

CHEOY LEE 78 BRAVO

TAKE A BOW

INTERIOR DESIGNER SYLVIA BOLTON created the interior layout and décor of Cheoy Lee's latest launch in the new Bravo series, choosing both trendy and original materials that will appeal to a broad range of tastes. A sturdy but easy-to-open stainless steel and glass door opens onto the salon. A rocking chair adds a touch of whimsy to a décor mixing earth tones, sapele wood in a satin finish and contemporary accent pieces in trendy black. The light-accented bar, located amidships on the yacht's starboard side, is dressed in leather tiles with glass accents. The round dining table portside features a leather inlay that repeats a recessed ceiling detail with an attractive central light fixture, and a round custom carpet below. Light-color carpeting in the salon gives way to a dark wood sole in the dining area and adjacent corridor, which is wide enough to allow a clear view to the pilothouse's windows. Forward, a spacious portside open galley with granite countertops and stainless-steel appliances, including a side-by-side refrigerator and freezer, comes into view. It includes an island, which quickly becomes a good place to congregate for a chat with the captain, the chef or guests seated on the portside banquette. A day head is across the way. The helm station, on the starboard side offers good views forward and on both sides, and console displays are easy to read.

The new Cheoy Lee 78, introduced at the Miami Yacht & Brokerage Show, has two personalities. Dockside, it is a comfortable and inviting yacht with a well-conceived interior that invites relaxation. At sea it is a no-nonsense hard-working vessel that, in the hands of an experienced captain, has no trouble placating boisterous seas.

Story Cecile Gauert Photos Matthieu Carlin and Billy Black



The main salon, above, dining area and bar are located forward of the galley, bottom right; staterooms, including the master, opposite page are on the lower deck

The lower deck accommodates all staterooms and crew quarters. A spiral staircase with wooden steps leads to the master stateroom and VIP. Attractive LED pin lights in the steps guide the way to a good-sized foyer separating the full-beam master stateroom from the VIP. A textured, glass-pebble wall provides a pleasing contrast to the wood veneers. Bolton has chosen a neutral color scheme with accent pieces that provide each room with a theme, nautical for instance in the VIP suite, a scheme that allows easily changing the décor when ownership changes or as tastes evolve. The stone-floored master bathroom serves as a buffer between the bedroom's king-size berth and the engine room. An escape hatch is cleverly positioned behind the glass-enclosed shower, which opens onto his and her sides of the bathroom. The shower's back panel opens to reveal the emergency exit. A third guest bedroom, located in the bow, is accessed through a second stairway, located next to the helm station. The choice of a three-bedroom layout is judicious in that it provides guests with a luxury of space not common in a yacht with a LOA of less than 80'. Crew quarters, located aft of the engine room, are accessible through the transom door.

Walking back outside through the main deck's aft doors, guests have a straight path to the comfortable aft deck sofa, which faces not one but two hi-lo tables. Closer examination reveals the tables' imposing pedestals are built on a slant. Devised at the shipyard, this geometry allows the two tables to rise upward and inward at the touch of a remote control, forming in their upper position a single dining surface. Non-skid painted stairs lead to the flybridge, which also can be accessed directly from the main salon.

