



With a smooth throttle response, the BGX70 can hit just under 30 knots



Both worlds

Alan Harper meets Bluegame's biggest yacht yet – a dashing double-decker with a split personality



As we reach open water I push the throttles home and the BGX70 accelerates effortlessly. It's a beautiful day: the calm, azure seas off Cannes present no sort of challenge to the Lou Codega hull, with its fine, deep entry slicing through the chop, and shallower sections aft maximising dynamic lift. White spray dazzles against the rich blue of 200-fathom water. This boat, the first of a new model from Bluegame, is fitted with the larger of two IPS engine options and has 2,000hp on tap. Hull and machinery feel perfectly matched.

The acceleration is relentless, topping out at just under 30 knots – not too shabby for a 40-tonne yacht, especially with a fair weight of fuel on board. The BGX70 has proved herself a well-mannered, quick and capable seagoing yacht, whose smooth throttle response and nicely-weighted helm only add to the driving experience. Big smiles from the shipyard's engineers, and from Bluegame's founder, Luca Santella. After the BG42 and BG62, the BGX70 is their biggest boat yet – an intriguing combination of mid-size family dayboat and superyacht-style accommodation. It's fair to say they've nailed it.



With a surprisingly large interior volume, the lower deck exudes a spacious feel



It's like the lower deck of a substantial motor yacht has been wedded to the main deck of a sensible, mid-size walkaround



Yet Bluegame is an offshoot of Sanlorenzo and boats of this size are hardly Sanlorenzo's stock in trade. If Bluegame seems an odd fit for a yard that seems increasingly focused on big steel superyachts, it's not, according to Bluegame CEO Carla Demaria. The newest member of Sanlorenzo's board – she was until recently chief executive of Monte Carlo Yachts and before that, along with Sanlorenzo CEO Massimo Perotti, served for many years at Azimut-Benetti – concedes that the shipyard is hardly a “brand collector”. But for Bluegame, an exception was made: “It shares the same values as Sanlorenzo, but takes them below 70ft [21 metres],” she explains. “We are talking to the same clients – we have sold BG42s as chase boats for megayachts.” Santella has plans for a BGX60 too.

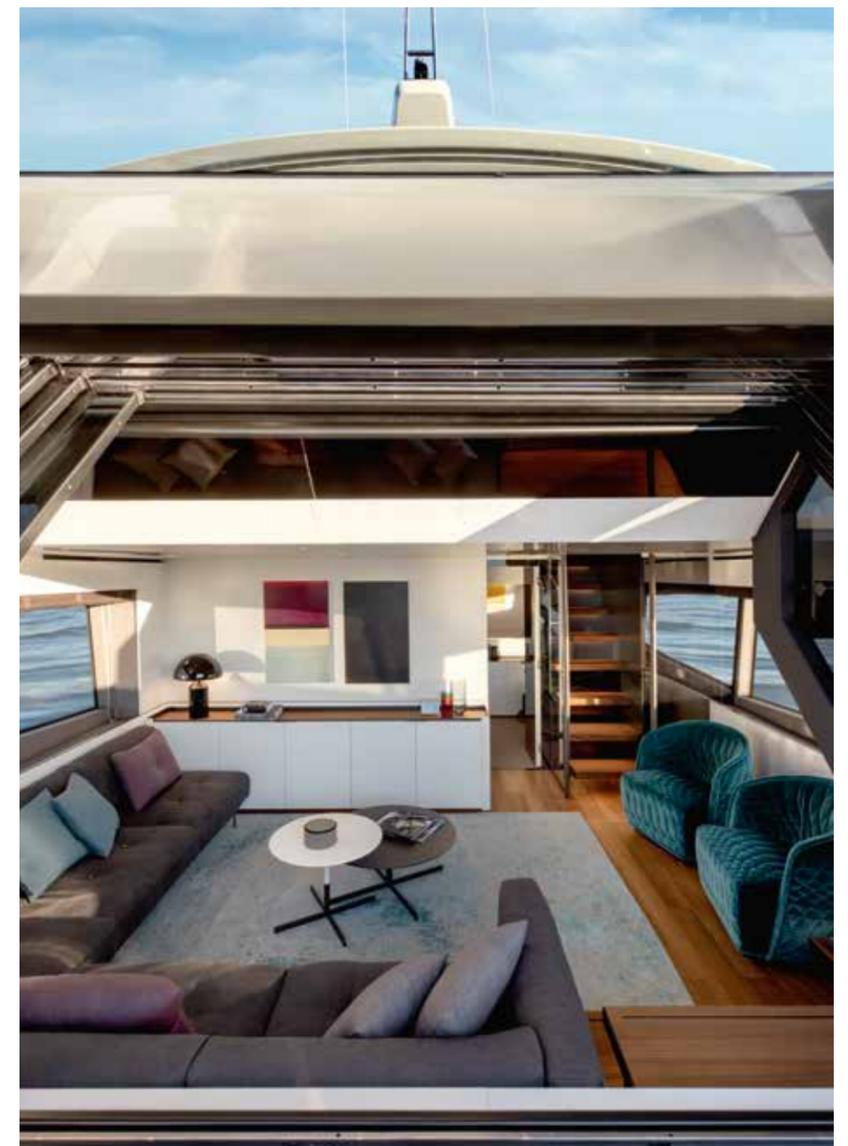
As we head back in towards the Vieux Port, I hand the controls back to the captain and Santella conducts an informal guided tour. The BGX70 is a two-decker with something of a split personality, and quite unlike any other boat of its size. The broad expanse of teak at the stern feels more like a superyacht's aft deck than the cockpit of a 22 metre. Forward through sliding glass doors, two steps take you down into a comfortable saloon, almost at water level, with big windows each side. The companionway in the aft corner is boxed in with glass – quite the superyacht touch – as seen in some of Sanlorenzo's larger vessels.

