



Bavaria by Farr

BY PETER NIELSEN

Marblehead 22



Germany's **Bavaria Yachts**, not long ago the 800-pound gorilla of European boatbuilding, took a pummeling during the recession. For years its philosophy of strict engineering practices and budget control had seen its value-priced cruising boats flying off the factory floor. By 2007 the factory was cranking out nearly 3,500 boats a year to feed a seemingly insatiable, mainly European market.

That same year, private equity firm Bain Capital bought Bavaria for a reported 1.3 billion Euros—close to \$2 billion—just before the luxury goods market went belly-up. You can guess the rest, and it wasn't pretty. It ended with Bain unloading Bavaria last year for a reported 300 million Euros. Ouch. If you could ever bring yourself to feel sorry for a venture capitalist, that would have been the time.

Anyway, Bavaria was down, but far from out, and its R&D department was working overtime. Bavaria's boats were looking dated next to the crisply styled new lines from Beneteau, Jeanneau and other Euro-yards, and something had to be done. Enter Bruce Farr, or at least his design team, who have collaborated with Bavaria and interior stylists Designworks USA on a new range of fast cruising boats. Their brief was to merge the Farr performance edge with Bavaria's manufacturing efficiency and come up with a line of good-looking, well-sailing boats.

So far, there are five boats in the new **Cruiser** line—a 32, 36, 40, 45 and 55-footer. The 45 is a good example of where Farr's thinking is at. Twin rudders, one of which will always be fully immersed, means the stern can be made broader and more powerful without the risk of losing control at large heel angles. A long waterline maximizes speed potential, and the fractional rig has a large mainsail and small jib that will be easy for a husband-and-wife crew to cope with. A beefy anchor roller-cum-sprit is an ideal place to set an A-sail on a furler or in a snuffer.

The charter market has influenced the layout belowdecks, where there is a choice of an owner's version with a single large stateroom and ensuite heads forward of the saloon, or a four-cabin configuration.

There's no doubt these new Cruisers look sharp, and the factory's pricing looks as keen as ever: the Cruiser 36 sells in Europe for just 82,000 Euros (\$103,000) before tax. The boats are getting good reviews on the other side of the pond and we hope it won't be long before we see them in the U.S.A.

Admirers of the growing armada of beautiful daysailers should be familiar with the work of Doug Zurn. The Marblehead, Massachusetts-based designer drew the gorgeous **Bruckmann 42**, a fast daysailer/weekender with traditional lines above the waterline and ultra-modern foils down below. Zurn's latest design is the **Marblehead 22**, which builds on the blend of classic looks and up-to-the-minute performance that characterized his 42-footer.

The Marblehead 22 is an intriguing boat with several features that set it apart from its rivals in this competitive niche market. Most obvious is the unstayed carbon-fiber spar with its large square-topped mainsail and wishbone boom, a rig that combines plenty of power with easy sailhandling.

A sail area/displacement ratio of 24 indicates this boat will be no slouch. Beam, at just 6ft 10in, is modest, and at 3ft for the shoal-keel option, so is draft. The pretty hull has a near-plumb stem and a handsomely styled transom. Displacement is just 2,300lb, which makes trailering a viable option.

At just under 12ft long, the cockpit has plenty of room for family and friends. The small cuddy provides dry stowage and somewhere for the smallest crew members to hide from the sun.

The Marblehead 22 will be built in cold-molded wood/epoxy by Samoset Boatworks in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. Hull #1 is expected to hit the water this month. **A**

RESOURCES

Bavaria Yachts, bavariayachts.com

Samoset Boatworks Inc., samosetboatworks.com

Zurn Yacht Design, zurnyachts.com