



Crown



The new Ocean Alexander 85E presents a contradiction in terms by blending modern styling with ageless beauty.

Jewel

By Chris Caswell

It would be hard to find a more fitting memorial to Alex Chueh, the founder of Ocean Alexander who passed away just before press time (see “Founding Father,” below), than the new Ocean Alexander 85E. This yacht combines all the attributes he believed in: high quality, timeless design and an arrangement that truly reflects how owners enjoy their yachts.

Did I like the 85E? No, I loved it.

I loved the 85E for her elegance, for her serenity and poise. If the yacht were a person, she would be Grace Kelly in *To Catch a Thief* or Faye Dunaway in *The Thomas Crown Affair*. Cool. Slightly distant. Ever so desirable.

From the dock, the 85E is almost a contradiction in terms: modern yet ageless. She has the requisite reversed transom, too often called Euro, that embraces and protects a wonderfully large swim platform; she has the large windows in her topsides, and everything from the window pillars to the electronics arch is raked. Yet anyone who loves the lines of a vintage Rolls-Royce or a classic Trumpy motoryacht will be right at home here. Ten years down the line, the 85E will still turn heads.

“The 85E is a boat created to bridge the gap between our traditional Ocean Alexander styling and interior design and the European boats that feature highly contemporary design that is often not accepted in the American market,” said Ocean Alexander’s Richard Allender. “It features updated exterior styling, along with a new interior layout and design. This will be the basis on which the future products from Ocean Alexander are designed.”

Once you’ve chosen which of the graceful stairs to ascend to a cockpit shaded by the overhanging boat deck, you’ll find an entertainment area that has been created with the precision of a jigsaw puzzle, and yet seems uncrowded. A dinette runs along the transom, its gorgeous teak table begging for alfresco meals. The bar, capped with a granite countertop and accompanied by a pair of stools, is tucked into the starboard corner.

Access to the bridge is via gentle stairs to port, and under the stairs is the very civilized entry to the crew quarters. This is a huge improvement over having to enter from the transom platform or descend through a deck hatch.

Destry Darr of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, did the interior styling, and she used pale grays as a perfect counterpoint to the dark walnut woodwork — a first for Ocean Alexander. The salon makes good use of loose bucket chairs and built-in settees to create a conversation area or a comfortable media room in which to view the 40-inch pop-up TV in the after corner. Large windows all around and the twin stainless-steel doors aft give everyone a good view, even when seated. I liked the toe switches for the electric salon doors: Anyone carrying a tray of food or drinks won’t have to do a balancing act with this megayacht touch.

The formal dining area blends seamlessly into the salon, with a low buffet behind the settee serving as the divider. Eight people can easily sit around the inlaid walnut table.

One step up is the country galley and pilothouse, which could easily be curtained off from the salon for night running. The U-shape galley is surrounded by granite counters and fitted with a chef’s delight of fine appliances. The multitude of drawers and locker doors are held in place by powerful magnets.

Just forward, an L-shape dinette is tucked under the windshield

for casual meals or for keeping the skipper company. Beautifully balanced pantograph doors open effortlessly to the side decks, and the entire pilothouse sole is planked so that any water (or galley spills) tracked in is easily cleaned.

The skipper sits in lordly comfort in a Stidd pedestal helm chair and has a good line of sight in spite of a slightly oversize dash console (which Ocean Alexander is reducing on future 85Es). Directly behind the helm, enclosed stairs lead to the bridge, which makes moving from one to the other easy.

Once down the stairs from the pilothouse, you’re in a foyer/passageway that runs fore and aft. In the forward guest suite, a centerline queen berth has steps on each side for easy access, and two ports plus an overhead hatch provide plenty of light. The en suite head has a decent-size stall shower, and just outside in the foyer, a full-size washer/dryer stands ready for use. Moving aft, two large, airy guest cabins (one to port and the other to starboard) have twin berths and private en suite heads with showers.

Another thoughtful touch is the locker under the stairs, which is

FOUNDING FATHER

Alex Chueh, the founder of Ocean Alexander Marine, passed away just before press time, and, though he never intended to be a boatbuilder, it was something that he did very well indeed. Born in China, he graduated from the Taiwan Military Academy and served until he retired at the age of 37 to start a new career as a floor hardware manufacturer in Taipei.

Chueh lent a friend money to buy a boatyard, and when the friend was unable to repay the loan, Chueh became a boatbuilder in 1978. His first yacht was the classic 50 Mark I, and just five years after start-up, Ocean Alexander built *Nighthawk*, a 70-foot motoryacht that was one of the largest yachts ever built in Asia at the time.

I first met Alex on a visit for YACHTING in the early ‘80s, and he took me on a tour of his yard. At a stack of huge teak logs, a wizened old man sat, sipping tea. Every few minutes, he got up to make a chalk mark on a log and then retired to his tea. Alex described him as the “teak master,” who decided where the cuts would be made to get the best wood for the yachts. Alex will be missed not just as a superlative boatbuilder, but also as a man of vision, determination and honor.

THE FULL-BEAM HIS-AND-HERS HEADS HIDE BEHIND THE MASTER BERTH. TASTEFUL DECOR WELCOMES GUESTS TO THE SALON (OPPOSITE).



