

May 12th 2013.
By Lenny Rudow



Aspen 32 C100 Escape Power Cat: Asymmetrical Harmony

Unlike most powercat cruisers, the Aspen C100 Escape has two different hulls—and just one engine.

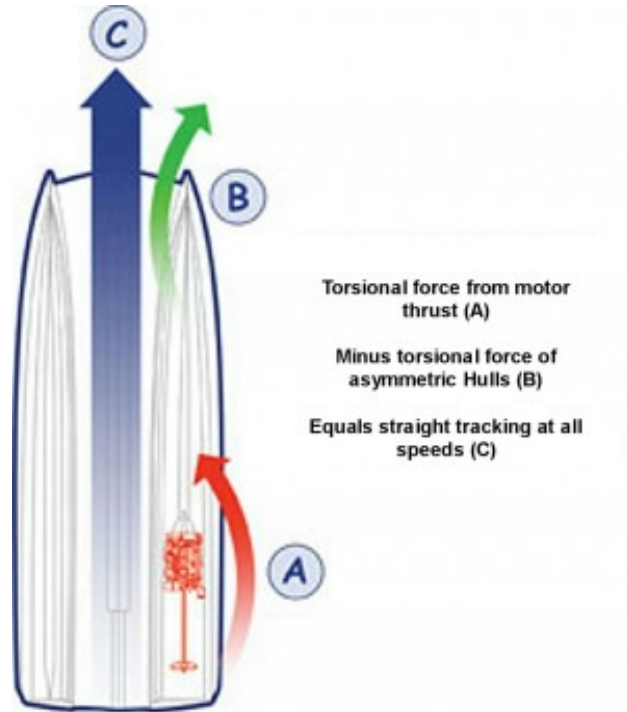
Power cat designer and bona fide boat nut [Larry Graf](#) has had a few ideas that would be best described as crazy. This is the guy who decided to Island-hop from Hawaii to Midway in a pair of 26' Glacier Bays, then ran one of them – the smallest boat ever recorded to make this trip – from Nome to Siberia. He also set a speed record in another 26-footer by racing from the mainland US to Bermuda in 36.5 hours. But when it comes to designing the boats he uses for these experiments in insanity, Graf has a knack for getting things right. After leaving the company he founded, Glacier Bay Catamarans, he started Aspen Power Catamarans. These boats are built upon an entirely different concept, called the proa. A proa has two dissimilar hulls, one of which is traditionally powered by a sail or paddles; the design originated in Micronesia prior to European encounters. But in the case of the Aspen, power comes courtesy of a single diesel inboard. The newest to model hit the water: the C100 Escape.



Though you can't tell by looking at the Aspen C100 Escape from the sides, what lies below the waterline is quite unique.

The C100's hulls are identical in profile, but one is 35-percent wider than the other. As you might suspect, this is the one that houses the powerplant, a 220-hp Volvo-Penta D3 diesel. But the hulls are also asymmetrical, and

are designed to compensate for engine torque. Graf says that since both forces are proportional to speed and thrust, the boat runs straight—and in practice, he’s clearly correct. Running the boat in a straight line doesn’t require any extra feedback at the wheel, and with the single engine the C100 can cruise in the low 20’s and top out at just under 30-mph.



The hulls are designed to counter motor torque, and travel straight forward without any additional corrections.

Those speed numbers aren’t exactly spectacular—at least, not at first glance. But remember that you’re propelling a 32-footer weighing over four tons with a mere 220 horses. Cruising along at 20-mph this translates into about three miles to the gallon. That’s double the fuel economy of many cats in this size range, and triple what you’ll get out of many monohulls of similar size and weight. Which, by the way, all require you to bear the initial cost, operating, and maintenance expenses of twin engines.

Other than performance, living with two different hulls under one deck doesn’t have any significant repercussions. Sure, one side of the cabin is larger than the other. But otherwise, you’ll never notice the difference. Speaking of the cabin: the C100 has a large enclosed helmdeck with a saloon, galley, and the helm station, plus a master with a king sized berth. The dinette converts into a queen, and there’s room to tuck an additional single berth into the smaller hull section. An enclosed head is amidships, to starboard. This is similar to the layout found in Aspen’s C90 Cruiser, but there’s one big change: the cockpit is four feet longer. And this is where the C100 becomes notably more versatile than its smaller sibling. With this much more cockpit space, it can serve equally well as an entertainment platform or a hard-core fishing machine. No, it won’t race you out to the canyons in record time, but for applications where slower cruises are the norm the C100 will shine.



Inside, the C100 is finished with Burmese teak trim, a teak and holly sole, and teak cabinetry.

There is, however, one other down-side to the proa design which has to be considered: slow speed maneuverability. To those of us who are used to shoe-horning a twin-engine inboard into a slip, going to an off-center single screw will be a challenge. Graf has found a way around the issue, by including Side Power bow and stern thrusters as standard equipment on the C100. They make the docking chores a breeze, but naturally they also push up the boat's price tag. And the price tag is substantial, running in the neighborhood of a quarter-mil.

While we're on the subject of standard equipment and pricing, it should also be noted that the C100 comes with just about everything you'll want or need, and then some. Items like a 160-watt solar charging system, stainless-steel Lenco trim tabs with position indicators, a six-gallon water heater, and a 200 watt, six speaker stereo system all make the list. And that list also includes a full trimmed-out interior with touches like a teak and holly sole, Burmese teak cabinetry and trim, and Bentley helm and passenger's seats.

Specifications

Length	32'4"
Beam	10'0"
Max. Draft	3'1"
Deadrise	NA
Weight	8,400 lbs
Fuel capacity (Std./Opt.)	80/120 gal.
Water capacity	50 gal.

Heck, when you buy a C100 you even get a full tank of fuel and a one-day walkthrough/training session with the boat. And while Aspen doesn't state it explicitly, I'm willing to bet you can get that day with Larry Graf himself, if you ask. It would prove to be an excellent learning experience. But whatever you do, don't point the C100 west and ask him why he hasn't visited Kamchatka yet.

Other choices: While the word "unique" is greatly over-used in the boat-building business, in this case, no other description fits. You simply will not find a competing boat anything like the Aspen.

For more information: contact [Aspen Power Catamarans](#).



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Profile

Lenny Rudow is Senior Editor for Dominion Marine Media, including Boats.com and Yachtworld.com. With over two decades of experience in marine journalism, he has contributed to publications including Boating Magazine, Marlin Magazine, Boating World, Saltwater Sportsman, Texas Fish & Game, and many others. Lenny is a graduate of the Westlawn School of Yacht Design who has won 28 BWI and OWAA writing awards.

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This feature was posted on Sunday, May 12th, 2013 at 5:29 am and is filed under [aBoat Review/Test Feature](#), [Boat Review/Test](#), [Cabin Cruisers](#), [Multihull](#), [Power Catamarans](#), [Powerboat](#).

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