There is a variety of layouts offered on the lower deck but with the engines installed right aft, on IPS drives, the overwhelming impression in the sleeping accommodation is of size. Discounting the crew cabin in the bow, it's a full 13 metres from the forward bulkhead of the VIP suite to the threshold of the aft saloon. This is the sort of interior volume you would associate with yachts in the 26-metre class.

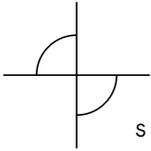
On the upper deck, however, the BGX70's dual personality begins to reveal itself. Here it feels not larger but smaller, with compact, human dimensions in the deck saloon. Views fore and aft from the helm station are bounded by the bow, just in front of the windscreen, and the dinette, behind the glass doors. You could easily forget that there's another five metres or so sticking out behind. It's like the lower deck of a substantial motor yacht has been wedded to the main deck of a sensible, mid-size walkaround.



The saloon (below) is large and comfortable with broad windows on each side. To the rear, two steps lead directly out to the aft deck (above)



On the upper deck, its dual personality begins to reveal itself. Here it feels not larger but smaller



Specifications

Name Bluegame BGX70
LOA 21.86m
Beam 5.6m
Displacement (light) 40,000kg
Fuel capacity 4,200 litres
Water capacity 1,000 litres
Construction GRP
Engines 2 x IPS 1200/IPS 1350
Max speed 30 knots with IPS 1350
Cruising speed 27 knots with IPS 1350
Range 300nm at 25 knots with IPS 1350
Price from €3 million
Builder Bluegame

But then Bluegame has always done things differently. Santella, an Olympic yachtsman, originally founded the firm in Cape Town in 2004, when he built a one-off 16-metre for a local client. That went well and he drafted some new designs, but returned to Italy in 2007. He showed the concepts to Perotti at Sanlorenzo, who liked what he saw. Bluegame production duly started nearby in Ameglia, as Sanlorenzo took the fledgling company under its wing.

But then came the financial crash, and Perotti was forced to concentrate on core business. Bluegame limped on alone until Santella mothballed the company in 2012, taking up a development role at Sanlorenzo and coming up with the yard's innovative SX explorer yachts.

"Then in 2017 Max Perotti showed a renewed interest, and we started to talk about Bluegame again," says Santella. The SX line was showing real promise and Perotti wanted to explore the possibilities of expanding the range downwards. "But the SX concept cannot translate below 75ft [23 metres]," Santella explains. So he started sketching an entirely new kind of motor yacht. Again, Sanlorenzo's boss liked what he saw, but this time he struck a deal to bring Bluegame properly into the Sanlorenzo fold, with Santella as head of product strategy. And Bluegame was born again.

Demaria has in the past described Bluegame as "a rough diamond" that was "known to be innovative and original. It has exclusivity, quality, and an unmistakable look."

The BGX70 certainly caused quite a stir in Cannes, and its unusual design has gone on to win major awards. It looks as if Perotti was right to renew his interest in Bluegame. That "rough diamond" is polishing up nicely. bluegame.com ■

With its expanse of teak, the stern resembles a superyacht's aft deck

