



Balancing

Tiara's new 4300 Open is a dual-use model ideal for the family that loves to cruise and fish together.

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Act





Leon Slikkers had one of his “aha!” moments when he realized a boat lover shouldn’t have to choose between a cruising machine and a fishing platform. The founder of Tiara Yachts realized he could make a model that would incorporate the assets of both, and soon after, the company’s Open Series was born. Over the years, Tiara continued to refine the boat line that made “dual-purpose” its mantra, and that expertise now culminates in the 4300, the new flagship of the series.

“The Opens reflect the taste of Leon Slikkers, and, as you can see, he has a good eye,” says Dave Walsh, Tiara’s director of marketing, who is sitting on the cockpit gunwale of the 4300 prototype berthed in Stuart, Florida, on a damp spring morning. The overcast sky looks nickel-plated and creates a moody backdrop for the boat’s strong lines. Most impressive are the straight sheer, the squared transom, the swept-back windshield and the hull sides swept clean of any features (including portholes) that could take away from the appearance of those offshore-ready curves. The boat certainly looks the part of a premium sport-fish, and that will suit owners just fine. Walsh says about 25 percent of those who have an Open fish seriously, while the other 75 percent consider that sport more of a hobby and remain committed to cruising. Even so, the thing that consistently lures cruisers is style. “Many people just love the looks of a boat equipped to fish, even if they don’t fish themselves,” says Walsh. “We’ve even installed towers for some of these owners.”

Aesthetics aside, there is much more here to keep a cruising family happy. “We like to say the 4300 sleeps six and entertains 18,” says Walsh, who looks around the lower cockpit, which is no slouch at 98 square feet. Couple that space with the additional 95 square feet at the raised bridge and you have a design for those who spend most of their time on board in the outdoors, where they can feel the wind, sun and spray, whether they’re dragging lines with a few good friends in the morning or running the family over to a pretty beach for an afternoon picnic. One of the best places to take it all in from



WARMING TREND. Teak covers the galley (top left) to starboard and the dinette (top right) beside it; the master stateroom (above).

is the mezzanine seat, which is even more comfortable than it looks. Plus, there are plumbed and gelcoated stowage spaces under it and in the footrest, where lines and fenders fit nicely. There’s more stowage behind the seat’s backrest, although the builder offers you the option of installing a refrigerator or freezer here.

The options list for the 4300 tells an interesting story. The variety of features and equipment on it emphasize the fact that an owner can design his boat to suit his lifestyle. If a dedicated cruiser is desired, you can forgo the 50-gallon recirculating baitwell in the transom and install a fold-down lounge for the passengers you’ll entertain.

Or, you could order the L-shape lounge that wraps around the port corner of the cockpit and then add a teak table if your idea of cruising includes meals under the stars in addition to those shared around a dinette in a warm cabin. The addition of this feature would mean you couldn't take advantage of the aluminum backing plate laminated in the cockpit sole, the one that makes it possible to mount a fighting chair. But that's probably just as well, since it's just one of the features on the options list designed to encourage excited discussions among those owners who will spend the bulk of their time trolling.

As thorough as the equipment list is, it doesn't quite represent all you can do with the new 4300. Tiara is a production builder, but it can work with owners on some special requests. For instance, Walsh tells me one customer wants to add a Kenyon grill to the cockpit wet bar — which, incidentally, is a well-done unit with a big sink, drawer stowage and recessed trash receptacles. The builder can accommodate that, just as it can provide tuna tubes for the transom livewell (it's sized to fit them).

One of the must-have options is a hardtop, although even here, Tiara offers the luxury of choice. There's a "cruising" version — which comes with side enclosures, LED spreader lights and a skylight with an opening hatch — as well as a "tournament" top that has no skylight but does include rocket launchers and rod holders. Both are beautifully molded structures with beefy supports that provide shade and protection from rain/spray. Most interesting, though, is the way Tiara seamlessly joins the hardtop to the composite windshield. Because the builder engineered air inlet ports above the frame of the shield, it eliminated the need for a vent in the center of the tempered glass. Thus, there is just a single mullion there, and that makes overall visibility from the helm one of the 4300's strongest points. Visibility is exceptional for passengers too because Tiara set the adjacent L-shape settee up high. I also like the clever way the front section of this lounge can be turned from its



BLUE-WATER BOUND. Cummins diesels power a rugged offshore hull.



INSIDE: ① Many details are incorporated to assure the safety of the crew, including the heavy, diamond-type, molded nonskid on walking surfaces forward. ② A pocket door between the master stateroom and companionway saves space. This room also has private access to the head. ③ An adjustable Stidd seat at the helm faces a roomy dash that's sized for large electronic displays. Beside the seat is a crawl hatch to the engine room. ④ The boat is available with an optional swim platform, which should be popular with the cruising crowd.

TIARA 43

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA (w/standard pulpit): 45'11"

Beam: 15'4"

Draft: 4'2"

Disp.: 30,000 lbs.

Transom Deadrise: 17.5 degrees

Fuel: 600 gals.

Water: 130 gals.

