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## BOAT OF THE YEAR AWARDS

A NEW AGE OF  
ONE-DESIGN  
HAS ARRIVED

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hen Bruce Farr observed Farr Yacht Design's new one-design 40-footer from a distance during its BOTY test, he said of the hull's geometry, "There's a lot going on." The shape of the Farr 400, he added, is what you get when you apply a decade's worth

of Volvo Ocean Race and TP52 R&D. There's also a lot going on because there's a lot to be expected from the boat: it's a grand-prix one-design and distance-race sprinter rolled into one.

"I like how they didn't pander to rating rules and conventions," says BOTY judge Dobbs Davis, a measurer and student of rating rules and their limiting effects. "They went for pure performance to appeal to a small, but dedicated, market. This is the best of several 40-footers racing today and should attract the interest of [one-design] owners looking for something larger and offshore capable."

For its test sail, the Farr 400 came race ready, with the rig tuned, and manned by a crew of pro and semi-pro sailors. In the light to moderate testing conditions, the boat excelled on all fronts. A robust bow profile (a striking change from the knife-like, plumb bows of recent Farr designs) puts volume forward, which, says Farr, is a more forgiving entry for amateur helmsmen. The boat is narrow at the waterline and has a long chine run aft, but the beam is gener-





## BEST OFFSHORE ONE-DESIGN

### Farr 400

**Purpose:** Grand-prix inshore racing and Category 2 offshore

**Recommended crew:** 8

**Pros:** Easily driven hull, sophisticated build and design, versatile

**Cons:** Undrafted class rules (including owner/drive status); wheel vs. tiller

**IRC TCC:** 1.243

**Price as sailed:** \$520,950

[www.farrdesign.com](http://www.farrdesign.com)

ous, as is the interior volume. For those who heed “the numbers,” the boat’s polar diagram shows a quick, well-rounded machine: in 15 knots, we’re talking 8 knots upwind and 16 downwind at 150 degrees true. Its sail-area-to-displacement ratio is 40; the Farr 40, by fair comparison, has a ratio of 36.

With masthead spinnakers, carbon/epoxy construction, and a 9.5-foot lifting keel, it’s a powerful package, one that comes with a slew of concepts and gadgets borrowed from the custom, grand-prix realm. The deck layout uses a clever array of the latest hardware, all of

which makes for more efficient sail handling and trim adjustments. The offset foredeck and companionway hatches are the most obvious. The foredeck hatch, to port, allows a straight run aft for the spinnaker string-takedown system (with the spinnaker being pulled into a sock belowdecks). The hatch also allows for the retractable pole (angled downward for a longer spinnaker luff length) to be put on centerline. Primary sail controls and halyards are led to a single pit winch, which is tied into the all-important pedestal.

Belowdecks, the boat is a carbon cavern; only a Porta Potti forward and a web of bungees keeping control-line tails out of the cockpit. The test boat was not equipped or set up for distance racing, but with a short list of required essentials, it could be easily converted to offshore racing mode.

Premiere Composites, which builds the Farr 400 in Dubai, has plenty of experience building grand-prix raceboats, alongside intricate composite architectural structures, and the finish quality, the judges each agreed, was outstanding: all edges and exposed surfaces were faired, with systems run neatly. The attention to detail is true on deck as well. “It’s the first time I’ve seen Dyneema lifelines properly fitted with smooth ferrules in the composite stanchions and rails—a critical little touch,” says Davis. “And there’s a myriad of adjustments to the jib

**THE FARR 400 ONE-DESIGN** comes loaded with trickle-down advances from custom raceboats. Above, the bright, cavernous interior, looking aft, shows incredible high-quality construction and attention to detail. At left, the deck layout is focused on a concentrated starboard pit area and offset port hatches.

to allow full control of sheeting angle and luff tension.”

The twin wheels the 400 tested with are better suited to an offshore program, noted the judges. For a dedicated inshore program, the tiller option would be the way to go. With a quoted cost of \$520,950 to get a 400 commissioned and on the racecourse, the market for the Farr 400 is certainly a narrow one, but reduced costs of transportation compared to similar one-designs should be an attractive feature for the budget-conscious owner with international intentions.

With the lifting keel and two-piece carbon mast, the boat is portable on either a trailer or custom “flat-rack” (available from the builder), which would serve the concept of a grand-prix regatta circuit well. At the time of our testing in October, class rules were still being drafted, with no decision yet on professional versus amateur drivers, or how many professional sailors would be allowed. Given the powered-up nature of this boat, however, owners with serious intentions would be wise to budget a generous salary cap.