



Under full sail in plenty of breeze, an Outbound 52 cruises to weather off Miami Beach.

# Bound for the Open Ocean

BY ANDREW BURTON  
PHOTOS BY  
BILLY BLACK

There are no limits to your cruising grounds when you're aboard the Outbound 52, and you'll get there in a hurry.

**S**OLID BLUE WATER BURST ONTO the foredeck of the Outbound 52 and turned to foam as it rolled aft, proof that I'd failed to steer around another large, square Gulf Stream wave. The rest of the crew slid under the hard dodger, out of the spray. Lapses in helmsmanship notwithstanding, we were having fun sailing in the waves kicked up by the 17- to 20-knot northerly breeze blowing against the current. The boat was doing what it was meant to do: get where it was going quickly while giving its crew a comfortable ride.

The way the Outbound 52 was going

through the water reflected the beliefs that builder Phil Lambert has developed over years of sailing his own boats: Cruising sailboats don't have to be slugs, and the ability to make fast passages is a safety factor in itself, allowing crews to sail around weather systems or make port before storms hit. An ex-racer, Lambert heads to sea not just for the entertainment of exploring new places but also for the plain and simple joy of sailing.

Lambert grew up in Southern California, then attended the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, New York, where he skippered one of the academy's

offshore racing yachts. After he graduated, he spent a few years working as an officer on oil tankers before starting a career in yacht financing. Over the years, a boat concept took shape in conversations with a friend and colleague, Craig Chamberlain. Their racing backgrounds and some uncomfortable yacht deliveries gave them the idea that there was a need for an offshore cruising boat that was both fast and comfortable to be aboard.

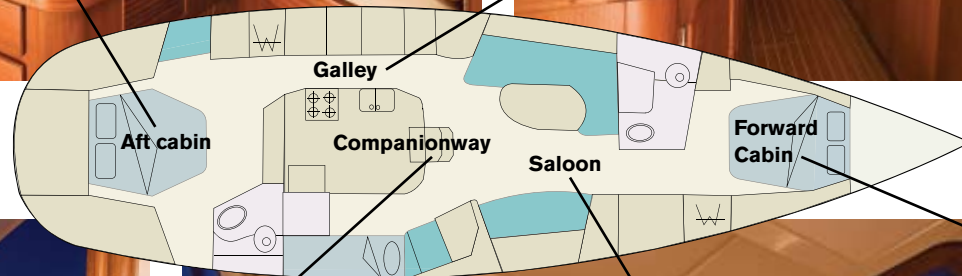
The stars lined up for Lambert in 1997 when a financing client who was importing motoryachts mentioned that the yard, Hampton Yachts, was interested in

building a sailboat. With a young family, Chamberlain decided to stay in the insurance business, but Lambert was ready to jump. A week later, he signed a contract with the builder, and Outbound Yachts was born.

Lambert was soon picking the brain of renowned raceboat designer Carl Schumacher, probably best known among cruising sailors as the designer of the Alerion Express 28. The result was the Outbound 44, an attractive, strong, and adaptable boat that—with a two-foot extension on the transom to increase the size of the swim platform and the boat's sailing

waterline—is now sold as the Outbound 46. There are more than 30 of the 44s and 46s sailing in various parts of the world, and more than half are in the midst of, or have completed, significant cruises. Today, Lambert spends most of the year living in Xiamen, China, overseeing his boats' construction at the Hansheng Yacht Building Company.

When the time came to design a bigger sister for the 44/46, Lambert approached Tim Kernan. (See "Cruising Origins Breed Go-Fast Designs," page 70.) Like the late Carl Schumacher, Kernan is a California naval architect with a repu-



tation for designing fast boats. Lambert once again had a very clear idea of how he wanted his new Outbound to turn out. It was to be a center-cockpit cutter, a fairly common plan for a 52-footer. But neither he nor Kernan were about to let the Outbound 52 look, as Kernan says, "like a wedding cake with layer stacked upon layer" in an effort to squeeze in every possible cubic inch of space below while leaving the cockpit seemingly added to the deck as an afterthought. On this boat, the relatively narrow cockpit is sunk deep into the structure and features

high coamings and a short step down to the deck. The seats are long enough for stretching out and close enough together to provide an easy foot brace for those sitting to weather when the boat's heeling. A hinged watertight panel is built into the cockpit sole to facilitate engine removal in case that, some day, becomes necessary. The wheel is aft and mounted on a substantial pedestal that also holds the compass, engine instruments and controls, and the controls for the autopilot, bow thruster, and windlass. A well in the forward part of the cockpit provides

**The Outbound 52's interior combines two-cabin luxury, Far East craftsmanship, and living spaces both beautiful and practical.**

easy access to the saloon with just a few steps down the companionway.

