

WORDS Alan Harper

B L U E G A M E B G X 7 0



The Bluegame 70 isn't your typical explorer yacht but there's no denying it's one of the most adventurous boats of the year

The Bluegame brand has a short but complicated history. At the Cannes boat show last September it emerged from self-imposed purdah with a new model which, as it turns out, is long and complicated. More on that in a minute: first a recap.

The brainchild of Luca Santella, a 56-year-old Italian yachtsman of considerable repute, Bluegame goes back to 2004, when he built a one-off 55ft walkaround in Cape Town for a South African client. It was a success, and attracted not just attention but investment. "So we launched our first Bluegame 47 in April 2005," Luca reminded me at the recent Cannes boat show. "And we moved back to Italy in the summer of 2007." Following an introduction to Max

Perotti at Sanlorenzo, where Luca's brother Antonio works as a director, production began in Ameglia. But it never really took off. The financial crisis hit. Sanlorenzo's interest waned, and Luca eventually mothballed the company in 2012.

"Then in 2017 Perotti showed a renewed interest in Bluegame, and we started to talk about it again," said Luca. An agreement was reached and a deal struck, which was finalised in early 2019. Bluegame is now a Sanlorenzo brand, with Luca as head of product strategy. Meanwhile, work began on the new Bluegame BGX 70.

Luca hadn't gone away: he continued to work at the Ameglia shipyard after the cessation of Bluegame and came up with Sanlorenzo's SX explorer yacht concept, with its large aft platform, expansive main deck layouts, and raised wheelhouse. "But the SX concept cannot translate below 70ft," Luca explained. The big new Bluegame needed some original thinking.

It certainly got it. It's not just in profile that the BGX 70 is unlike other yachts. In layout terms it takes a while to find your way around. It's like two different boats. You step aboard and immediately find yourself on the aft deck of something that cannot possibly be just 70ft long. It's broad, high, flat and open at the stern. At anchor, there's room to make it a spectacular party space, and under way it's a boat deck big enough for a four-metre tender and a PWC.



The vast aft deck and lower saloon (left) create a unique indoor/outdoor beach club area with a great connection to the water

Walk forward and down three steps and you enter an attractive and spacious low-level lounge, comfortably furnished, and glazed on three sides. The engines are aft, beneath that raised aft

deck. This lounge adjoins the master cabin, which occupies the full beam of the hull, dead amidships. Beyond that, the guest cabins. At nearly 50ft (15m) in length from the crash bulkhead forward to the sliding doors aft, this is the kind of lower-deck accommodation volume you might expect on a 90-footer.

If instead of going down from the aft deck you choose to go up the starboard companionway, encased in its high-tech glass structure, you encounter a very different set of spaces. The main deck feels like a 50-footer's, with a pleasant and practical 'cockpit' aft, a sunny deck saloon adjoining the helm station with a low-level galley along the starboard side, and comfortable forward seating.

Even once you have acclimatised yourself to the unfamiliarity of the layout, the BGX 70 still feels like two separate boats. From



The saloon, galley and helm station on the raised main deck

the helm, everything is on a level and within easy reach, like a sensibly sized family cruiser. Down below, you're in the realms of luxury motor yachting. Technically, what

Bluegame refers to as the main deck is no such thing. Here is a yacht with an upper deck and a lower deck. There is no main deck, it's pretty subversive. This is properly clever design.

To complicate things just a little, the 70 also comes with a choice of lower-deck layouts, and a choice within that choice. Option A, with a master cabin and two double ensuites, emphasises privacy. The owner's cabin and its adjoining lounge together make up a superb private apartment which can be reached only from the aft deck or from above, via the starboard saloon companionway. The two guest doubles, meanwhile, occupy the forward half of the hull and are accessed from the upper saloon via the port companionway. A solid bulkhead amidships separates the two areas.

Our test 70, the first example of the new model, had lower

deck Option B, which is a much more sociable and family-friendly arrangement. That bulkhead virtually disappears, with not only a door leading forward towards the rest of the lower deck accommodation, but also a sliding panel on the starboard side. This opens up the full beam master cabin and office to another private seating area, which can be fitted out as a twin-berth cabin. With the door open and the panel down, the entire area is virtually open-plan. It's an arrangement that might prove popular with parents of young children.

