

# Premier 45

The Premier 45 is something a little bit different. **Andi Robertson** takes this new high end semi-production design out for a spin

Originally created by a Spanish and South African design partnership for a German owner, and built in the Middle East, the Premier 45 is an exciting and slightly different boat on the market.

## Concept

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The Premier 45 is semi-production, built in Dubai by Premier Composite Technologies. The company has become something of a runaway success, building large-scale architectural composite structures. It is a profitable operation now, allowing founder and director Hannes Waimer to enjoy his other passion: motorsport.

A wealthy German car racing pal laid down a challenge to Hannes to come up with a boat which satisfied his very specific brief. He wanted a fast cruiser which he could race, with a high level of comfort and accommodation; a cool, sexy interior; a

simple, very uncluttered deck layout and a profile which would take sleek Wally-style systems. It also had to be lifting keel to access shallow anchorages, and basically get to the parts that other 45ft yachts could not reach.

Premier looked at the likes of X-Yachts as a starting point from which to develop something more niche, with a higher performance and spec, without letting the project run away and become too impractical. In fact the design originally came from Botin and Carkeek, before the duo went their separate ways. It has been a carefully developed, slow-burn project and there is little doubt the final outcome is the better for it.

The boat was launched in Germany in the spring, after creating something of a stir at Dusseldorf's Boot, prior to testing as a nominated contender for European Yacht of the Year. We sailed boat No. 1 on the Solent in a late summer breeze.

## Hull, rig and deck layout

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The fundamental theme for the Premier 45 is smooth decks and cockpit, so all the control lines are well hidden. The lack of clutter produces a clean and functional layout which is very distinctive, centred around excellent ergonomics. It is very much a performance cruiser rather than a racer-cruiser in terms of layout, so the cockpit is generously proportioned with space to relax and enjoy the ride. But the working areas are also good with secure spaces for the trimmer. It is designed to sail easy miles in comfort and style. Doubtless it will appeal to the chic owners in the Mediterranean, Germany, Scandinavia and USA where making a statement is important.

Even for a 45-footer it is a pretty big and powerful boat. The moderately chunky hull has good form stability and is designed to provide decent internal volume. The stern sections are relatively wide and powerful, profiled not too far from the modern TP52. The bow carries ample volume and there is a very subtle chine on the stern quarters. Such a hull shape and high righting moment requires a generous sail plan and the Premier 45 is not short of horsepower, but it is all very easily handled.

The hull is a mid-tech E-glass foam sandwich, with substantial carbon reinforcing while the deck utilises a full carbon lay-up. All

## SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Design</b>	Botin Partners & Carkeek Design Partners
<b>LOA</b>	13.72m
<b>LWL (loaded)</b>	12.94m
<b>Beam</b>	4.15m
<b>Draught</b>	1.83-2.75 m
<b>Ballast</b>	3,340kg
<b>Displacement (light)</b>	8,034kg
<b>Sail area</b>	Mainsail 69.8sq m Jib 50.6sq m Spinnaker 190sq m
<b>Price</b>	€423,381 (ex VAT)



“It has been a slow-burn project and the final outcome is the better for it”



1 The Premier 45 is an eye-catching performance cruiser design 2 The distinctive coachroof 3 The 45 was satisfying to helm upwind, but not especially forgiving 4 Recessed control lines throughout, including headsail furler and main track 5 Powerful hull sections

PHOTOS ANDI ROBERTSON



The first boat is fully loaded (to the point that the final cost is a source of some embarrassment), with all main Harken primary and pit winches powered. The short headsail tracks are on a manual pin system, simply to keep the decks free of rope work. The backstay, vang and outhaul are all hydraulically controlled on this boat.

On the bow the Harken Mk IV jib furler is recessed below deck level. There are two big lockers in the bow, one deep sail locker and a self-draining foredeck chain locker where the electric anchor winch is, but I really loved the custom carbon anchor arm system where the head remains captured and swings out automatically, keeping it all clean and easy.

The mainsheet is a German A-style system. As with all the control lines it is almost entirely hidden, running in a conduit along the coachroof edge, as also does the jib sheet. The recessed inboard mounted jib sheet tracks ensure a nice, tight sheeting angle upwind, but as soon as the angles open then it is easy to set a change sheet onto the sidedeck edge on a simple loop and toggle system.

Other details I liked included the recessed bowsprit and furler controls and the way the instrument outputs and controls are mounted on the aft edge of the cockpit coaming. True to the cruising primary use, there is a smart fold-up table, which rises out of the cockpit floor for meals and drinks times, and overall there are plenty of wide, flat spaces for sunbathing and laying about.

### Sailing

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During our test day we had a south-westerly breeze of 10-13 knots and just a little chop. We sailed in company with the new Ker Class 40 which was out testing prior to the TJV and were pleased to match it for pace upwind – not that the Class 40s are especially quick beating, but we found the Premier 45 very satisfying and easy to sail upwind.

The comparatively narrow sheeting angle gives a nice, high mode with the powerful mainsail making life relatively easy for the helmsman to stay high and fast. The foils are not especially forgiving and do reward accurate helming for the small percentages, but that said with a good bulb and form stability we felt the boat was amenable enough. She found a groove and with a light but responsive helm it was easy to encourage the extra fractions here and there.

