



A LOW PROFILE

Zefira is the epitome of stylish discretion. In fact, so discreet is this 164-footer from Fitzroy Yachts in New Zealand she practically disappears. Rebecca Hayter explains







With a 164ft/50m hull in an unusual colour choice of grey, a deck with no flybridge and just a sliver of white pilothouse appearing to float beneath her tapered boom, Zefira maintains an unusually low profile for such a large yacht.

The fast aluminium cruising sloop is the largest built by Fitzroy Yachts in New Zealand and the longest non-flybridge sloop yet from Dubois Naval Architects. Rodney Martin, managing director of Fitzroy Yachts, says Zefira's European owners had an exceptionally clear vision of what they wanted in their yacht. "It was what Dubois worked to; it was what Remi [Tessier, interior designer] worked to; and it was ultimately what we worked to," he says.

Experienced sailors who have owned several yachts, the owners wanted a high-performance cruiser that would shine at regattas yet manage heavy weather. With a light interior and a sleek, low profile, Zefira is the epitome of stylish discretion.

The darkened pilothouse windows with black mullions are seated at deck level and on deck as few fixtures as possible distract the eye, leaving the yacht's lines to work their aesthetic charm. The teak decks are almost clear of fittings; the hatches have concealed hinges and no margin boards – leaving no margin for error in laying the teak. The foredeck hatch for the 26ft/8m tender and foldaway deck crane is barely noticeable. Zefira has specially imported grey caulking in her teak deck.

The aft cockpit has a close connection to the sea – another reason for doing without a flybridge – but it has all-round shelter, thanks to windows that retract into the coamings. Electric motors raise and lower the four 200kg pieces of glass.

It's an easy same-level transition from the cockpit into Zefira's stunning interior. This is by Remi Tessier, a stunning

setting of white and light, soft cow leathers, bleached sycamore walls and cabinetry and bleached wenge floors. It's complemented by polished stainless steel, **crafted glass on the tables by French artist Bernard Pictet, and contrasted with black carbon fibre.** The upper and lower saloons feature woven leather flooring, run with a silver thread from Belgium. The main deck saloon includes dining and seating areas and has a view forward to the foredeck.

Through strategic lighting and recessed toe-kicks, the furniture and stairs appear to float, which is entirely appropriate in the world of sailing. Steps with illuminated white leather handrails link the upper and lower saloon.

This area, which includes a library, is dominated by the concave ceiling feature. To build this 5m structure, Fitzroy made a three-dimensional male mould, from which they took glassfibre templates to create a jigsaw of compound curves, so the dome could be installed in sections.

Another illuminated stairway leads to the accommodation, which includes a full-beam owners' suite and a twin and two double guest staterooms, plus cabins for nine crew.

The owners brought their private art collection to New Zealand and selected pieces for installation in consultation with the interior designer. This included a sculpture, La Prua, by Arnaldo Pomodoro.

The galley features stainless steel surfaces, with matt-black granite worktops, a large cold room and a dedicated area for the Miele coffee machine. A large island extends the workspace, which features Gaggenau and Sub-Zero appliances and a Vintec wine cellar.

Zefira has a range of 4,000 miles at 12 knots under power. Fitzroy Yachts engineer Tony Green was aboard for her maiden



Zefira's sleek, low profile, grey topsides and su styling give her sophisticated air. Above: the helm station has scrub for all navigation systems and communication





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voyage as far as Galapagos and was surprised by her speed. They departed New Zealand on 16 November and were in the Galapagos by 17 December, after three days in Tahiti and two in the Marquesas. The sailing was mostly upwind, but even in 30 knots, the boat's easy motion, with her fine entry and full transom, was kind to the crew.

"She is quite a well balanced boat and even the captain said that once you're sailing, you can just let go of the wheel and it will pretty much go straight, not pull to port or starboard at all," Green says. "It has quite a quick reaction to the helm when you steer." The twin helms abaft the cockpit are well protected from

there is a clear view over the pilothouse forward to the bow.

Green was involved in designing the engine room, home to the Caterpillar and Northern Lights gensets, plus equipment such as shore power equipment and various compressors. Fitzroy placed them here rather than in the lazarette as part of an overall strategy to keep weight central and low.

"The engine room is definitely quite different from what we've done before," Green says. "The simplicity of it: being able to walk in, go around and do your checks, operate all the equipment easily with full headroom. It's really cool that the engineer is also able to monitor all that equipment from the



The captain also enjoys plenty of dedicated space in the bridge, where black mullions make a dramatic, star-like statement over a floor of black leather, white leather and carbon fibre. The screen starboard accesses all communications, navigation and ship's items, including autopilot, engine room controls, throttle, variable-pitch propeller control and fire systems.

