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Deep within Boka Bay, Montenegro, the Art of Kinetik Hedonist lies still at a run-down fuel pontoon looking menacing and decidedly unearthly. Even at rest this beast is totally fascinating – angular to the extreme, a perfect piece of design theatrics hewn out of impossibly glossy wood and twinkling stainless steel. A tanned arm beckons us towards the boat and up pops the head of Boris Ivanovic, the CEO of Art of Kinetik, who, with his four-man crew, is going to take us from the Montenegrin old town of Kotor to Split in Croatia.

Young and suave, Boris is exactly the kind of entrepreneur that you would imagine to be the brains behind a project such as this. He has invited *MBY* on board his boat before – editor Hugo had a go in the hardtop version after the Monaco Boat Show in 2010 (*MBY*

September 2011) – but this time round, on the open version, we are here to see if Hedonist is actually any good as a proper cruising boat. Can the boat that makes a Pershing look like a sensible option eat up the miles like a Princess V62 or is it the perfect example of an attention-grabbing showpiece with no real substance beneath those viciously sharp and alluring lines?

Getting on board is an event in itself – *MBY* production editor Chantal and I are asked to chuck our kit to two of the crew while a tower of beanbags is stacked before us on the quayside. This wobbly pillar is the only way to ascend onto the Hedonist's decks. From the top you straddle the side screen and then ease yourself down the fold-out steps into the cockpit. Boris is happy to admit that the boat is a sacrifice of form over function in many instances.

"I want things to look good and I want them done a certain way. I wanted to protect the exceptional profile of this boat, hence your ascent onto the decks," he says. "We couldn't find anyone to supply

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KINETIC ECSTASY

The Art of Kinetik Hedonist has been known to make grown men whimper with its exquisite lines. But what's it like for real holidaying? Jack Haines hitches a ride in Montenegro to find out

Text: Jack Haines Photos: Jack Haines & Art of Kinetik

Jets suck in water and fire it out eagerly the other side – this is truly one of the most breathtaking machines I've ever seen



Just outside Kotor lies the famous Our Lady of the Rocks island



Party pad: the Hedonist's one saloon-cabin is über cool and the bed can fit at least three!



Bespoke and effortlessly stylish: even the Hedonist's bow roller is hewn to perfection

Art of Kinetik CEO Boris Ivanovic (middle) and Jack Haines (right) on Hedonist's wide foredeck



the hinges that I wanted for the mooring gear covers at the stern so we built them ourselves. This is the way we achieved our dream."

This quest for perfection is evident throughout the design and creation of Hedonist. If a supplier didn't have the right equipment Boris would stomach the time and money and build it himself to achieve his vision.

A COOL NEW WORLD

Our skipper ignites the triple 800hp MAN engines and the oily smooth water around the Hedonist's bathing platform is pounded into a boiling froth by the three Rolls-Royce Kamewa water-jets. Via joystick, we slide away from the dilapidated pumps of the fuel pontoon and nose out into the Bay of Kotor, the largest fjord in southern Europe. This part of Montenegro is achingly beautiful with ancient towns dating back to 168BC and fantastic Venetian-inspired homes nestled at the bottom of imperious mountains. These same mountains have seen much of Montenegro's troubled history – the old warship storage caves deliver a stark reminder of decades gone by. But this turbulent history has also moulded the company's ideology. Boris explains: "This part of the world has a certain reputation and a lot of people only know the area for its years of conflict. We wanted to change that and show that there are the skills and knowledge to produce a desirable and well-engineered product."

We are now easing out of the fjord and the Hedonist is finally able to open its legs as we head north towards Dubrovnik. The frothing cauldron at the stern morphs into a thick, white plume as the jets suck in water and fire it eagerly out the other side. Progress is smooth as we power onto the plane but the roar of the engines and the commotion from the jets add plenty of aural excitement to the mix.

The central jet-drive is fixed while the outboard ones do the manoeuvring via an incredibly sensitive fly-by-wire steering system. It's actually a little too sensitive for my liking and requires only the tiniest of adjustments to make the boat bank from side to side. That's fine in calm waters but in a swell, more resistance at the wheel would make life a lot easier. Aside from that, being at the helm is an experience like no other, usually reserved for those whose destination requires leaving the earth's atmosphere.

