

Absolute 45STY

Absolutely perfect. BY CRAIG RITCHIE



GREAT LAKES CRUISING has always represented a challenging proposition for boat builders, due in no small part to the vast and unique environment we live in. You need a boat that's big enough to handle large, open waters, yet compact enough to let you explore those smaller ports and anchorages that are often the best part of any trip. Some days you want an air-conditioned cockpit; other days you have the heat on full blast. The ability to cruise economically is a given, while the ability to quickly cover long distances is always a huge plus. In some respects, cruising the Great Lakes is not much different than cruising portions of the central Mediterranean, which makes it no surprise that one of the most talked-about new yachts on the Great Lakes hails from a builder in Italy.

Founded in 2002 in the beautiful village of Piacenza, Absolute Yachts has rapidly gained a worldwide reputation for crafting



versatile, well-made boats that neatly bridge what would seem to be conflicting design goals — and they manage to do so without compromise. Under the leadership of Italian yacht industry veteran Angelo Gobbi, the young company has already won several major industry awards — including multiple wins in the prestigious World Yachts Trophies — for its sophisticated, eco-friendly construction processes and class-leading, fuel efficient designs. With a fleet comprising no less than 15 different designs from 40 to 72 feet, Absolute has attracted the attention of dedicated boaters all over the world who embrace the builder's high-tech engineering flavored with classic Italian design.

Perhaps no model in the lineup better embodies this seamless integration of form and function like the 45STY, which Absolute affectionately calls its "small megayacht."

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A small megayacht

Launched in 2014, the 45STY, or 45 Sport Yacht, is a megayacht in a Great Lakes-sized package. As a day boat, the 45STY easily accommodates a dozen guests in luxurious comfort and can sleep six on extended cruises. Powered by twin Volvo Penta IPS 600s, it can run at 35 knots when it needs to, or cruise comfortably at 20 knots. It all comes down to the way Absolute focuses on fine details, which is apparent even as you approach the 45STY dockside.

"The Absolute 45STY offers incredible volume and performance," says Amy Krueger Malow, president of Jefferson Beach Yacht Sales (jbs.com, 866-490-5297). "Great for overnighting, and a blast for entertaining and family fun, this 45 is easy to operate and has many unique features not typically found in this class of vessel."

Stepping aboard the large, hydraulic rear swim platform immediately affirms Absolute's notion that the 45STY is indeed a small megayacht. A large, watertight door to port of the transom opens to reveal access to the crew accommodation — a spacious, bright and attractive suite with its own private head. If you're self-crewing like most Great Lakes cruisers, you shouldn't be surprised if the younger members of your group start calling dibs on this private space. With its close proximity to the swim platform, the crew quarters is the perfect place to change out of wet swimwear. It provides a convenient head right at the back of the boat, making this a tremendously popular feature.

A series of wide steps lead up from the swim platform to the roomy rear cockpit, where a neatly engineered stern seat can slide ahead to further expand the already sizeable rear sunpad. Facing the stern seat on the starboard side is

a large integral wet bar, complete with a sink, a BBQ grill and a refrigerator or icemaker below. The positioning of the grill and wet bar lets hosts serve guests seated outdoors in the cockpit and inside in the salon equally well. Underfoot lies a teak floor. An overhead, retractable electric sunshade provides relief from the mid-day heat, so you can sit outside and enjoy the view without risking sunburn.

On either side of the cockpit, steps lead to wide, non-skid side decks, which provide access to the bow where an oversized, forward-facing sunpad awaits. There's no better spot to lay back and take in the view.

Back in the cockpit, twin glass doors slide to each side as you enter into the salon. Fully open, they let in fresh air and create a wide-open, continuous living space that spans the indoors and out. To truly appreciate the effect, push a button and open the Absolute 45STY's enormous full-width electric sunroof.

When kitchen duty calls

A large and fully-equipped galley positioned on the starboard side of the salon takes full advantage of the 45STY's open plan. Enormous windows offer incredible views when kitchen duty calls; there's no stepping below to cook, and you'll never miss a sunset on this boat. Its proximity to the cockpit grill and wet bar really makes the most of both amenities and naturally enhances the boat's entertaining capabilities. Canaletto walnut cabinetry, marble-nuanced Corian countertops and electric residential appliances are luxurious touches.

