create a new luxury line – the Euphoria range makes its debut this summer with the launch of a 54-footer, to be followed by a 68 and an 84 (see page 74).

Having tested an Azuree in Turkey in the past, I returned to Istanbul with high expectations. We featured the Azuree 40 three years ago and while I was struck by the potential of Sirena's 25,000m² yard in Bursa, the yacht seemed a little niche. Ceccarelli's design was one of the first to embrace the now-popular beamy, chined, racey shape, but the deck lines and styling were quirky.

Ironically, Rot Humphreys was doing wonders with a similar boxy shape for a new Elan range at the same time. And with this 46, he has shifted the Azuree into the contemporary performance-cruiser sector. There have also been changes behind the scenes at Sirena, with a recent management reorganisation and the introduction of an ambitious new CEO, Ipek Kiraç. Which brings us to the crunch question: does all the new investment in this yard deliver the goods? ▶

TEST FACTS

Test Editor: Toby Hodges



- ▶ Where we tested: Pendik, on Turkey's west coast, south of Istanbul on the Sea of Marmara.
- ▶ Wind: light from Force 1 to 4
- ▶ Model: standard three-cabin, two-heads layout, aluminium rig, plus performance pack (including bowsprit) and teak decks





▲ **Top and above:** the 46's generous aft beam allows Humphreys to provide a unique option to convert both cockpit benches into sunbeds. Together with a large fixed table, this creates a substantial relaxation space that will be useful in the Mediterranean



▲ **Above:** with the wide bathing platform lowered, there is access to a dedicated central liferaft locker. The aft helm seats each side provide useful stowage, including an optional fridge to port, although they can be removed for racing

► **Right:** the quality of the finish and attention to detail has improved significantly over Azuree's first offering. Just look at the engine room: well-insulated, well-lit and easily accessed



Down below

This new Azuree is a step up in quality and then some. My first impression of the 46's interior was how much it has improved on the older Azuree 40. It's very clean, light, modern and well-finished throughout, and while Sirena Marine may still be evolving, they are clearly aiming for high quality. The 46 consistently gives an impression that she provides lots of boat for the money.

There's natural light in abundance through ports and hatches in the hull and coachroof. The layout is by no means revolutionary, but it uses the beamy volume well and includes a clever choice between two- or three-head designs and alternative chart table positions. Our photographer described the interior finish as 'European beige' due to the light oak veneer of the joinery – smart, certainly, but more showhome apartment than family home.

The quality of the finish is comparable to

the likes of Grand Soleil or Dehler and while there are some wrinkles, these are being ironed out, we were assured. Nor does the 46 look cheap anywhere. For example, the use of sculpted handles on the doors and lockers instead of the usual push-button latches is a nice touch. She feels like a solid boat to walk through.

If I were being picky, one problem with having all that lounging space in the cockpit and saloon is that you need somewhere below to store the cushions. But I like the way the saloon cushions and backrests are well-designed to be neatly and smartly Velcroed to the seats. There's more Velcro on the floorboards to prevent slippage or creaking – another positive in my book. LED lighting is used throughout, but dimmers are advisable unless you like a very bright interior at night. The doorways seemed narrow for my liking and the tank sizes are on the conservative side.

Saloon The chart table can be either aft-facing or a compact table in the starboard sofa, as per the test boat, which can be used as a drinks table or be lowered with an insert to create the sofa. For chartwork, it's about as small as it can be to remain practical.

The saloon table allows clear access when folded and doubles in size when open to seat six or seven. Like many Med-style boats, this can be lowered to create a large daybed. I like the hard-fabric inserts Sirena have used beneath the berths, to provide stowage without items rattling in the bilge.

Galley The layout here is practical and of a size suitable for moderate use. Hull-side stowage is useful for crockery and glasses, with pegs to customise sizing, and there is good pan stowage, a dedicated bin area, space for an optional second fridge and soft-closing drawers. The main lift-top fridge has three baskets to use the beam fully.



Forward cabin The master cabin is smart, light and comfortable. The space under the berth could be better utilised and there are no shelves or useful alcoves. The en-suite heads is generous in size, making the cabin entrance feel a little tight. The heads has a clever double Perspex door to separate the shower area and keep the heads and sink area dry. There is enough room for a 120lt sewage holding tank, although at the expense of stowage space.



Aft cabins Intriguingly, there is an option to use the port cabin as a single crew cabin with heads – Turkish owners like to have a crew, apparently. Again, the near identical cabins have narrow entrances, but plenty of headroom (6ft 5in/196cm). With no bench lockers in the cockpit above, there is headroom above the berths. Angled sideboards outboard make for a comfortable place to sit athwartships. But with tanks below the berths, the only usable stowage is in a medium-sized wardrobe or small lockers and on an outboard shelf.



