

All Work & All Play

Designed to remove the clutter from their mother vessels, support vessels are inherently utilitarian. Yet Damen's Power Play is defying the status quo as an extraordinary global explorer in her own right.

Words: Julia Zaltzman



Far from being a yacht owner's opulent extra, support vessels serve a very real purpose these days. The marine equivalent of a Himalayan Sherpa (the unsung heroes of a mountain expedition, capable of hefting vital equipment and making a trekker's dream become reality), support vessels are now deemed the smart way to economically transport surplus toys and vehicles. But Damen's Power Play cranks it up yet another notch. More of a hybrid between a shadow boat and primary yacht, with three large staterooms, a main-deck saloon, and a rear deck for guests, Power Play provides a new level of independence away from the mother ship, not to mention additional guest and crew accommodation. If you're wondering how many extra cabins and jet skis one owner might require to warrant a second yacht, then you're thinking about it wrong.

While a 70-metre yacht with six cabins (accommodating 12 guests) has more than enough room to cater for the needs of those on board, the thrill of owning a superyacht, not to mention the owners themselves, has evolved in recent years. There's a new generation in town who are dancing to a different tune, according to Victor Caminada, brand and communications manager at Dutch shipyard Damen. "The new generation is a much younger generation who often focus less on the 'polish and shine' and more on the functionality and practicality," he says. "They are no-nonsense, and their often pioneering sense of adventure is leading to an evolution in the type of yachts clients are looking for."

Damen is unequivocally leading the yacht support vessel pack. The 55.5-metre Power Play is the sixth hull in the Damen YS 5009 range and has been designed both as a stand-alone vessel and as a support vessel. She accommodates up to six guests split across three generous cabins, and it's this luxury element that reflects the changing market requirements. The complete yachting experience now equates to diving, submersibles, fishing, exploration, underwater discovery and fast toys. Power Play delivers, providing the owners with the flexibility to have a short trip away from the mothership without compromise, or to have access to an operational crew of seven people and four further staff, such as pilots, security guards, or marine conservationists.

Configured for long-distance journeys and wholly seaworthy thanks to Damen's naval expertise, Power Play also has the ability to operate in zero-discharge zones like marine sanctuaries. She defies conventional thinking about luxury yachting and puts the onus on independent exploration and ocean conservation above and below the waterline. Fancy staying on site during dive and explorer trips while the mother yacht remains anchored in a marina? Done. Want to command dive and ROV missions, accommodating experts on board? No problem. Need to host large celebrations with up to 350 guests? Easy. Whether looking to set up beach parties and water toys before the mother yacht arrives or desiring the freedom to enjoy two locations at once, ►



Above: The 240 square metre deck and 12-tonne deck crane offer an incredible number of possibilities for tenders, toys and submersibles. **Below:** There is on board accommodation for up to six guests (split across three cabins), seven crew and four further staff, such as pilots, security guards or local guides.



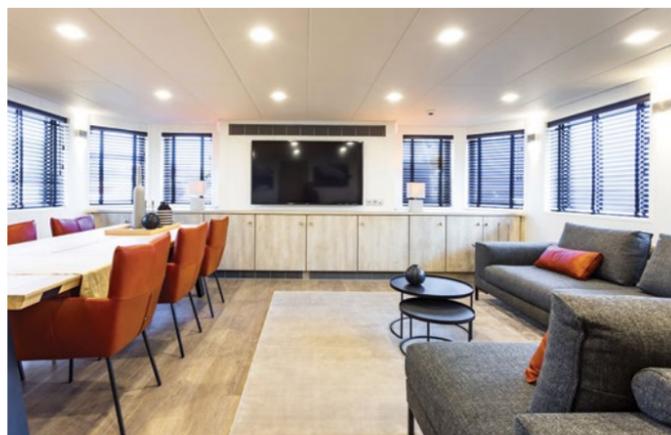
connected by helicopter, Power Play makes it all possible.

"The stand out feature has to be Power Play expansive 240 square-metre deck area," says Caminada, not to mention the 12-tonne deck crane with A-frame fittings for launching large equipment such as tenders, toys and submersibles. "She features lots of storage and luxury service facilities and the whole proven platform comes in at under 500GT," he adds. The support vessel also has the capability for goods to be containerised, "so, effectively, toys and equipment (such as cars and supplies) that can be stored in a container can be placed and carried on deck."

With the thrill of ownership centering around adventure, the types of toys required are diversifying too. The most popular are sea planes, submersibles, sailing dinghies, sport fishing boats, jet skis and dive equipment (such as decompression chambers). Power Play has all of the preparations in place for the installation aft ship of a dive store and decompression chamber, or indeed a superyacht beach club, depending on the owner's requirements.

"Customisation is always possible and often owners have clear ideas on how they wish to use the vessel and what they would like to have on board," explains Caminada. "Whether this is a laboratory, dive centre or something entirely different, the design lends itself to enhancements."

With a proven top speed of 20 knots on the open water, Power Play provides her owner with an unprecedented, complete yachting solution. Built on stock so as to guarantee a fast delivery, the seventh hull in the YS 5009 sold at the start of 2019 and is on schedule to complete this summer. A further two yacht support projects are currently underway at Damen, both of which will be available for delivery in 2020 and promise to continue the yard's support vessel evolution. @



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