Seated on either side or amidships, I found that the wheel was easy to reach and that visibility was good over the hard dodger when I stood up and through it when I sat down. Designer Kernan says that he spent a lot of time getting the dodger right so it not only provides shel-

ter but neither interferes with vision forward nor offends the eye.

Low bulwarks make the raised-saloon deckhouse look sleek and give the boat an almost racy look that's offset by numerous ports, hatches, and vents. Voluminous storage in lockers in both quarters and under the foredeck ensures that owners will be able to avoid cluttering the deck with cruising gear.

It's an advantage to have the builder own hull number one: He can try new ideas before a client gets involved. One thing that will get worked out is the steering system. Three turns lock-to-lock on the silky-smooth Lewmar Mamba system—turning the shaft on Jefa bearings—is overkill to control Kernan's

beautifully balanced sail plan and high-aspect spade rudder. Lambert says that a new two-turn system is on order.

Asked if he thinks a skeg-hung rudder would be more appropriate for a cruising boat, Kernan—the engineer—answers adamantly in the negative. "I've seen too many skegs hanging by the rudderstock off the bottom of boats," he says. "If they're built right, spade rudders are stronger."

High on Lambert's cruising-boat criteria is strength. The Outbound's solid hull is hand laid with vinylester resins; a foam-and-fiberglass structural grid that incorporates stringers, the engine bed, and three-quarter-length longitudinals is built into the hull during the layup. Watertight bulkheads fore and aft add another measure of safety, and all the bulkheads are bonded to the hull and deck for their entire perimeter. The deck is vacuum-bagged with a Divinycell core and bedded with 3M 5200 adhesive sealant before it's through-bolted to the hull on four-inch centers.



## Outbound 52

LOA	52' 00" (15.85 m.)
LWL	47' 10" (14.58 m.)
Beam	15' 4" (4.67 m.)
Draft	7' 6" (2.29 m.)
Sail Area (100%)	1,312 sq. ft. (121.9 sq. m.)
Ballast	15,000 lb. (6,804 kg.)
Displacement	39,500 lb. (17,917 kg.)
Ballast/D	.38
D/L	161
SA/D	18.1
Water	225 gal. (852 l.)
Fuel	250 gal. (946 l.)
Mast Height	72' 0" (21.95 m.)
Engine	110-hp. Yamaha 4JH4-HTE
Designer	Kernan Yacht Design
Price	\$830,000

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The external lead keel has a long, flat, efficient bulb for added stability. It's bolted onto the bottom of a deep sump that's deeper aft than forward, adding grounding protection by spreading the impact force over the whole top of the keel rather than point-loading the aft corner. To my mind, the external lead helps mitigate damage from groundings, too, as lead absorbs impact much better than iron or fiberglass-encapsulated ballast.

There were no crashes or bangs as we flew along in the choppy Gulf Stream. I'd expected the relatively light-displacement performance-cruiser to pound as it blasted upwind in rotten sea conditions. But thanks to the boat's V-shaped sections and a fairly fine entry, we had very little noise. Considerable rocker in the body of the hull makes for a seakindly ride; there

was no jerkiness to the motion, as there can be on some performance cruisers.

The Outbound's light-to-moderate displacement had another benefit in that we didn't have to break out foul-weather gear because the sailboat strode over, rather than through, (most) of the waves. In smooth and rough water and 15 to 20 knots of breeze the 52 tracked well, demanding little more from the helmsman than an occasional flick of the fingers to keep the boat going in the right direction, even when we bore off to a broad reach in quartering seas.

The high-cut Hood Vectran headsails on manual Furlex furlers are set far enough apart that the 130-percent outer jib makes it through the gap relatively easily during tacks and jibes; the main has full vertical battens and furls into the three-spreader Seldén mast. A solent rig is available as an option. In my fantasies about the boat, I'd have hydraulic or electric furlers on the headsails. Discontinuous rigging keeps the mast pointing in the right direction.

Though the boat was sailing just fine, we had more than enough wind to experiment with different sail combinations. Kernan says the tall rig was designed to sail better with a reef once the breeze tops 16 knots. The boat sailed well with full genoa and a reef, but it went fine with full main and staysail or a partly rolled genoa. The 52 has a big rig, but it's easily handled. The thinking is that offshore, you're not going to be able to cut down your voyaging time by much when it's windy and the boat's already doing hull speed. Indeed, most 52-footers are going to make time in a breeze. Where you can cut passage times is when the breeze is light and your boat still goes. Owners of the 52 are going to be able to make good speed under sail for a long time before they have to turn on the engine.