There are three screens to port. One displays the engine and items, another the radar and the third GPS and chartplotter. There's a chart table with a dedicated compartment for paper charts.

The 204ft/62m Southern Spars rig features carbon EC6 hybrid rigging to carry 32,300ft²/3,000m² of sail. The main and headsails are by RDL, northern Kaurar with the high-tech taffeta for Innova and



Low windows mean there are superb views from the deck saloon. With its recessed toe-kicks the furniture appears to float. Left: the combination of overhead skylight and superstructure windows provides a vast amount of natural light

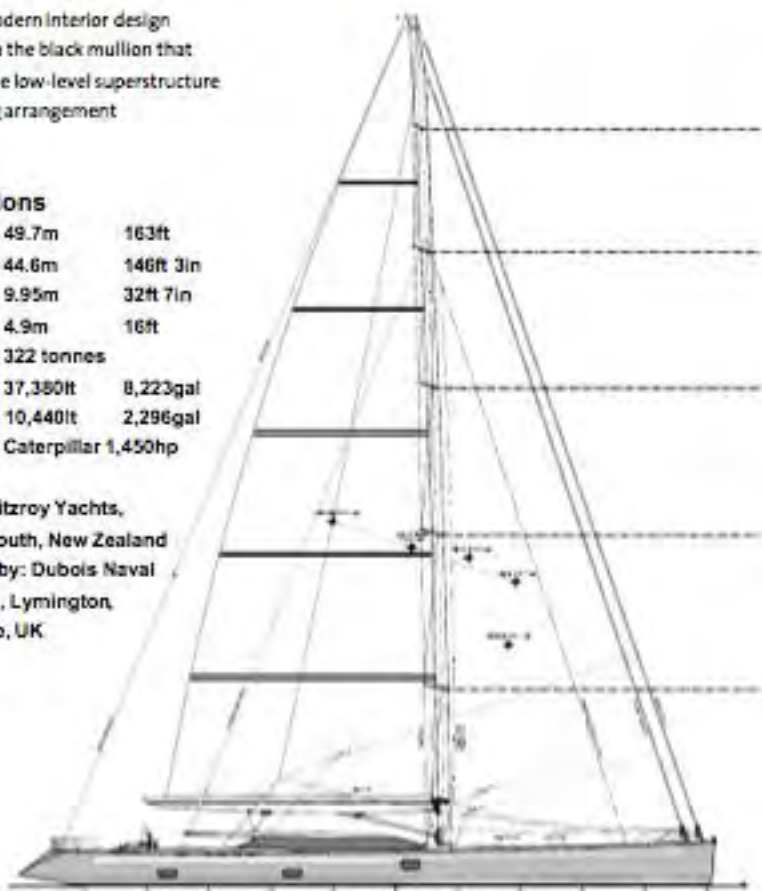


er's modern interior design
s with the black mullion that
orts the low-level superstructure
lazing arrangement

Dimensions

	49.7m	163ft
	44.6m	146ft 3in
Length	9.95m	32ft 7in
Height	4.9m	16ft
	322 tonnes	
	37,380ft	8,223gal
Power	10,440lt	2,296gal
Engine	Caterpillar	1,450hp

Designed by: Fitzroy Yachts,
Plymouth, New Zealand
Designed by: Dubois Naval
Architects, Lymington,
Shire, UK



stability. North Sails general manager Richard Bicknell says that, traditionally, furling mainsails had been unable to use cars, because they can't furl in the mandrel, which means the batten compression wears on the luff tape during the hoist and drop. So Southern Spars developed a new batten car system.

This still has a bolt rope, but each batten has a luff car that exits the track and furls around the mandrel. In the hoist, a trumpet guider locates the car back into the track. "It's just amazing," Bicknell says. "It's been our battle for many years as luff tapes needed to be replaced every 18 months or so."

The staysail has a built-in luff forestay which secures to an in-deck furling padeye and is tensioned using a ram. The sail and stay can be removed, so it doesn't interfere with tacking. There are two gennakers on inflatable snuffers, one each for running and reaching to cover the range in regattas.

Most of Zefira's 11 captive winches have carbon fibre drum s. Being around 30 per cent lighter, they could be installed in deck lockers at the base of the mast, rather than sited low in the boat. This saves weight in reducing aluminium pipes and water traps.

"It just makes all the runs to the winches a lot of shorter and close to the exit points, less complicated, less friction and easier to inspect," says Rodney Martin. "It's not the first time we've done it, but it's the furthest we've taken that concept."

Zefira is the yard's seventh Dubois. Fitzroy built every part of the yacht, except mast and sails, over 27 months. At 16ft/5m longer than Saiperton, Zefira brought some challenges.

"It doesn't sound a lot, but you're going from around 230 tons to 330 tons so it's not quite 50 per cent more boat in volume, but it's a significant increase for the length," Martin says.