AIR OF EXCLUSIVITY

The BGX 70's internal ambience is calm, understated and fitted out with real quality. It is, after all, a Sanlorenzo product. "Bluegame targets the same type of clients as Sanlorenzo – it shares the same values, but takes them below 70ft," explained Carla Demaria, the new Bluegame CEO. She joined the Sanlorenzo board at Max Perotti's invitation last December, after ten years in senior management at Groupe Beneteau, where she launched and ran Monte Carlo Yachts. Prior to that, she worked for 23 years at Azimut – alongside Perotti. They have known each other a long time. "Max and I don't need to talk," she told me. "We know what we're trying to say."

A couple of days before, at the Sanlorenzo press conference, Carla had described the Bluegame brand as "a rough diamond," implying that while it might need a bit of polishing, underneath it was pretty special. "It is known to be innovative and original,"

she said. "It has exclusivity, quality, an unmistakable look."

No arguments there. Styled by Studio Zuccon, the BGX 70's interior design is a confection of contrasting shades and textures, with lacquers, teak and leather combining to create pleasing and beautifully executed spaces. The internal doors are thick and heavy and the fittings high-spec. All the catches and handles functioned properly and everything had a reassuring air of solidity. Stowage space has not been neglected either. The sleeping cabins are well appointed with drawers and lockers – the little leather strap to lift up the mattress in the VIP is a nice touch – and the starboard seating area down below on our test boat also featured a wall's worth of locker space.

The proportions of the cabins and corridors are comfortable, and headroom is a pretty reasonable 6ft 7in (2.01m) through the lower deck. The beds might not quite pass muster with some owners – they're decently wide at 5ft 7in and 5ft 4in (1.70m and 1.62m), but lengths of just 6ft 0in and 6ft 1in (1.83m and 1.85m) are perhaps a little skimpy for a yacht this size.

The saloon on the main deck – upper deck, really – is compact for a 70-footer but comfortable, and its raised elevation affords excellent views, with glass on all four sides. One reason that it's not especially large, of course, is that among its many other attributes this yacht is also a walkaround, sort of, with wide, secure sidedecks leading forward behind deep bulwarks from the broad aft 'cockpit' to the bow seating and various sunlounging areas. And if the foredeck isn't quite private

It's as if you are driving a mid-range flybridge cruiser. And yet the accommodation deck appears to belong to a 90-footer



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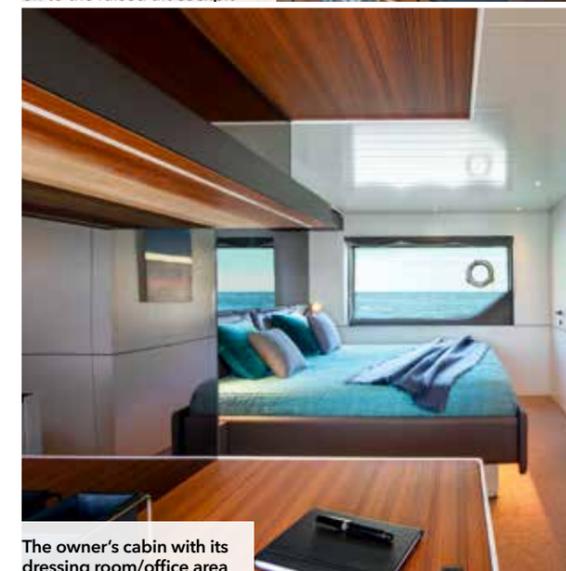
The main deck saloon opens on to the raised aft cockpit



The owner's ensuite bathroom is as chic as the cabin itself



The cockpit overlooks the beach club on the lower deck



The owner's cabin with its dressing room/office area



The VIP double is forward with a third cabin as an option



Internal and external staircases lead up to the main deck. The outside galley is an option

There is of course just the one helm station, but surrounded as it is by glass on all sides it offers good visibility from a high pair of helm seats. We set the automatic trim to on and the Seakeeper to standby, for the best combination of handling and performance, and eased the yacht out from among the crowded boat show berths. It was early, a good couple of hours before the show opened, but the low sun was already warm. Spraying hoses from an army of boat cleaners sparkled in the raking light as they got their charges ready for the rigours of the day.