Heads The aft heads is just about large enough to serve the two guest cabins. Although it lacks a separate shower area, a dedicated showerhead and bracket can be used standing or sitting. The shallow circular basins would look nice in an apartment, but won't be too clever when heeled. Again, storage is minimal, with a holding tank fitted. The addition of a rail for wet weather gear behind the heads may make this more practical for north European clients.

ON TEST: AZUREE 46

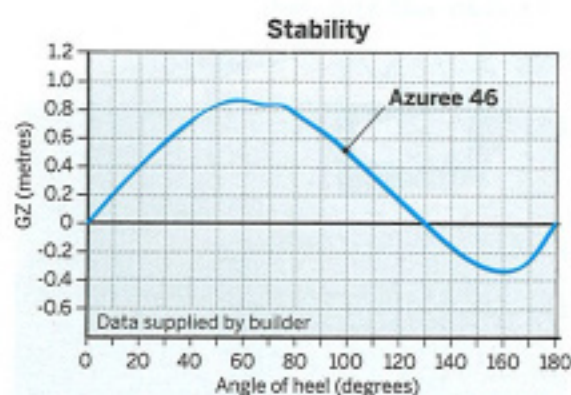
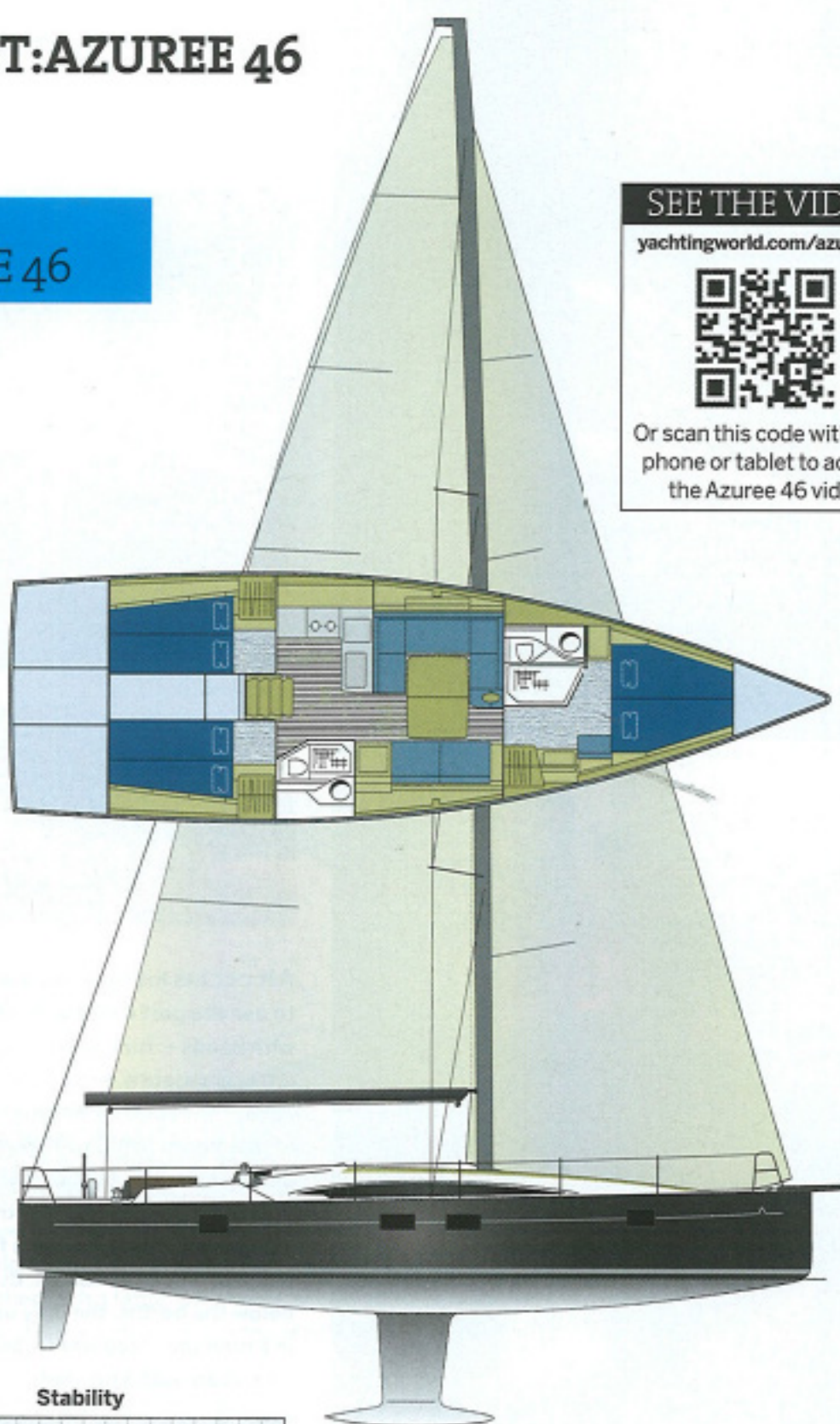
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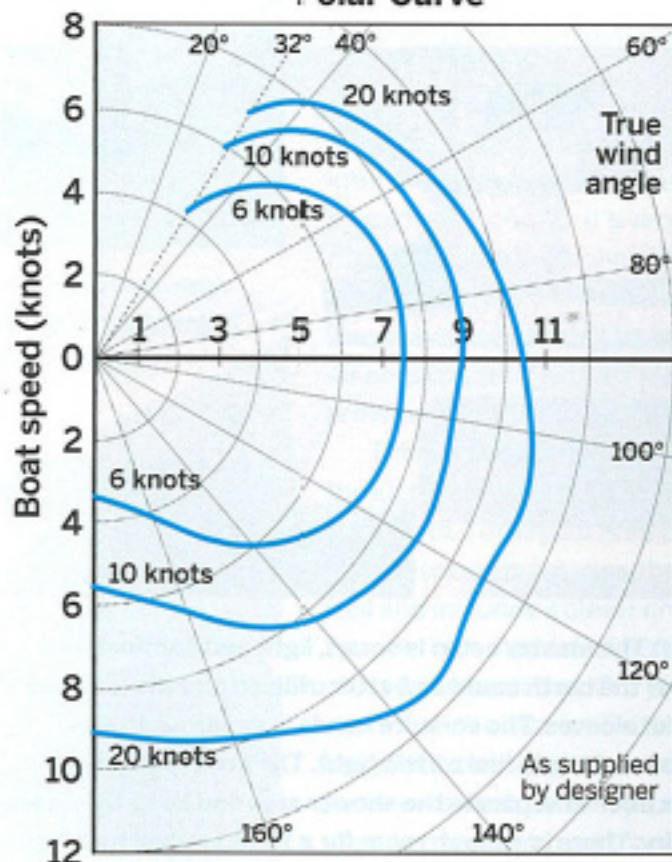
Or scan this code with your phone or tablet to access the Azuree 46 video



