

Boat Review: Bavaria C57

ZUZANA PROCHAZKA OCT 4, 2019



There is much new going on at Bavaria Yachts. Only a few months under new ownership and the German builder has already launched a new flagship—the C57, which presumably will be the template for future models, including possibly an even larger boat than this one. We sailed the first C57 this past spring on this side of the Atlantic to test Bavaria’s new vision.

Design & Construction

Rolling with the “new” theme, Bavaria has moved away from Farr, its longtime design firm, and engaged Mauricio Cossutti of ORC racing fame for the design of its C series. This signals a renewed emphasis on performance, which is expected to reach well beyond the builder’s previous Cruiser models.

The C57 looks massive despite her sub-55ft LOA. A plumb bow, very beamy hull with a barely-visible soft chine and twin rudders are her most marked characteristics. The keel was optimized (read: flattened) to reduce wetted surface, and for the first time, Bavaria has switched to vacuum-infused construction for weight savings.

On Deck

A tall (79ft 6in) keel-stepped Seldén mast with double aft-swept spreaders supports a fractional and generous sail plan of over 1,600ft. Our test boat had a self-tacking jib along with an in-mast furling main, but a 106 percent overlapping genoa and traditional-hoist mainsail are available. The split backstay was of Dyneema. The sails were supplied by Elvstrøm.

Forward, the C57 has an open pulpit and an added stainless steel bow roller leading back to a vertical Lewmar windlass. Aft, there's a huge and completely un-missable swim platform when the transom is lowered, an impressive teak beach that will be as fun as it is useful. When the transom is lowered, you get a peek into a dinghy garage that can hold a fully inflated Williams MiniJet tender. There's also a nicely integrated liferaft cubby to starboard and steps up to the cockpit to port.

Twin Carbonautica wheels (optional) hang from superyacht-style binnacles that are molded into the working cockpit area. B&G displays are on both sides, with the optional bow and stern thruster controls by Sidepower to starboard. Good handholds grace the inboard sides of the binnacles. Bavaria does handholds (both inside and out) better than any other builder in the industry, which speaks to the company's focus on safety as well as comfort.

In terms of amenities, the transom seat hides an outdoor galley complete with a refrigerator, grill and sink. This was first seen on the Dufour brand a few years ago and the arrangement has gotten quite a following. Ahead is the social cockpit with facing U-shaped settees that wrap around two hi/lo tables. This works well, as it leaves the centerline open for a nice flow.

Amidships, there's an array of four flush deck hatches that bring lots of light and ventilation below. Cushions are also available to make this into one of three sun pad areas aboard, with the other two locations in the cockpit and ahead of the mast. Moving forward, the side decks include a small but critical molded-in bulwark for better footing when heeling. There are also six oversized pop-up cleats that add to the perception of heft and stoutness of the design.



Accommodations

With the C series, Bavaria has changed up its production processes, so that each boat's modular furniture is now built outside the boat and then dropped into the hull. It's non-structural but also makes for more versatility in the different layouts that are available, which can include three to five cabins plus an optional crew berth in the bow. In the owner's version, the master stateroom is forward with a large berth on centerline. The head is split, with the toilet and sink to starboard and a shower compartment to port. For charter, two cabins can be fitted here, with the heads accessible from both staterooms.

Aft, you can opt for two cabins, and a full head with a separate shower to port and a day head to starboard just aft of the nav station. For charter, the model can be also spec'd with an additional over/under bunk cabin to starboard, which eliminates the day head as well as the nav area.

The middle of the boat is static, with a U-shaped settee to port facing a double lounge to starboard. The galley is forward and one step down, an arrangement that provides a buffer of sorts between the master stateroom and the saloon. It's a wonderful layout at anchor, but making the transit from the galley to cockpit with hot food when underway may be a challenge, especially in a substantial seaway.

A three-burner stove/oven combination is to port next to a small bottle locker. Twin refrigerator drawers and an optional microwave are to starboard. There's ample solid-surface countertop space, so multiple chefs can work simultaneously. Stowage is impressive, both for kitchen tools and provisions.

Interior wood finish options include dark walnut, mahogany or light oak. Solid wood edges and furniture corners were added for durability and easy repairs in case of the inevitable dings. USB charging ports are built into each of the many reading lights. The saloon is among the largest in its class, and that was no accident. The C series may be focused on performance, but that didn't come at the expense of comfort. The overall feel is one of a luxury home.

Under Sail

We had an ideal day of sailing, with 18 knots over the deck on the flat waters of Biscayne Bay. At 65 degrees apparent wind angle, the C57 glided along at 8.3 knots. When we hardened up to 45 degrees, we still kept up a good 8 knots. Falling off to 120 degrees, the speed also fell to 5.7 knots as the large mainsail blocked the small jib.

The C57 is agile with tight and easy turns. Driving while sitting outboard provides excellent sightlines. However, there is little to rest up against, which could make for a challenge on long watches. (Though the autopilot will undoubtedly be in charge while cruising.) We didn't have the optional gennaker, which would have undoubtedly had us flying downwind as well on such an optimal day.

