

Oyster 495

DELIVERANCE

When offered the chance to help deliver hull #1 of Oyster's new 495 from Southampton to Barcelona, it was an offer **Charlotte Thomas** couldn't refuse. After all, what better way to get under the skin of Oyster's newest addition than a non-stop, 1,750-mile sea trial?



It is often quipped that with sailing yachts, it's as much about the journey as the destination. And so it was for me when, in July 2022, I stepped aboard the first Oyster 495 in Southampton, UK, to help the Oyster team deliver her across the Bay of Biscay, down the Portuguese coast, through the Straits of Gibraltar, and around the coasts of Spain to Barcelona.

There's resonance here too because the 495 represents a journey for Oyster themselves – she is the first model conceived, designed and developed entirely under Richard Hadida's ownership. She therefore stands not only as the new entry-level Oyster, but also as the embodiment of the new team's push to further define Oyster DNA with new technologies and philosophies for shorthanded fast cruising and quality construction.

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“Designing the 495 was a real challenge,” offers Paul Adamson, Oyster's CCO, “because she is a distillation of everything we've learned on all the different models, and it's more of a challenge to set all the systems in on a smaller yacht.” As Adamson explains, layout design and systems integration make the 495 feel like a larger yacht yet handle like a smaller one.

“The U-shaped galley to port is fantastic because it opens up the main saloon,” he enthuses. “We've extended the deck saloon windows so there's even more natural light. The galley design also means you get a lovely private walkthrough into the aft full-width master cabin, which has triple seascape windows either side. There's amazing engine room access with big double doors, and all the engineering is effectively within that space.”

It's the aft master cabin that I'm shown to for our delivery, and I'm immediately struck by the roominess. Just inside the door, there's a double robe/storage locker. The bed looks large and inviting, and the signature seascape



windows offer glorious views across the water. There's a built-in sofa to port, shelf and storage to starboard, under-berth drawers, and an ensuite shower and head to port. There's a large flatscreen on the forward bulkhead, and the bed offers various lee cloth options – essential for any sort of offshore cruising.

The standard configuration is geared toward couples or families, with the master complemented by a generous forward VIP and a third twin bunk cabin forward to starboard, with a shower and head serving both forward cabins. Amidships is the open-plan saloon, galley and nav area – the main wraparound lounge is to starboard, with a large table that optionally can be specced to convert the area into a daybed; a bench settee to port, whose backrest holds a pop-up television; the galley aft to port; and the chart table aft to starboard.

There's a real sense of light and space with generous deckhead heights, those wraparound deck saloon windows (the forward ones open for ventilation at anchor), and another triple claw of seascape windows in the hull. Pipework and valves are easily accessible under the cockpit sole, and the centralised system design means that all other serviceable parts are easily accessed in the engine bay.



Top and above: The saloon with nav area to starboard and galley to port makes the area the perfect central hub both at sea and when you reach your final destination. The forward deckhouse windows open for

ventilation and the saloon table can be specced to convert the lounge to a day bed. The nav area features C-Zone and Oyster digital switching for easy operations.

The 495 also features Oyster's digital switching and C-Zone integration, and smart lighting allows for different interior moods and night modes at the touch of a button.

There have been other clever tweaks too – the greywater tank has been set in the space at the back of the keel stub, with auto discharge at sea. “It means that whenever you're in the cabins, you don't have any of the gulper pump sounds,” says Adamson. “It makes the boat really quiet.”

The galley offers quality equipment including fridge, drawer dishwasher, oven, gas hob and combi microwave on hull #1, with a secondary freezer unit behind the nav area. The U-shaped design makes it perfect at sea with everything to hand and good brace points, while the fridge, freezer and dry storage kept four of us happily fed with fresh produce and home-cooked meals, many deliciously prepared by Oyster skipper Philip Howard-Smith, for the whole 10-day delivery.

Up on deck, there's a large, secure-feeling cockpit forward of the twin helms, and a cockpit table with leaves that fold up to create an alfresco dining top you could land a small plane on. There's space aft of the helms that proved perfect for a lounge in the sun

on passage, while the transom features an automated cassette swim platform that also makes getting into and out of the tender easy. The lazarette ate everything we could throw at it; there's also a large sail locker forward, a separate gas locker aft that could serve as a stow space for tender fuel if you went gasless, and additional stowage in the helm seats.