Upwind we found about 7.5 knots at 25 degrees apparent without too much effort or any real weight on the rail. If you were not in racing mode, you would probably ease the track down slightly and go faster. The boat was at all times dry and a delight to sail, you really feel it would swallow the miles. When we overloaded the helm we did lose it a little



ABOVE A minimalist modern interior  
RIGHT Stylish twin wheels available in E-glass or carbon



a couple of times, something other European testers have reported, but the rudder profile is due for some further attention as it is perhaps very slightly too aggressive.

Setting the asymmetric gennaker is pretty easy. The retractable carbon bowsprit is controlled by a single outhaul line. We launched the light kite out a sock and were off in seconds towards the upper limit for the sail, making 10 knots, surging to over 11 at times, with no real hassles and just three on board. The helm remained light most of the time, very much akin to a pedigree raceboat feel. The all-round sailing performance is sparkling but pleasingly manageable.

### Interior

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The interior is as much – or perhaps more – of a statement than the exterior. It is very different with a pretty unique ambience. The saloon space to port is a ‘chill out’ zone, but

that said you can dine with comfort in a very elegant space. Opposite, the galley is fantastic, but understated. All the housings are precision composite, set off by a clean Corian work surface. From a practical point of view there is an excellent three burner cooker with oven and grill, many drawers and cupboards, and a big top access 150-litre icebox as well as the cooled drinks cabinet. In the eye level lockers, we found the Nespresso coffee machine.

The Premier 45 sleeps seven with an excellent big forecabin. The owner's cabin has its own en-suite with separate shower, whilst the main heads/shower is opposite. Naturally the toilet bowls are carbon fibre.

The keel trunk is unobtrusive and incorporates the rig as well. It is raised and lowered at the flick of a switch. Unlike other lift keel designs, the forward edge is flat and the aft edge tapered which ensures that the keel head fit tightens as it drops, rather than the more usual ‘wedge’ which often seems to

develop a few millimetres of play. The lift keel is an option, but with the keel box integrated as part of the load-bearing engineering a fixed keel version will have the same layout.

The two double aft cabins are nicely thought out with a good level of space, headroom and stowage. The aft berth on the port can be split to allow sitting access to the engine, rather than having to lie on the berth.

### Verdict

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Overall I found myself really liking the Premier 45 for very many different reasons. It sails beautifully with a real precision feel, fast and rewarding on all points of sail. It is different, making a subtle statement. In the short term, although Premier are enjoying a growing order book for this model, you will not be parking next to one soon. The base price is very tolerable and from there it is a case of making the boat what you want. □

“The helm remained light most of the time, akin to a pedigree raceboat feel”

of the interior is composite and moulded over the five-axis CNC-milled tooling. The high precision build absolutely minimises weight – interior surfaces are finished before they are integrated to reduce the need for filler.

The coachroof line is distinctive, with a very narrow window line which is purely cosmetic – all interior light comes in via hatches and flush mounted windows overhead. There are neat touches emphasising the minimalist approach throughout: angled clutch recesses, a recessed engine control box, composite stanchions. The main track is recessed into the cockpit floor and so too is the headsail

furler. The twin E-glass composite wheels are to die for – though, as with anything on this boat, if you want carbon, you got it (Premier's buying power makes such add-on costs proportionately quite economical). The lifting keel system is great, reducing the draught from 2.75m to a not-exactly-creek-crawling 1.83m, but is an additional €29,000 (£24,300).

The Premier 45 is generously endowed with a powerful, tall, twin-spreader all-carbon rig from Southern Spars. Sail power is mostly generated upwind by a 751sq ft mainsail with a 106 per cent overlap jib. There is a carbon retractable bowsprit.

### COMPARISONS



#### Xp 44

Good-looking regatta racer, strong under IRC and ORCi. Smart, well finished interior, and high spec fit out for an off the shelf cruiser-racer, but still a formulaic production boat.

**Length** 13.29m  
**Beam** 4.07m  
**Draught** 2.3-2.65m  
**Ballast** 3,850kg  
**Sail area** 106.8sq m  
www.x-yachtsgb.com



#### Grand Soleil 47

The new, improved, slightly bigger follow up to the excellent GS46 European Yacht of the Year in 2010. This Botin Partners design for the high end Italian marque is a smooth, sophisticated and quick cruiser-racer.

**Length** 14.62m  
**Beam** 4.25m  
**Draught** 2.2-2.6m  
**Ballast** 3,900kg  
**Sail area** 119sq m  
www.keyyachting.com

### ANSWER BACK

**From: Joe Hall, Marine Sales & Marketing, Premier Composite Technologies**

PCT is extremely proud of the design and build quality of this attractive yacht. But more importantly, the company is delighted with the sailing performance of the boat, having now sailed several thousand miles.

Relative speed is the consistent narration, which accompanies the boat's performance; relative that is to the wind and sea state. The Premier 45 is both swift and smooth, providing owners with an extremely comfortable ride and by default, increasing cruising ranges for both relaxed weekend sailing or longer distance expeditions.

On the racecourse, the boat has yet to be tested, however, with its powerful rig and hull form and with Premier Composite Technologies' racing pedigree, the expectation is that the boat will also be a winner.