

Yachting World



MAY 2018

GET PAID TO GO SAILING

6 WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A
LIVING WHILE CRUISING

TESTED

Kraken 66: born for
crossing oceans

NEW YACHTS

12 hot designs
under 40ft

ADVENTURE

Magnificent
Nova Scotia

HOW TO...

GET THE BEST FROM AIS

PREPARE FOR A FRONT

KEEP COOL IN THE TROPICS

'How we helped our kids to love cruising'

TESTED: KRAKEN 66

WHAT WOULD YOU WANT IN AN ULTIMATE OCEAN CRUISING YACHT? HERE'S KRAKEN'S ANSWER

If you don't like the weather in Cape Town, wait ten minutes," is an adage the local skipper of the first Kraken 66 told us as we set sail. Thankfully, we had a good couple of days to test *White Dragon*, sailing around the stunning Cape Peninsula – but he was right about the 'variable' conditions. It would change from intense heat without a breath of wind one minute to an unsettling dense mist and cold Force 5 the next.

We'd chosen the ideal location to do a proper boat test on a bluewater cruiser built by a new brand with the specific requirement to be able to sail

anywhere safely and comfortably. Still, as the first day passed, the conditions felt a little benign compared with the legendary Cape Doctor reputation.

As we awoke off Simon's Town on the second morning, however, the wind was already whistling off the mountains. By the time we'd breakfasted, readied the boat and shipped the anchor, 45-knot gusts were already ripping the tops off any swell trying to make its way into False Bay.

I smiled: we were going to get the very conditions we had come all this way for, to test the boat in the winds she was bred to handle. ➤





FACTS

Test editor **TOBY HODGES**

- ▶ **Where we tested:** Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula
- ▶ **Wind:** 5-50 knots over calm and short, choppy seas
- ▶ **Model:** Kraken Yachts' first boat, a 66 called *White Dragon*



Photos by Trystan Grace of Kraken Yachts



Thankfully, this first Kraken had already done more than enough to instil confidence in its abilities. Kraken yachts have integral keels, full-length, skeg-hung rudders and capacious tanks for long-term cruising. It may take belt and braces to a new level, but, as I was to discover, there is a host of good ideas and a lifetime of experience poured into this yacht that many can learn from.

Whether or not they suit your type of sailing is another matter – but I found myself swept along by the profusion of practical features, the majority born out of hard-earned sailing miles by Kraken's founder Dick Beaumont.

What is Kraken?

Kraken is a Hong Kong-based brand, run by British sailors building yachts in China designed by New Zealander Kevin Dibley. Construction is subcontracted to a yard in Xiamen, which already builds boats for a number of brands including Passport Yachts.

We tested its first boat and model, a Kraken 66 built for Beaumont, who clocked over 100,000 miles aboard his previous 58ft Tayana. "I made a book

entitled 'If I ever have another boat, do this,'" he explained. "That book became three books and, when grandchildren came along, I had the chance and desire to apply those lessons."

When we joined him in Cape Town Beaumont had already sailed *White Dragon* 12,000 miles from China en route to exhibit the boat in Europe.

Local greeting

Motoring out of a breathless and sweltering V&A Marina in central Cape Town, we immediately met the changeable conditions we were warned about. Heading south along the western side of the cape, we were hit by a 15-knot

Relatively low topsides maintain elegant hull lines. To gain interior volume a high coachroof and a camber to the foredeck is used

Kraken founder Dick Beaumont at *White Dragon*'s wheel chatting to YW's Toby Hodges



onshore breeze, which was so much colder and so sudden that we wondered if the dozens of paragliders flying down from Table Mountain would land safely before it hit land.

Yet as soon as our sails were hoisted and trimmed, the breeze would die away or switch to an opposite direction. It was the start of a long day of frustrating conditions involving motoring and sailing spells, but the tour around the coastline of one of the world's great Capes proved a good chance to learn more about the design and features of the Kraken 66.

It's a fairly traditional centre-cockpit design inside and out, which eschews modern design trends in preference for a raked bow and relatively narrow transom. The bow is shaped to prevent it from burying in seas and reduce slamming. Combined with the yacht's loaded displacement, it certainly gave a smooth and steady motion when we ploughed through sharp waves upwind in a gale. The tucked-in stern sections, meanwhile, are to prevent the boat planing in waves.

Keels are a big topic for Kraken yachts. "The answer to the question 'what do I do to stop my keel bolts coming off?' is



'WE PLOUGHED THROUGH SHARP WAVES UPWIND IN A GALE'

'don't have any bolts,' says Beaumont.