Everything about the 495 has been made for easy shorthanded sailing, and this extends to optional retractable bow and stern thrusters as well as single-button in-mast furling. The Rob Humphreys-designed hull has been drawn to offer decent performance from very light airs to very heavy without compromising on the feeling of safety.

“We defined the Oyster DNA with the 495 and made sure it has that DNA running through every inch of it,” says Adamson. “So she has a keel-stepped mast and solid construction [which is DNV-GL certified],

AT A GLANCE

16.1 m
Overall length

4.77 m
Beam

21.0 t
Displacement (lightship)

117.5 m²
Upwind sail area (in-mast furling)



and she offers space, quality and craftsmanship alongside practical seagoing features.”

After 1,750 miles, several of those aspects shone through. As we left the UK and headed into the English Channel, we pulled the main out – the system intelligently controls the furler and the outhaul automatically, making

Above: The no-through-road galley design makes it perfect for cooking at sea, with great brace points and easy access to hob, fridge and sinks.

The quality of finish is high, as is the spec of the galley equipment, and a second fridge/freezer can be specced behind the nav area.



PHOTOGRAPHY: WATERLINE

Tacking into the teeth of a howling Levante wind gave us a chance to experience her traits in a vicious, sharp seaway. Wet and uncomfortable a slog it was, but badly behaved she was not.

it a one-handed operation – and unfurled the 105% non-overlapping jib and cracked on into the sunset. By morning, we had rigged the furling Code Zero and set into another glorious day of sailing.

She is a delight on the helm, with enough feedback to let you know what she's feeling. Twin rudders give solid control, even in a following sea, and in lighter airs she was still

Top: The excellent deck layout offers a comfortable, safe cockpit and twin helms.

Above right: The aft master suite feels huge and triple seascape windows either side offer spectacular views from the large bed.



quick and responsive – 8 to 9 knots on white sails and topping 10 knots with the Code up in a dying breeze. Digital switching gives easy control of things like nav lights from the helm, while her suite of B&G instruments and MFDs with integrated radar and AIS tracking were a real boon when we were enveloped in dense fog off Cape Finisterre at the bottom of Biscay – not the most glamorous landfall after a glorious, dolphin-strewn, three-day romp offshore.

Tacking into the teeth of a howling Levante wind off Cadiz and through the Straits of Gibraltar gave us a chance to experience her traits in a vicious, sharp seaway. Wet and uncomfortable a slog it was, but badly behaved she was not.

More importantly, the quality of her construction was evident in a complete lack of squeaks and creaks below despite the hammering. Impressive stuff.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER LIVERSIDGE



PHOTOGRAPHY: BRIAN CARLIN

Left: The 495 is superb under sail, with assured upwind performance and an easy drive downwind – perfect for long-distance shorthanded ocean sailing. The new control system also makes sail-handling easy.

There were one or two tweaks we suggested from what is essentially the 495 prototype (like having the plug holes in the galley sinks on opposite sides so there's always one sink that will fully drain upwind), but my overall impression was that the Oyster 495 is a superb new addition to the range. She's a joy to sail and a dream to live on, the embodiment of Oyster founder Richard Matthews' quip that cruising fast is more fun than cruising slow.

The early sales success of the 495 – several hulls are headed for Australia – is proof that Oyster's journey has found its destination. "She's a special boat," Adamson concludes, and I'd have to agree. In fact, if there are any 495 owners who need a hand with delivery, I'm up for the journey – destination irrelevant. [O oysteryachts.com](http://oysteryachts.com)

SPECIFICATIONS ➔

Oyster 495



1

DECK

Great layout for short-handed or family sailing with safe and comfortable cockpit, huge alfresco dining cockpit table, and secure twin helms with sail controls to hand.