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

Two thousand horsepower might be deemed rather modest for a motor yacht of this size, but the 70 didn't feel underpowered. It's no slouch. With a 2,000-litre fuel load and a far from lightweight fit-out that included not just the Seakeeper but also 500kg of Lithium house batteries, a top speed of just over 29 knots seemed perfectly acceptable. Acceleration was steady rather than spectacular but the throttles were beautifully smooth and the helm nicely weighted. The turning circle, according to my notes, was 'majestic', but the boat handled with just the right angle of heel and imparted a sense of calm control.

From the helm, the BGX 70 does exude an uncanny sense of otherness. The bow is right in front of you, about 25ft away, just beyond those sunbeds. Behind you there is the saloon and beyond that the aft deck seating, also about 25ft away. You can't see the stern. It is for all the world as if you're driving a mid-range flybridge or hardtop cruiser. And yet, down below, there is an accommodation deck that appears to belong to a 90-footer.

It's certainly very different from anything else out there, and an example of true design innovation. In her conference speech, Carla Demaria described the new BGX 70 from Bluegame as a "game changer". As a play on words it might not be up to much, but as a statement of fact you'd have to say she has a point.

enough for you to relax on, there is always the generous sunbed on the roof upon which to take a snooze.

Lou Codega designed the 70's hull as well as the hulls of all the other Bluegames. He's been around the block a few times and is well known in the US for his sports fishing boats, and with its fine forward sections and moderate vee aft, its down-angled chines and paired parallel spray rails, the BGX hull is a clear inheritor of that offshore discipline.

An IPS boat – because probably even V-drive transmissions wouldn't have allowed the engines to be set far enough aft to make that excellent lower lounge possible – the 70 comes with 900hp IPS 1200s as standard, while our test example had the next ones up, at 1,000hp apiece.



DIGITAL DASH
Glass bridge design means these gauges are digitised screen displays

JOYSTICK
Another benefit of the IPS pod drives is simpler berthing manoeuvres

BLUE STEEL
Stainless steel wheel harks back to Bluegame's sportsfisher origins



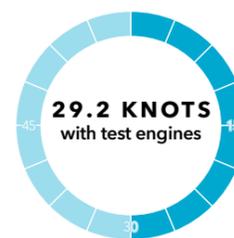
ENGINE ROOM
The Volvo IPS engines and drives are mounted under the beach club area

DOWN LOW
The sole of the aft saloon is at water level, under the main deck cockpit

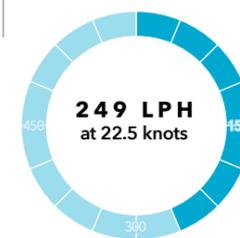
LAYOUT OPTIONS
The midships seating area can be configured as a third double cabin (see above)

SECRET SERVICE
The crew cabin hatch is concealed under the forward sunbed cushions

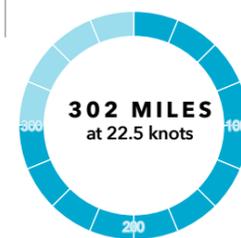
TOP SPEED



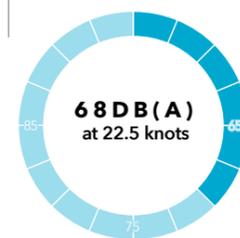
CONSUMPTION



RANGE



NOISE



PRICE



SPECIFICATION

- LOA 71ft 7in (21.86m)
- Beam 18ft 3in (5.60m)
- Draft 5ft 3in (1.6m)
- Displacement 40 tonnes (light)
- Engines 2 x 900-1,000hp Volvo Penta IPS 1200/1350
- Fuel 4,200 litres
- Water 1,000 litres
- Build GRP
- RCD Category B for 16 people
- Price from £3.096 million inc VAT [€3m ex VAT]
- Contact Bluegame www.bluegame.it

PERFORMANCE

Test engines Twin Volvo Penta IPS 1350 1,000hp diesel

	ECO	1,250	1,500	1,750	FAST	2,250	MAX
RPM	1,000	1,250	1,500	1,750	2,000	2,250	2,350
Speed	9.7	11.9	14.4	18.3	22.5	26.8	29.2
LPH	41	76	121	182	249	338	382
LPM	0.24	0.16	0.12	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.08
Range	806	538	403	336	302	269	257
Noise	61	62	63	64	68	74	75

Speed in knots. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on real-time fuel gauges; your figures may vary considerably. All prices include UK VAT. 48% fuel, 0% water, 13 crew + 250kg stores. 21°C air temperature, 1-2ft waves, F2-3 for speed trials.