Our test boat had the standard 6ft 5in fin keel, which works well in the skinny waters around Florida, but delivers only a 31 percent ballast-to-displacement ratio. For improved performance a carbon mast and a deeper keel (8ft 2in) with a bulb are available.

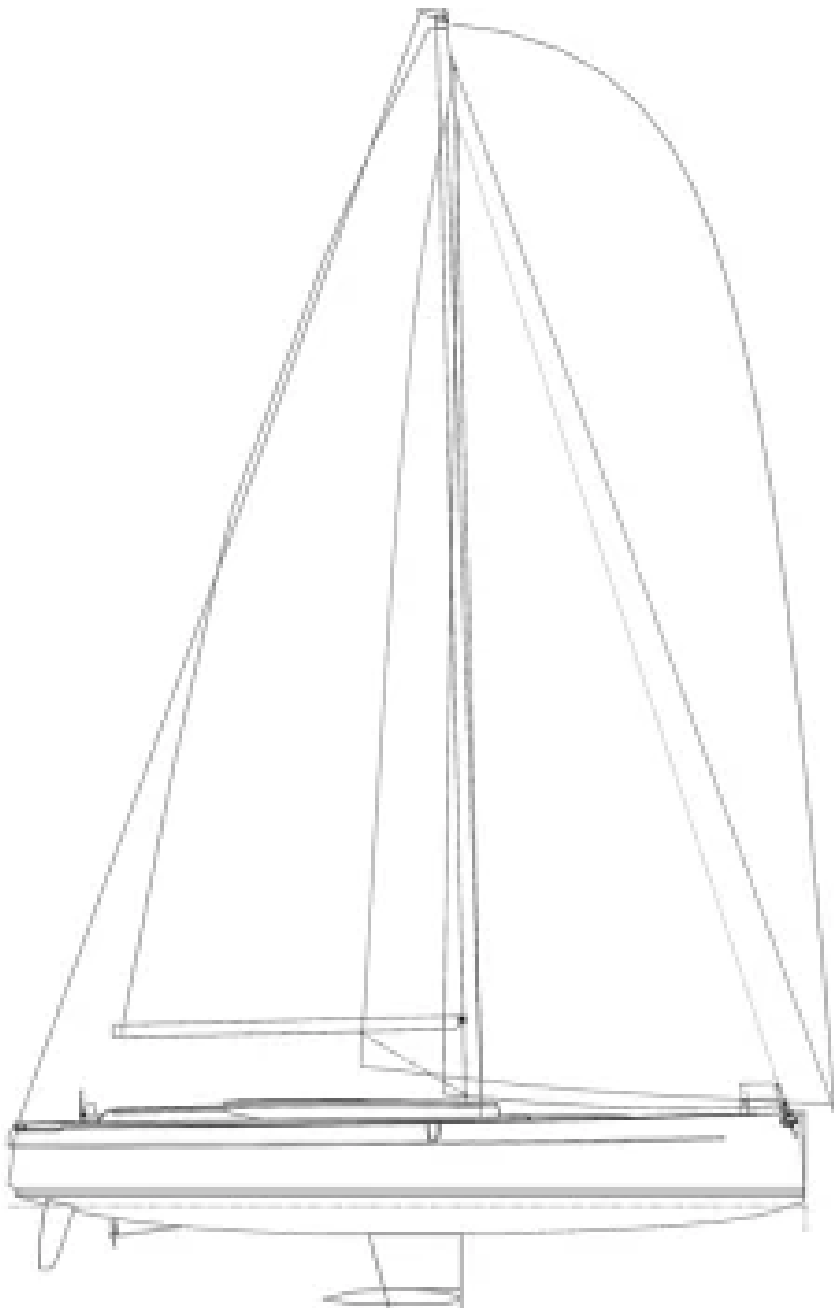
Under Power

The C57 comes with an 80hp Volvo Penta diesel with saildrive, but that can be upgraded to a 110hp Yanmar. An optional Fischer Panda feeding multiple banks of AGM batteries can be installed in a fairly tight machinery space aft of the engine.

With a fixed propeller and the standard engine, we reached 8.3 knots at 3,300 rpm. At that speed, there was some vibration, which may have been due to improper propeller pitch. Normally, expect to cruise around 7.5 knots at a more economical 2,600 rpm.

Conclusion

The C57 replaces the Cruiser 56, aboard which I once spent two weeks in the Med—a stout boat with great handholds when we were on our ear in a Meltemi. Being a little lighter, the C57 seems to sail better in light air, but still provides the same sense of security and comfort when reeling off the miles.



LOA 54ft 9in **LWL** 50ft 9in **Beam** 17ft 3in

Draft 6ft 5in (shoal); 8ft 2in (deep)

Displacement 37,765 lb

Ballast 11,705lb

Sail Area 1,646ft

Air Draft 79ft 6in

Fuel/Water (GAL) 110/143

Engine Yanmar 80hp

Ballast Ratio 31 **SA/D** 23 **D/L** 129