Forward of the galley to starboard is a large dinette with a wraparound U-shaped sofa and a gorgeous Canaletto walnut extension table. Bathed in light, it offers the best dining views

on the boat, complete with side windows that can be lowered for even more ventilation if desired. A neatly concealed hutch compartment just forward of the dinette provides convenient and secure storage for plates and stemware.

After dinner, simply fold up the side leaves on the table and this space becomes the best place to enjoy the massive flat-screen television concealed in the portside wall — simply push a button to raise it from its base behind the day sofa that spans the salon's port side.

Cruise in comfort

Reflecting its Italian heritage, the helm console on the 45STY is located to port of the salon. The attractive console is neatly designed and intuitively laid out, with most information presented on an optional 15-inch Raymarine HybridTouch multi-function display positioned in the center of the carbon fiber dash panel. Volvo Penta round gauges in a classic white-on-black pattern — complete with chrome accent bezels — display engine rpms, hour meter, oil pressure and fuel level. Volvo digital throttle controls to the left of the leather-wrapped tilt steering wheel offset joystick-docking controls to the right, preserving the helm's clean appearance and balanced design. Combined with the delightfully upholstered leather driver's seat with armrests and a reclining backrest, it's safe to say the driver is thoroughly spoiled on the Absolute 45STY.

The stylish and efficient helm only hints at what awaits below decks, however; this is where Absolute's Italian roots truly come to the fore. As you walk past the helm and step below, a large day head to port is sure to impress not only with its upscale design and finishes, but with its sheer size.

The day head provides ensuite access to the forward VIP cabin with queen bed, which is so bright and lushly appointed that it could be confused for the master suite. Three enormous privacy glass windows and an opening porthole along each sidewall provide incredible views when you wake each morning, allowing natural light and fresh air to flood right in. Why squint through the overhead hatch when you can enjoy the big-screen view?

Any questions about the master cabin location are quickly answered when you take a few steps aft and into the largest full-width suite in its class. Equally bright and airy with its own three large windows and opening porthole along each

sidewall, the owner's suite is more spacious — and certainly quieter — than some big city apartments. A full-length leather sofa to port provides the perfect place for lounging with a great view out those oversized privacy windows. A private and spacious ensuite head and large walk-in wardrobe quite literally provide all the comforts of home. Tasteful appointments throughout — including Canaletto walnut cabinetry, plush carpeting and varnished bedside tables with brown leather inserts — underscore Absolute's talent for blending form and function.

Capable performance

The Italian contention that beauty is nothing without performance is clearly evident when one takes the helm and leads the Absolute 45STY to open water. With its joystick-docking control, easing in and out of even the tightest slips becomes child's play; you're encouraged to clear the harbor and see what this boat can do.

With its twin Volvo Penta IPS 600 diesels generating 870 hp and mountains of torque, the 45STY starts to feel more like a sport boat as you ease the throttles forward. True to its European sophistication, the boat simply glides ahead with throttle input, and pushes the speedometer up over 20 knots so quickly and effortlessly that you can't help but do a double take when you see the numbers climbing on the screen. Slide the throttles all the way forward and that number turns to 35 knots, which is plenty fast for a yacht this size. Slide the throttles back to a more leisurely 25 to 27 knots. Those big Volvos work with the yacht's sophisticated hull design to deliver excellent fuel economy while burning just 1.14 gallons per mile, giving the 45STY a range of more than 300 nautical miles between fuel docks.

Even with the sunroof and salon doors wide open, and the side windows down, subtle air-deflecting design elements ensure it's still easy to maintain a conversation at reasonably normal volumes. If you don't think that's impressive, go try it in your car.

Absolute's little megayacht never ceases to find new ways to surprise and impress. With its capable performance, luxurious appointments, thoughtful amenities and sophisticated Italian style, the 45STY stands out, whether you cruise the Adriatic coast or the Great Lakes. One might be tempted to say it's Absolutely perfect. ★

Absolute 45STY SPECS

Specifications

- LOA: 46'5"
- Beam: 13'5"
- Fuel Capacity: 343 gals.
- Water Capacity: 92 gals.
- Power: T-Volvo Penta D6 IPS600
- Base Price: Contact dealer

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