Kraken firmly believes that having a rigid structure bolted into a flexible hull is a structural flaw.

The 'Zero keel' is its solution, a bulb-shaped keel that is integral to the hull – bonded securely with the hull and keel laminates, with no bolts needed (zero bolts mean zero chance of separation).

Integrating the keel into the hull mould is an innovative, though expensive, technique. Lead ballast casting is inserted into the lower section of the keel and enclosed within the single-piece hull moulding before the frames and stiffeners are installed.

White Dragon has an integral keel, but still uses bolts. The decision to use only Zero keels for all future Krakens means the company is building a new mould for subsequent 66s.

Following a two-mile excursion off the Cape to watch the Atlantic rollers explode onto the frighteningly exposed Bellows Rock, we unfurled sails again to round the point and venture up the eastern side of the peninsula.

White Dragon has an upgraded sail and rig package, with carbon Southern Spars



mast and in-boom furling system. We made between 6.5 and 7 knots reaching in what I guesstimate to be around 10–12 knots across the deck (the instruments were faulty and did not show true wind).

Power of hydraulics

It should have been just enough of a breeze and an ideal angle to get a feel for the boat, but the Kraken's hydraulic steering denies sailors the feedback that they rely on and relish. It's a peculiar choice for this size of yacht, though cable steering does actually come as standard.

Hydraulic power is used wherever practical aboard *White Dragon* for reliability and to limit any reliance on

Left: a deck locker for diesel fillers with raised caps to help prevent spillage
Right: running rigging (and jib sheets) lead neatly to a bank of high-load jammers aside the cockpit

- 1 The large, curved davits lift the aluminium hulled RIB hydraulically, stowing it inboard at an angle.
- 2 The lazarette locker is full beam width and large enough to house liveaboard gear, dive bottles etc
- 3 The cleats and fairleads are built into the bulwark, which has a curved inside profile perfect for bracing against.
- 4 A bimini will take zip-on surrounds that allow full forward vision and cocoon the cockpit.
- 5 Triple-height guardrails, a high coachroof rail, and a moulded-in toerail help make the deck feel safe.
- 6 A deep sail locker provides valuable stowage. The addition of gas struts would make it easier to lift.
- 7 The stemhead has an anchor roller to starboard and a bowsprit prodder to port that can be swapped for a second anchor fitting.

electric motors. Hydraulic winches and furlers also make it easier for one person to control sail operations remotely from the helm.

The raised single helm station provides good visibility, but it is very central, so it can be tricky to view telltales. The helmsman can reach out from here to trim the three winches for sheets and traveller, however.

When the wind died again, we motored on at 2,200rpm making 7.8 knots. In a 24-hour period using genset and engine, the Kraken 66 consumes about 13lt per hour at this speed, reported Beaumont, down to 10lt per hour at 2,000rpm. With nearly two tonnes of fuel tank capacity, that equates to a significant motoring range.

"In remote places where you may not be able to get good fuel, it makes a big difference if you can run for two or three weeks," he told me.

Brunton's variable-pitch propellers



**'HERE IS A BOAT THAT FILLS
YOU WITH CONFIDENCE'**

Machinery space

Below the saloon to starboard is walkthrough access to two gensets, a dive compressor, DC hydraulic plant, aircon, and a hydraulic watermaker that produces 240lt per hour.



A bank of heavy-duty Racor fuel filters is mounted on the aft bulkhead and below the sole are the three main sea-chests (two for the main engine in case one gets fouled). Every pipe is clearly labelled.

An ultra high-volume pump is mounted 3in higher than the bilge pumps, which only activates – together with a siren – in serious flooding.

There is also access under the central saloon sole forward to a compartment that houses a captive winch for the main halyard. There's an emergency stop button for the hydraulics here, and on the cockpit pedestal.



and Sigmadrive flexible couplings are used for optimum fuel consumption and vibration reduction, together with the latest common rail Yanmar diesels for efficiency and reliability.

Every Kraken also has two main tanks that transfer to a day tank. This running tank cannot be filled directly from the dock – fuel has to go through the Racor fuel polishing system first to prevent dirty fuel getting through to the engine.

"Seventy-five per cent of the failures on my previous boat were fuel related," Beaumont reports (the rest were to do with electric motors).

"So we have ensured you'll never have impure fuel – that's what turns beautiful places into misery."

