

LOA: 45'6"
Beam: 14'11"
Draft: 3'9"
Displ.: 30,000 lb.
Fuel: 350 gal.
Water: 118 gal.
Power: 2/435-hp Volvo
Penta IPS600s
Transmissions: Volvo
Penta IPS with
1.82:1 gear ratio
Propellers: Volvo Penta
T3 propset
Warranty: 5 years hull/deck,
2 years on accessories,
exclusions apply
Base Price: \$903,704



TIARA YACHTS HAS PROVEN TIME AND AGAIN THAT IT
CAN CREATE SOMETHING GROUNDBREAKING.
THE 44 COUPE SHOWS IT CAN KEEP UP THE PACE.
BY JASON Y. WOOD

Second Act

Tiara Yachts, Michigan-based builder of proven sea boats, invited me to its impressive facility on the shores of Lake Michigan to show off its Tiara 44 Coupe. Now I know the Great Lakes can get really rough, Gordon Lightfoot songs aside, so I was curious what I would find out when I took the helm of this stylish new design as a light rain began to fall.

Turns out Tiara Yachts has a bit of a success on its hands, and I was about to see why. With a combination of high tech and high style, the Tiara 44 Coupe seems to be hitting a sweet spot for a company looking to create a category killer to fit in with its sportfishing boats, cruising saloon express models, and open-layout express offerings.

Weather-wise the rough stuff never materialized. Truth is, the 44 Coupe sent us looking for other boats to see if we could find a few wakes bigger than our own, but we didn't have much luck.

I should say "much more luck," since I took the helm and discovered the Tiara 44 Coupe is a fun and responsive cruiser with a pair of 435-horsepower Volvo Penta IPS600s. During our test she did everything we asked and responded well to the wheel and throttles. But cruisers take note: the Garmin Glass Cockpit command system made this boat very interesting to drive, at least for me.

Basically the system allows you to use the joystick at speed—not just for slow maneuvering—and it does that by taking control of the IPS fly-by-wire steering system. Initially I thought that if I owned this boat I would never use the joystick to drive at a faster clip, though it was cool to try it out. But the more I've thought about it since, I realized that this addition is an important step in how we use IPS because it's the natural evolution of the joystick control system. I had it backwards. If we think about this objectively, retaining the wheel is by far the more strange aspect in the grand scheme of the system's capabilities. I'd wager the technology that went into steering the IPS with a wheel was much more complex than adding at-speed control to the joystick. We've gotten to the tipping point where the technology is outstripping our ability to utilize it effectively—the wheel is only there to quell the fears of the 99 percent of boat-

► See detailed photos and a video about the development of the Tiara 44 Coupe @ www.pmymag.com



Andrew Bartlett (above), project manager for the Tiara 44 Coupe, put the galley aft and to starboard in the saloon to make it accessible to the cockpit as well (right). Plenty of glass adds to the inside-outside feel.

ers who would look at a wheel-less helm and say, *Now I have to learn how to drive a boat all over again.*

The fact that most longer cruising runs would be managed through the autopilot makes it even more forward thinking: The Glass Cockpit system has an advanced autopilot system controlled by the joystick with tiny twists while wholesale course changes can be done simply by moving the stick. It's a potent combination that must be experienced—the joystick offers an intuitive way to manage the autopilot as you adjust course, rather than the push-button or dial-up controls of a standard autopilot. And when you switch it off, you continue to use the joystick. Give it a test drive some time—the future is here.

The development team for the Tiara 44 Coupe didn't go to the drawing board with a clean sheet of paper, however. The new launch is one way that Tiara is building on the momentum created by the 50 Coupe with her open main-deck plan with huge windows, Volvo Penta IPS propulsion, and Glass Cockpit helm system. It would be a bit of an understatement to say that something clicked with the launch of the 50 Coupe in 2013.

Tiara focused on a couple of different details that the designers realized were important and found one solution: They put the boat's social areas all on one level, connecting the helm, saloon-galley, and cockpit. "It started with bringing the galley up and aft so it's in a more central location between the aft cockpit and the enclosed saloon—as central a location as we can make it," says Andrew Bartlett, product manager for Tiara Yachts. "And that has other benefits: You're bringing the sociability up a notch, not isolating the person using the galley, making the lower level—we call it 'heads and beds'—below essentially a private level for the owner and VIPs. We made the dayhead accessible right at the bottom of the steps. [The layout] brings the person in the galley up and out to the saloon, to the social area, and it also makes that lower level to be a kind of private or owners-only area. The layout has been well accepted and it's an easy conversation to have with most people who own a boat."

The Tiara 44 Coupe, introduced in the summer of 2014, shares



A gaping sunroof—a trademark of the Coupe line—brings the outdoors inside at the forward area of the saloon. Feel the fresh breeze in your hair!

loads of DNA with her big sister, and that's no accident. Same goes for the 50 Flybridge, a model introduced to the public at the Ft. Lauderdale International Boat Show last year.

"We were encouraged by the reception of the 50 Coupe. The 44 is absolutely an endeavor to cast a wider net and provide the Coupe to more of the marketplace," Bartlett says. "The 50 deserved a product to complement it, we didn't have to adjust the recipe. It's very exciting."

While much about the 44 Coupe shows the company's new direction in model development, her construction follows the company's same proven method: Balsa-cored hullsides are encapsulated in hand-laid fiberglass cured with premium resin. The decks are cored with balsa as well. Don't be surprised if you see this line continue to grow, though Tiara is keeping quiet about plans right now.

As with any IPS-powered boat, the engine room meets the criteria set forth by Volvo Penta for its pod-propulsion system. It's here that stringers, collars, and other structural elements are plainly visible in the stoop-height (as in 37 inches, sole to overhead) space, but there's a good amount of space to get around the engines—even on the outboard sides. In fact, we discovered the design of the engine room is a core part of this next-generation lineup from Tiara (see "Engine Special: Shafts and Shifts," opposite), and shows off the thought process well.