2

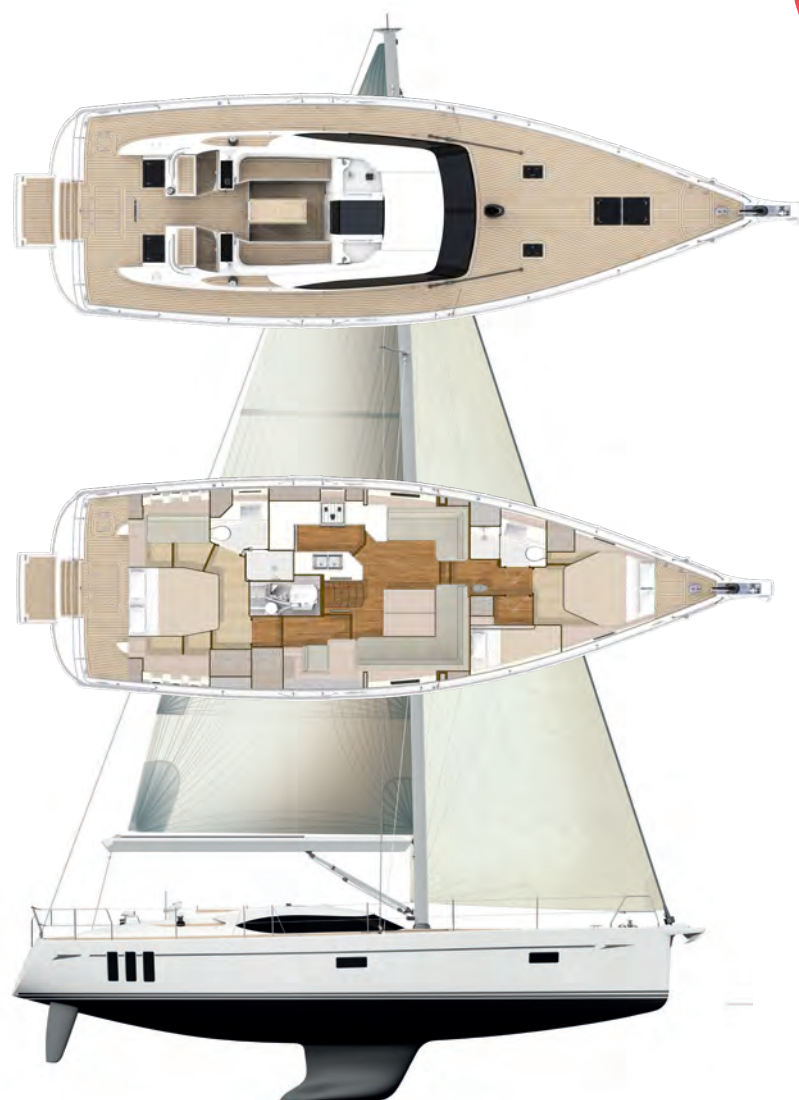
ACCOMMODATION

Superyacht ethos in small-boat shell; huge aft master; great VIP forward; large saloon with fantastic U-shaped galley that isn't a corridor. Light aplenty.

3

SAIL PLAN

Standard rig with one-touch in-mast furling likely to be popular; carbon rig with fully battened main an option. Hull well geared for fast ocean sailing.



SPECIFICATIONS

Builder	Oyster Yachts	Furling (main)	Selden in-mast electric
Model	Oyster 495	Engine	Yanmar 4JH
Country of build	UK	Output	110 hp
Designer	Oyster/Humphreys Yacht Design	Propeller	Fixed 3-blade
Naval architect	Oyster/Humphreys Yacht Design	Drive type	Saildrive
Interior designer	Oyster/Humphreys Yacht Design	Fuel capacity	800 litres
Year of build	2022	Generator	8 kW
LOA (length overall)	16.1 metres	Bilge pump	Jabsco
Hull length	15.15 metres	Freshwater capacity	600 litres
Beam	4.77 metres	Watermaker	Optional 110 litres/hour
Draft (standard keel)	2.28 metres	Blackwater capacity	80 litres
Draft (optional shoal keel)	1.83 metres	Air draft	22.77 metres
Displacement (lightship)	21.0 tonnes	Anchor	Delta 32 kg
Overall sail area (in-mast furling) – 105% headsail	117.46 m ²	Bow and stern thrusters	Optional retractable
Overall sail area (fully battened main) – 105% headsail	126.43 m ²	Winches	Lewmar
Classification	RCD Cat A Ocean; DNV-GL (hull and deck)	Navigation electronics	B&G Triton
Hull construction	GRP, vacuum-infused	Owner	1 x full-beam aft master double with ensuite
Deck	GRP with closed-cell foam/plywood core	Guest berths	1 x forward VIP double; 1 x twin bunk cabin
Keel	Lead keel with 6,645 kilogram ballast	Maximum people on board	8
Mast	Aluminium (carbon optional)	Standard warranties	Two years
Sails	Dolphin Sails	Price	AU\$2.48 million

126.43 m²

 Upwind sail area
(fully battened
mainsail)

8.5 knots

Cruise speed (engine)

800 litres

Fuel capacity

2.28 metres

Draft (standard keel)

21 tonnes

Displacement

AU\$2.48 m

Price