Contact: Tiara Yachts, tiarayachts.com

Base Price (w/test power): \$907,990

PERFORMANCE

TEST POWER: (2) 715 hp Cummins QSM11 diesels turning four-blade 29- by 39-inch Nibral Michigan Wheel props. Speeds measured by GPS on the Intracoastal Waterway off Stuart, Florida, in calm conditions with full fuel, full water and three people on board. Sound levels measured at the helm in dB-A.

RPM	MPH	GPH	DB-A
600	8.3	3.0	74
900	10.1	7.2	76
1,200	11.5	17.6	83
1,500	20.5	25.0	83
1,800	28.5	34.2	84
2,100	34.4	48.4	85
2,400	39.6	63.4	88
2,520	41.5	70.4	89

PROS:

- Visibility from the helm is one of this boat's strong points.
- Sophisticated use of various insulating materials keeps sound levels down.
- A high level of quality is evident in both the look and feel of the 4300.
- The balance of cockpit and cabin space is just right for active families.

CONS:

- The standard Destroyer wheel may not be the first choice for the angling crowd.
- A hinge for the transom door on the cockpit gunwale could snag a fishing line.



DRIVER'S EDGE. The air inlet port built into the hardtop keeps the helmman cool (below). At cruise speed (above), the running angle is sweet.

starboard-facing position to face forward, which is the direction most of us want to look when a boat is under way.

It's often said Tiara models are a product of evolution rather than revolution, and that's a compliment for this builder based in Holland, Michigan. Not a company to chase design trends, Tiara has followed a steady course, which is why yachtsmen gravitate to the brand, with its reputation for sophisticated engineering and quality. The 4300 is one more good example of that philosophy. It replaces the 4200 Open, and although its lines, features and mission are much like its predecessor's, the 4300 has been updated and improved. It has more LOA, for instance, and it picked up more inches with the straight transom, a departure from the curved design on the 4200. "That extra space was given over to the cockpit," says Rick Eggerding, Tiara's vice president of new product development, who is also on board for the sea trial.

Eggerding presses a switch under the gunwale to demonstrate the impressive access to the straight-shaft diesel engines under the cockpit. The entire bridge lifts slowly. (To protect the helm chair and settee from damage, sensors are under the seats to ensure they're properly positioned before the hatch goes up.) The gelcoated engine room looks both impeccable and serviceable. Even though the builder pushes engines outboard for better





VERSATILE. When it's time to pick up anchor and get under way, you can adjust the forward section of the L-shape lounge to face the bow.

thrust, you can still move around the two 715 hp Cummins. Service access is not limited to centerline, although it's very convenient from there.

"We've done a lot of work to keep sound in the engine room," says Eggerding, pointing to the insulating foam along the walls, the Centek mufflers and the sound shield for the Cummins genset. Tiara also employs a new core material in the stringers that makes them stiffer and prevents structure noise from resonating throughout the boat. "As any serious cruiser knows, sound can really wear you out," he says. "But I've been running this boat consistently for the past three days, and I'm not tired."

Soon after, we are under way on the ICW at a cruising speed of 31 mph (2,000 rpm), where we record a sound level of 84 dB-A. During company sea trials, the 4300 ran even quieter at that pace (81 decibels) because the boat didn't have a hardtop yet. It's pleasant on the ears, yes, yet the 4300 is also a pleasure to drive. The Cummins diesels yield a 409-mile range at cruise and power the boat's



For more photos of the Tiara 4300, go to motorboating.com.

modified deep-V hull to a top speed of 41.5 mph. Most impressive is the running attitude, even as the big cruiser gets up onto plane. Sightlines are no problem

for the helmsman. As for handling, steering and maneuverability are nothing short of confidence-building.

Back at the dock, we tour the cabin. Says Walsh, "When people step into this space, I like to think they'll get a sense of what this boat is about." If by that he means traditional, understated and a study in elegant minimalism, then we will all get the point. The woodwork is exquisite, for starters. Solid teak cabinets and bulkheads complement a teak-and-holly sole that is classic and gorgeous. The warm woods are set against cream-colored Ultraleather on the U-shape dinette. Its table drops down to create a roomy berth for one and the backrest converts to a Pullman bunk. Other overnight accommodations include the guest cabin with bunks to port and the private master stateroom forward.

In this cabin, I'm reminded of a Tiara owners' rendezvous I attended in Charlevoix, Michigan. There, I met a few couples who slept on board most summer weekends, even though their houses were a few miles from the boat. Tiara knows how to build a comfortable, livable interior; that's evident on the 4300, with its pleasing decor, workable U-shape galley (it has two Subzero fridge/freezer units) and good-size head. Then there's stowage: Tiara utilizes every inch of space, probably because its customers — serious boaters — spend so much time on board. For natural light in the cabin, there are three hatches in the foredeck and you can add ports if you want them.

Tiara's new 4300 represents the best of the Open Series. It has the versatility Slikkers dreamed of, the performance offshore cruisers covet and the painstaking engineering and craftsmanship that makes a Tiara, well, a Tiara. ♦



CLEAN MACHINE. Cummins diesels in the immaculate engine room.