Gale force sailing

Not many people go sailing in a full gale – not on purpose anyhow. On the morning of our second day aboard, we headed out into a Force 8 rising to a Force 9 to test the Kraken's mettle and behaviour.

We unfurled the main, leaving plenty in the boom, equivalent to around two and a half reefs, and half the genoa. The



apparent wind rose from a steady 35 up to 55 knots during our sail. The boat coped admirably, in its element even, as we fetched at 60-80° to the apparent wind averaging 8.5-9 knots.

Even with this conservative sail area it was enough to induce a fair amount of load on the hydraulic steering and 7-10° of rudder angle.

It didn't feel quite in tune. I was keen to swap to the staysail, to use a fuller foresail with better shape and potential drive – and indeed, when we switched, *White Dragon* instantly felt happier.

We still left three to four rolls on the staysail furler, but were then able to punch higher upwind at around 50°A in a consistent 45-53 knots, without losing any speed.

The Kraken tracked well, with a stable motion. Although the steering connection still felt alien, the load on the wheel helped relay the forces exerted on the boat to the helm.

In all, it was a competent and distinctly reassuring display. Here is a boat that fills you with the confidence to consider sailing in such conditions.

On deck

Heavy-duty winches and Spinlock high-load jammers hint at the displacement and loads of this design – in the loaded condition we experienced, *White Dragon* weighed around 45 tonnes.

The traveller is well positioned within reach of the helmsman, but the raised cheek blocks on each quarter look awkward, combined with a genoa track that is too long. On future models the track will be on the capping rail, which should then improve the genoa lead and block placements.

The cockpit is generous in size with a long table, but has angular benches with low backrests, which aren't particularly comfortable and would benefit from the addition of quality cushions.

Again the emphasis on safety stands out. Huge drains will reportedly empty a flooded cockpit in four seconds.

The liferaft locker is directly abaft the companionway, a position that Beaumont believes makes most sense if mustering in an emergency. And rather than using one hefty 12-person raft, two six-person rafts are stowed in here, to provide a



Top: comfortable U-shaped saloon and a proper pilot station

Above: heated wet gear locker has a chair adjacent to make it easier to get into and out of your foulies

spare and because their smaller size makes them easier to manhandle.

Extra water and fishing gear is stashed beneath the rafts and there is a grab bag locker under the companionway steps. The locker itself can also be removed in case there is ever a need to hoist out the engine.

Practicalities below

Step below and you gain an immediate feel of solidity, which only increases with time spent aboard.





Once more, intelligent features abound that are born out of experience.

To port there is a chair for perching on to remove foul weather gear, beside a heated wet weather locker. It's a format that encourages you to do things in an orderly and seamanlike fashion – to keep your foulies and lifejacket together, away from the cabins, and to dry them ready for your next watch.

Moving forward, a swivelling pilot chair at the forward-facing navstation gives clear visibility over the foredeck and views of the rig through a hatch situated above. The remote engine throttle and autopilot control mounted here make this a viable position to stand watch in inclement weather.

The U-shaped deck saloon has a table that lowers at the push of a button, either right down to form a huge bed or children's den, or partially to act as bracing to a pilot berth.

The real appeal of the Kraken 66's layout for me, though, is in what lies beneath the saloon. The amount of tankage and machinery space is simply astonishing. A door abaft the saloon leads into a corridor of engineering, larger and more comprehensive than aboard any yacht I've seen below 90ft (see panel on page 68).

A huge battery bank of 1,040Ah at 24V meant we could cook silently all evening at a power drain of just four per cent. Up to 9kW can be drawn from the inverters alone – enough to run aircon in the tropics. And *White Dragon* has serious power backups in two generators and a power take off on the main engine.

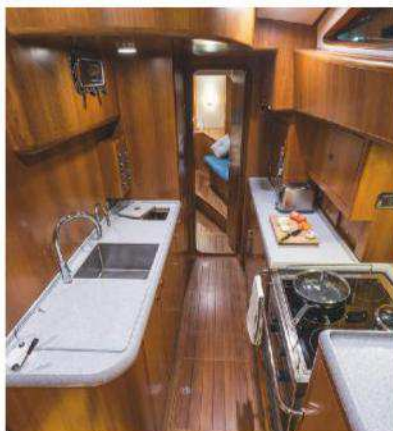
The woodwork is satin-finished golden teak, but white oak or cherry are offered as options. The teak has solid frames



with no square edges and the floor is solid planking. Beaumont explained that Kraken can provide this quality craftsmanship at a comparatively low price because of the labour rates in China.