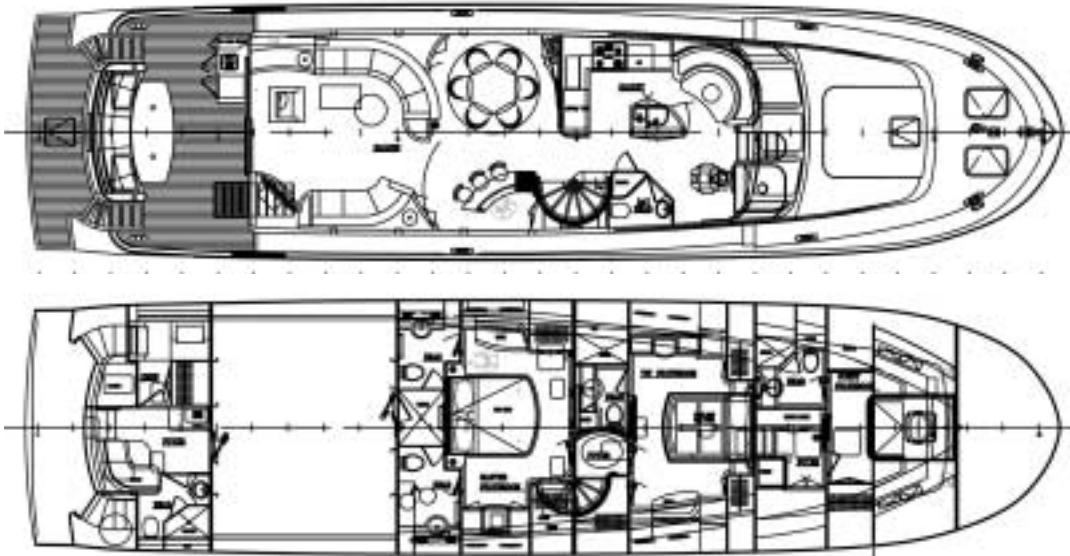


The spacious flybridge also features a second interesting table, another hi-lo affair, with a granite inlay that matches the bar's countertop and is operated by way of a substantial hand-crank that begs trying (It works beautifully). There's also a barbecue grill and wet bar, with ample space left for a dinghy and, if the owner so chooses, a Jacuzzi. Cheoy Lee's corporate captain, manning the bridge, describes the set up of the helm station as logical and efficient. "Everything is where you'd expect it to be."

Put all this in motion and the yacht takes on a different personality, becoming a reliable and sure-footed soldier in unsettled seas. We got onboard during a scheduled outing, which happened to take place in less-than-serene conditions. As we made our way out to sea, smaller boats were bobbing up and down in the inlet like toys made out of cork. As soon as the hull pointed south, a strong headwind drove seas against the bow with such force ocean spray reached the flybridge. Nonetheless the twin Caterpillar C18 engines delivered an effortless 19 to 20 knots. The cruise speed under more normal circumstances is 23 knots with engines at 2100 rpm. An earlier trial in China recorded a 25.1-knot top speed. The fiberglass hull, which is built using vacuum infusion and is the creation of naval architect M.G. Burvenich, handled itself with surprising stability in such unsettled conditions. Although it clearly acknowledged the waves, encouraging the yacht's five passengers to take a seat or grab a hold of one, it gave no hint of yawing.

On the main deck, the shapely bulwark, protective overhang and stainless-steel handrails ensured safe passage to the forward deck, where a Maxwell 4000 windlass is located. Moving back to the aft deck, the clever set-up of two tables, noted earlier, revealed its full advantage as the yacht was underway; the space between the tables allowed reaching the banquette in a direct line, without bumping into furniture as the yacht negotiated yet another incoming wave. Looking back, a great view of a wide swash of sea foam provided evidence the five-blade propellers were churning.

Inside the main salon, things were fairly quiet even as the yacht reached 21 knots. While the salon's rocking chair's back and forth motion left no doubt the sea was agitated, the engine noise, while noticeable, never overwhelmed normal conversation. Louder were the sounds of four- to five-foot waves crashing against the hull and a helicopter whirling overhead. The galley's island proved a helpful anchor on the way to the pilothouse, a quiet and serene area from where to enjoy the ride. —



LOA: 78'3"
Displacement: 133,000 Lbs.
Beam: 20'2"
Draft: 5'5"
Engines: 2 x 1000 bhp Caterpillar C18
Fuel: 2,700 U.S. Gal.
Water: 550 U.S. Gal.
Generator: Northern Lights
 30kW & 20kW
Draft: 5'5"
Water: 440 U.S. Gal
Naval architecture: Mike Burvenich
Interior: Sylvia Bolton
Builder: Cheoy Lee

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