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THE SUPERBLY FINISHED CREW QUARTERS HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO THE ENGINE ROOM AND THE SWIM PLATFORM.

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	dB(A)
700	7.2	2.0	56
900	8.8	4.3	56
1200	10.7	8.4	58
1500	12.9	22.3	58
1800	14.8	40.5	58
2100	18.2	54.7	60
2400	21.9	78.0	62
2445	22.2	81.9	64

TEST CONDITIONS: Speeds were measured by GPS off Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with flat seas and light winds, with 55 percent fuel, 50 percent water and four people on board. Fuel consumption was calculated by the electronic engine-monitoring system. Sound levels were measured at the lower helm.

LOA: 84'8"
BEAM: 20'1"
DRAFT: 5'4"
DISPL.: 171,600 lb.
FUEL: 1,900 gal.
WATER: 350 gal.
HOLDING: 200 gal.
CONSTRUCTION: Composite
DESIGN: Ed Monk Jr.
INTERIOR DESIGN: Destry Darr
GENERATORS: 2 x 27.5 kW Onan
STABILIZERS: ABT hydraulic
BOW THRUSTER: ABT hydraulic 25 hp
ENGINES: 2 x 1,600 hp MTU 10V 2000 diesels
SPEED: 22.2 knots max
RANGE: 2,200 miles at 10.7 knots
PRICE: \$5,790,000



large enough to hold the hard-side suitcases invariably brought by guests who have been told repeatedly to bring only soft duffels.

Gorgeous inlaid marble marks your approach to the master suite, which spans the full beam amidships. The king berth sits under an upholstered Ultraleather headboard, nestled between night stands with marble inlays. Waking in the morning, you'd find magnificent views on each side from the three tall windows. On the port side of the suite is a swoopy settee, and a bureau with vanity is to starboard. Two large hanging lockers, one a walk-in, are full height, so you could hang Pippa Middleton's royal gown with nary a wrinkle. Also spanning the full beam are the his-and-hers heads, both with Tecma toilets and ceramic vessel sinks. They are separated by the large, centerline stall shower.

If you think the guest cabins are lovely, wait until you see the crew quarters, which are finished to the same high standards as the rest of the yacht. The captain gets a private stateroom with a double berth and a desk, while the mate gets a single cabin, and both share a large head with shower. Ocean Alexander clearly understands that a happy crew makes a happy boat. This area would also be any teenager's (or parent's) dream escape. There is direct access from the crew quarters to the engine room through a watertight door, and for dockside service, access is from the stern platform through another watertight door.

Standard power for the 85E is a whacking great pair of 1,600-horsepower MTU 10-cylinder diesels that are impeccably installed between safety rails and surrounded by polished diamond-plate flooring for safety. The centerline sea chest is finished in white Imron and capped by a polished stainless lid with see-through glass. It's perfectly placed for cleaning.

I liked the redundant hydraulic power takeoffs on each engine for anchor windlass, davit, ABT stabilizers and ABT 25-horsepower

proportional bow thruster. And I really liked the tidy and seamanlike way that Ocean Alexander secures all the plumbing and wiring, with clear labels and intuitive routing for future service. A pair of 27.5 kW Onan gensets handle the electrical needs, and the Octoplex electrical control system monitors all power sources (AC and DC).

I could go on endlessly about the thoughtfully chosen standard equipment, but I want to get up to the bridge, which is a space that should be measured in hectares rather than feet. All the techy stuff is forward, with a pair of Stidd helm chairs at the simple fiberglass and black plastic dash, all tucked behind a venturi windscreen. Just abaft the helm area is a big settee with a dining table so long they made a removable bridge so a dozen people don't have to move to let out that one person in the middle who forgot to use the loo. This is all tucked under a nicely finished fiberglass hardtop with a huge electric sliding sunroof.

The port side is filled with a wraparound two-level granite bar with five built-in stools and the best view in the house. An Electric Chef grill is ready to sear your filets, and a chef/bartender will find all the necessities at hand. I was impressed by something so often forgotten, especially with granite counters: a fiddle on the edge to keep spills from becoming waterfalls. Farther aft, an immense sun pad has adjustable backrests and huge stowage underneath. A Besenzone davit handles up to a 14-foot tender, and the wide swim platform lowers into the water if you want to carry PWCs there.

Oh, and one other item about the bridge that you'd never love until you owned an 85E: All the water from rain or washdown is routed into scuppers that bear the Ocean Alexander logo and then piped down to water-level drains. No more black stripes on your house or topsides from runoff. Hurrah!

Under way, the Ocean Alexander 85E is as fast as you'd expect, considering the 3,600 snorting and pawing horses stuffed into the engine room. Top speed is a freckle more than 22 knots, but, if you're not in a hurry to get home, a comfortable 50 percent load gives you about 13 knots at two gallons per mile.

Yep, I loved the Ocean Alexander 85E, not just because she's luxurious and comfortable and beautifully built, but also because she's a fine tribute to Alex Chueh. □

Ocean Alexander; www.oceanalexander.com