Personally, I did find the interior styling somewhat plain and unremarkable. *White Dragon* has already sailed 12,000 miles and, in some areas, it showed. The varnish was showing signs of wearing through in places, including in the heads and around hatches, while some interior

Top: aft cabin island berth is square so you can sleep fore and aft or athwartships
Above: the twin bunk cabin furthest forward has an ensuite heads



Left: passageway galley is ideally laid out for use at sea

metalwork showed signs of corrosion. There is room for improvement with finish quality and the insulation could also be better, both for the engine compartment and for the cabins.

Practical galley

The passageway galley is ideally laid out to work at sea, with excellent headroom and capacious, practical stowage. All worksurfaces are fiddled and there are deep drawers for appliances, ventilated areas for vegetables, plus deep double sinks and a scraps bin inboard.

A Quooker hot water tap (think boiling water in an instant with no wasted energy) is useful for a quick brew and makes sense in combination with *White Dragon*'s induction stove. The use of an induction cooker avoids the need to ship gas, is easier to clean and safer.

"We move heaven and earth to talk people out of using gas," says Beaumont. He thinks it pointless and impractical to try to refill gas bottles or find the correct regulator sizes in foreign countries if you have a generator aboard.

A front-opening freezer allows cool air to circulate properly. The fridges can also be set at different temperatures on each shelf, with a stainless steel rack at the back to prevent freezer burn.

Aft cabin

The fittingly large master cabin has generous stowage in large wardrobes and below the berth, and the layout can be tailored to suit. The vast island berth is square so, with the use of the fitted leeboards, it allows you to sleep either fore-and-aft or athwartships.

The downside of the layout is a comparatively compact heads compartment, particularly the shower. Recognising this, Kraken is increasing the beam on the new mould to gain around 8in more room here.

Forward cabins

The layout forward of the saloon comprises two bunk cabins and a compact double, a format that will suit having plenty of friends or family aboard.

Kraken wanted to avoid having a V-berth cabin, to keep the cabins further aft where there is greater beam and a better motion at sea. The heads/shower in the bows services the forward cabin, while the double cabin and port bunk cabin share a heads.

The cabins are plain in style, but have good headroom and stowage space in lit and ventilated lockers. The berths all have lee cloths, reading lights and useful USB sockets.



Our verdict

For those who want a new boat for remote bluewater cruising, a Kraken is appealing. There are few new boats I'd place enough faith in to want to sail in a gale. The question is what sort of weather do you expect to encounter?

There will be those who think the overall design looks dated, perhaps because many of a Kraken's features, including an integral keel and overhanging hull lines, are traditional in concept. Yet they're employed for the very reason that they are tried and tested. At the very least, knowing that your keel cannot be separated from the hull is incredibly reassuring.

Like some Asian and American boats the Kraken arguably lacks the modern touch of European design, particularly down below. Through design, build and company philosophy, however, here is a yacht that places seaworthiness well above wow-factor. Every element has been conceived with sturdiness and safety in mind.

Kraken offers a lot of boat for the money. European-built ocean cruisers typically cost around a third more (the starting price is around €1m less than for a 67ft Oyster or Contest). The Kraken delivers on its robust promise and I've little doubt the experience behind this new company will help it appeal to serious cruising sailors.

DATA KRAKEN 66



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	20.12m	66ft 0in
LWL	18.11m	59ft 5in
Beam (max)	5.50m	18ft 1in
Draught (Zero Keel 66)	2.65m	8ft 8in
Disp (lightship)	37,500kg	82,673lb
Ballast	12,500kg	27,558lb
Sail Area (100% foretriangle)	214.7m ²	2,311ft ²
Berths		8-10
Engine	195hp Yanmar shaftdrive	
Water	1,200lt	264gal
Fuel	1,900lt	418gal
Sail Area/displacement ratio		19.5
Displacement/LWL ratio		176
Price ex VAT	US\$1,895,000 (£1.366m)	

Design

Kevin Dibley

krakenyachts.com

Rivals

Discovery 68

A sturdy, comfortable cruiser by Ron Holland that can be handled by a couple.

Price ex VAT: £1,995,000
discoveryyachtsgroup.com



Amel 64

Full of the yard's practical thinking and features for world cruising.

Price ex VAT: €2,150,000
amel.fr



Bestevaer 53

If you really want to go off-grid, these custom-built aluminium Dykstra designs are bulletproof.

POA. www.kmy.nl