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	14.00m	45ft 11in
LWL	12.99m	42ft 7in
Beam (max)	4.22m	13ft 10in
Draught	2.60m	8ft 6in
Disp (lightship)	10,450kg	23,038lb
Ballast	3,960kg	8,730lb
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	120.8m ²	1,300ft ²
Berths	6	
Engine	55hp	
Water	400lt	88gal
Fuel	215lt	47gal
Sail area: Disp	25.7	
Disp: LWL	133	
Price (ex VAT)	€259,000 (test boat: €357,140)	
Design:	Rob Humphreys	

Azuree 46 Polar Curve



Conclusion

The Azuree 46 embodies a company with far-reaching plans. It speaks of sound engineering, sporty fun and spacious design, and its quality shines through consistently. My only quibble is that practical stowage and tank sizes could be more generous, especially for cruisers who are looking to head offshore.



Like many performance cruisers today, she attempts to be many things to many people. There is enough comfortable downtime space aboard to host an ad agency brainstorm, yet she has simultaneously been designed to achieve credible IRC racing results. Looking at her figures, she has a similar high sail area:displacement ratio as powerful performance cruisers like some Arcona or Solaris models. But she is a good deal cheaper than either – less money than an Xp44 and only €30,000 more than the new Dehler 46.

If Sirena Marine dipped their toe into yacht-building with the Azuree 40 and 33, with these two new lines and a powerboat brand soon to launch they are performing an Olympic high-platform dive. With the right support network already in place, they have the infrastructure and finance to succeed and the price is right – Turkish-built, she is affordable despite the quality design and engineering. We could well be looking at one of the big production yards of the future.

Who's behind Sirena?

Sirena Marine is part of the automotive production company Kiraça Holding. İpek Kiraç is not just the daughter of the company's founder and chairman, but part of one of Turkey's most influential families. She became CEO of Sirena 18 months ago and says her goal is to create "international Turkish brands", the first of which are Azuree and Euphoria.

The Turks have the naval architecture and engineering in place, but arguably lack sailing experience. So, it was a shrewd move by Kiraç to bring in a leading figure from the UK's high-end production boat industry. He will serve as a board member and help fine tune Sirena's products and brands.