The cockpit sports a molded-in transom lounge with table as well as steps to the side decks and aft to the swim platform. Our test boat had a Nautical Structures hydraulic swim platform with 850-pound capacity suitable for holding a tender—an add-on that could really expand cruising options.

This boat has a lot to recommend it for cruising. A two-stateroom, two-head layout presents a compromise to which boaters these days should be getting accustomed: the sacrifice of headroom above berths. In boats that place big staterooms amidships, this is one of the first decisions made by the designers, and it's a good one. Provided occupants don't make a habit of sitting bolt-upright in bed, the 31-inch height over the twin berths in this guest stateroom won't be a bother. In the places where you will wish to stand, by the door to the stateroom, say, or by the built-in seat to port, the overhead height is 6 feet 2½ inches. This stateroom's head doubles as the dayhead, though the MSD is placed in the shower, beneath a fold-down bench.

The master in the bow has a 6-foot 4½-inch overhead, and a luxurious en suite head with separate shower. A cedar-lined hanging locker and a gigantic locker beneath the berth—a Tiara trademark—round out the stowage.

While the living spaces belowdecks are nicely appointed, they're for sleeping, and those of us who prefer to make the most of time on the water know the main attraction on this boat will be the saloon. A generous L-shaped settee is to starboard and stretches from forward seating with a folding table all the way to an I'd-like-to-sit-in-peace-while-you-drive-the-boat spot at the after end.

The starboard-side galley, placed at the after end of the saloon, is another noteworthy place on the 44 Coupe where fresh thinking trumps old ideas. In its central location between the saloon and cockpit spaces, it is sheltered from the elements in less-than-ideal conditions, but is accessible to all on bluebird days. The cook and clean-up team don't feel consigned to the scullery as they would on a galley-down arrangement. Instead they can



continue to enjoy the party. Refrigerator and freezer drawers, a two-burner cooktop, an easy-to-clean Corian counter, lockers for food and dishes, and under-mount stainless sink mean you have everything you need.

"It's about maximizing the real estate on a boat," Bartlett says. "If you can centralize that galley in the saloon area, then you do not have to repeat the same galley elements in the cockpit, you can give that real estate to two aft-facing seats so that cockpit becomes a very social area. Open that dual, sliding companionway door and you can tie the exterior cockpit and saloon together. So there's benefits upon benefits." An optional electric grill in the transom adds to the flavor.

The engine room, the galley, and the advanced Glass Cockpit helm all show the thinking that will propel Tiara's next-generation Coupe line forward. As Bartlett says, "We developed the 50 and 44 Coupes and we are exploring ways of scaling that up and down—both with flybridges and coupes—we're definitely going to pursue this success." And we look forward to seeing all of these boats perform in more challenging conditions. □

Tiara Yachts, 616-392-7163; www.tiarayachts.com



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE	dB(A)	NOTEWORTHY
600	4.8	.6	2,520	59	OPTIONS: Teak-inlay swim platform with Nautical Structures hydraulic lift (\$57,000); Makefast Marine powered sun awning (\$17,800); Kenyon electric grill at transom (\$2,280)
900	6.4	1.6	1,260	63	
1200	7.4	2.4	971	65	
1500	8.7	5.9	464	68	
1800	9.8	9.1	339	72	
2100	11.0	15.0	231	73	
2400	14.2	19.1	234	76	
2700	18.2	26.0	221	75	
3000	22.9	30.9	233	78	
3300	27.6	37.3	233	78	
3600	31.4	44.0	225	79	

TEST CONDITIONS: Air temperature: 73°F; humidity: 79%; seas: flat; winds: 2-4 knots; load: 350 gal. fuel, 118 gal. water, 7 persons, 250 lb. gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured with Garmin GPS. GPH taken from Volvo Penta display. Range is based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity. Sound levels measured at the helm. 65 dB(A) is the level of normal conversation.

Engine Special: Shafts and Shifts

So many builders over the years have made a point of explaining how the installation of Volvo Penta IPS pod drives allows them to put the engines farther back in the hull, doing away with "wasted space" in the engine room and opening up the lower deck to amidships accommodations. It's called "close-coupled" and the arrangement is nothing to sneeze at, since it does offer those obvious benefits. Many builders have incorporated that engine arrangement into their builds since IPS first came on the scene in 2004, when the first American boat designed specifically for the IPS, the Tiara 43 Sovran, was introduced—also with a close-coupled IPS setup. So Tiara is applying what it learned by incorporating something new ten years later. The Tiara 44 Coupe and her predecessor the 50 Coupe have something a bit different: Both models use jackshafts to place the pods aft while positioning the engines farther forward. "While the close-coupled arrangement can provide interior volume for cabin space it also has an effect on the seakeeping and feel of running the boat," says Andrew Bartlett, product manager for Tiara Yachts. "When we began development work on the Coupe generation we wanted to apply that learning. Part of that was moving the engine farther forward in the craft and using a jackshaft arrangement to connect the engine to the pod. It adjusts the longitudinal center of gravity to provide the Tiara ride characteristics that we always strive for." Ride characteristics and running

trim can be tweaked by shifting the position of a boat's longitudinal center of gravity, or LCG. "From a naval architecture standpoint you want to control your fixed weight—and the engines are a big part of the fixed weight—to optimize the LCG," Bartlett says. "And you want your live weight, which is the water and fuel tanks, in an LCG-neutral position as well, so as the tank empties it doesn't affect the position of the LCG at all. That's the ideal: The boat floats at the same attitude whether you are empty or full."