Below, the saloon is spacious without being cavernous. Handholds on the table, nav station, and beneath the windows along the starboard side on future 52s will be supplemented with a deckhead hand-rail or two. The large ports let in plenty of light, and ventilation comes from a pair of opening hatches and dorades forward. The nav station is to starboard of the companionway, where a strong-voiced navigator can communicate with the helmsman fairly easily. The desk is large enough for a full-sized chart folded in half, and there's plenty of room for electronics. Panels are

## CRUISING ORIGINS BREED GO-FAST DESIGNS

Outbound 52 designer Tim Kernan grew up in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, far from the Southern California sun that he now enjoys. His family kept a series of cruising boats called *Madrine*, and he fondly remembers the summer cruises and seasonal boat deliveries to and from the Caribbean that he made as a teenager.



Outbound 52 designer Tim Kernan

After graduating from New York University, he studied yacht design at the Landing School in Maine. As part of the curriculum, he spent a two-week internship with well-known designer Bob Perry, whom Kernan credits with teaching him to draw boats. According to Kernan, Perry told him that because he wasn't going to be any use during the two weeks he was there, he should merely "sit in that room and draw boats." Every now and then Perry would walk in,

look at Kernan's painstaking work, give him instruction along the lines of "No, no, no! You've got to have fun with it!" then set him back to his task.

Perry's style of instruction, apparently, was effective because when the students' final projects were displayed at the school, legendary yacht designer Olin Stephens complimented Kernan's work. And Perry must have received some value from his young intern because upon graduation, Kernan went to work for him for five years.

Later, Kernan worked for a couple of years for Morelli & Melvin Design and Engineering, helping to develop high-tech multihulls before hanging out his own shingle.

His first boat was the 50-foot Water Wizard oceangoing powercat; his 68-foot high-performance raceboat, *Peligroso*, has put together a string of wins since her launch in 2005, most recently a first in class and overall in the 2008 San Diego-to-Puerto Vallarta Race. Kernan is widely viewed as a talented, up-and-coming yacht designer, and I wish him the best of luck, especially with his campaign to save the world from ugly boats. To see a short video of the Outbound 52 and commentary by Kernan, visit *CW's* website ([cruisingworld.com/outbound52](http://cruisingworld.com/outbound52)). **A.B.**

passage to the aft cabin. The sink and stove are near the centerline and next to, rather than opposite, each other for convenience. Several doors and hatches—both vertical and horizontal—allow access to the refrigerator and freezer. Plenty of counter space will make it easy to prepare meals for an army of guests.

The aft cabin is sumptuous and has abundant storage. A queen-size island double dominates it; drawers pull out from the forward end, and the whole bunk top opens, like the trunk lid on a car, on gas rams for access to more storage aft without having to unmake the berth. The generous head compartment features a separate shower stall with another high sill.

The best part of the boat for me—aside from enjoying the sailing—was on the starboard side, aft of the nav station: A compact cabin has a single berth with drawers underneath to hold tools; remove the cushion, and you find a stainless-steel-topped workbench. Conveniently enough, the door to the engine room is right across from it. Inside the engine room everything from through-hulls to the generator appeared to be readily accessible. Just inside the well-insulated door I found easy-to-understand manifolds for switching saltwater feeds, freshwater tanks, and fuel tanks; there was also easy access to fuel filters and raw-water strainers.

When the boat heels, the deep sump keeps bilge water in the bilge, where it belongs, not under the bunks. Easy-to-reach through-hulls are identified with plastic tags.

Tim Kernan nicely sums up the philosophy of the Outbound 52: "Aesthetics were a consideration right from the start. For instance, Phil and I spent hours and hours just getting the hard dodger integrated into the overall design.

"Cruisers have a responsibility to sail pretty boats for all those people who come down to the beach to admire them sailing by," he says. "And when you're in some anchorage, heading ashore in the dinghy, if you don't turn around, pause, and admire your boat on the way, then something's wrong." I couldn't agree more. He and Phil Lambert have fulfilled their responsibility to the public and created a boat that people will enjoy looking at and a lucky few will get to sail.

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Reprinted from *CRUISING WORLD* JUNE 2008

on latches to fold down easily for access to the neat wiring. The saloon is very livable, with a settee to starboard opposite an L-shaped dinette that'll seat four—or six, with the addition of a couple of chairs amidships. With lee cloths, the settees will be good sea berths. Large shelves and lockers are outboard on either side, and there's more storage behind the seat backs and under the seats, thanks to the fact that the integral fiberglass 250-gallon fuel and 225-gallon water tanks are beneath the floorboards, where they add to the boat's stability.

Forward of the saloon, to port, is a large head with a separate shower that boasts a high sill so water won't slop over when you're showering at sea. The queen-size berth has access from either side. A hanging locker, drawers, and shelves will provoke guests to bring enough gear with them to almost affect the performance of the boat. Looking at the drawings, I notice an option to move the main bulkhead aft, shrink the head and forward stateroom, and add a smallish cabin with upper and lower berths.

Aft of the saloon, the galley is in the