The towering helm seats, which took two months to develop and nine months to build, are an effort to get into but feel fantastic once

you're encased and give a commanding view down the knife-like bow. The Böning electronics control all of the boat's on-board functions from navigation to diagnostics. Boris admits that he used Böning because they're the best, they look fantastic and they're more often found on superyachts so feel a cut above the rest.

The Hedonist is up and into her stride now and our 38-knot cruising speed feels remarkably relaxed. Let's not forget that she is 62ft 4in long so this kind of performance is impressive and gives an incredibly wide cruising band. You can basically cruise at any speed between 20 and 38 knots. Despite the sharp bow and reverse sheer at the stern, the Hedonist does not pierce through the waves. At speed the hull skims across the water like any planing boat and this means that occasional shudders make themselves known over larger waves. However, compared to rigid GRP, the far more forgiving wooden hull makes for a beautifully refined ride.

Coming into port at Cavtat



The helm wouldn't be out of place on a spaceship and the elevated seats gave class-best views out



THE ART OF SEDUCTION

Away from the helm it's the cockpit that really steals the show, the huge walkways either side of the helipad-sized sunpad make the area feel so roomy. It's unashamedly poised towards indulgence and relaxation. You could easily fit six people on the sunpad with more relaxing in the U-shaped seating forward and, true to form, the seating is full of surprises, including an ethanol-burning fire-bucket and integrated champagne cooler. The cockpit is so deep that despite the lack of a roof you're also totally protected from the elements.


We stop just south of Dubrovnik in the horse shoe-shaped port of Cavtat for a leg stretch and a look around. Any chance of sneaking in here for a quick stop goes out the window as soon as a ferry load of tourists spot the Hedonist from the quay. Despite the towering superyachts surrounding us, it is the Art of Kinetik that is getting all the attention. Cameras come out and fingers point as the skipper guides us, stern first, into a berth next to a superyacht whose crew are also craning out over the bulwarks to get a good look. This is not a boat for those who are adverse to attention!

After a short stroll and a coffee in Cavtat we cruise north, the Croatian coastline bombarding us with its beauty – the assortment of coves, bays and islands here is simply staggering. At the small island of Mljet we pick one of the many sheltered inlets, fold out the stainless steel anchor roller and dive in for a swim. The Hedonist sways on the afternoon breeze and as it does so the sun flickers across



the angled wood and stainless steel detailing. Pictures don't do it justice – this is truly one of the most breathtaking machines I've ever seen. We dry off and head ashore for a long lunch at a local restaurant on the water's edge. The Hedonist lies tied up on the quay below the terrace while we feast on local lobster.

Light is fading as the MANs once again rumble into life and the water-jets give the quayside a good drenching. The Hedonist's helm is ablaze with screens and dials and it looks even more spaceship-like than before. We spear away from Mljet and as dusk descends the sea's oily surface returns and the Hedonist is really in the groove.

The simple answer to whether the Hedonist is any good as a cruising boat is yes. She can cruise quickly and effectively, with a wide performance band and a well-protected cockpit. There are bits of it that work very well and bits that really don't. Getting on board is very awkward and the side decks make a tightrope look like a pavement. It's also 62ft long and has only one bed (unless you count the claustrophobic crew cabin beneath the cockpit sole). However, before our final run into Split we stop in Hvar. This is Croatia's Monaco, a superyacht haven packed with cocktail bars and nightclubs. Superyachts dominate the quayside and one of the distinctive Norman Foster-designed *Yacht Plus* fleet is anchored outside. Despite this, as the Hedonist pirouettes in the middle of the harbour, camera flashes light up the water as people fight to get a picture of our mysterious wooden beast. This says it all; yes, the Hedonist has practical downfalls but honestly, when it looks this good, who cares? 

Contact www.artofkinetik.com

Above left: the bespoke champagne cooler and ethanol fireplace-in-one. Romantic flames flicker from the slot in the top while your Cristal chills beneath. Above: though early in the season, the islands of Croatia were blissfully clear and jaw-droppingly beautiful



Tourists and superyacht crew alike were all eager to have a nose!



The cockpit's V-shaped sunpad lifts up to reveal the Hedonist's tender – a miniature 50-knot replica of its mothership