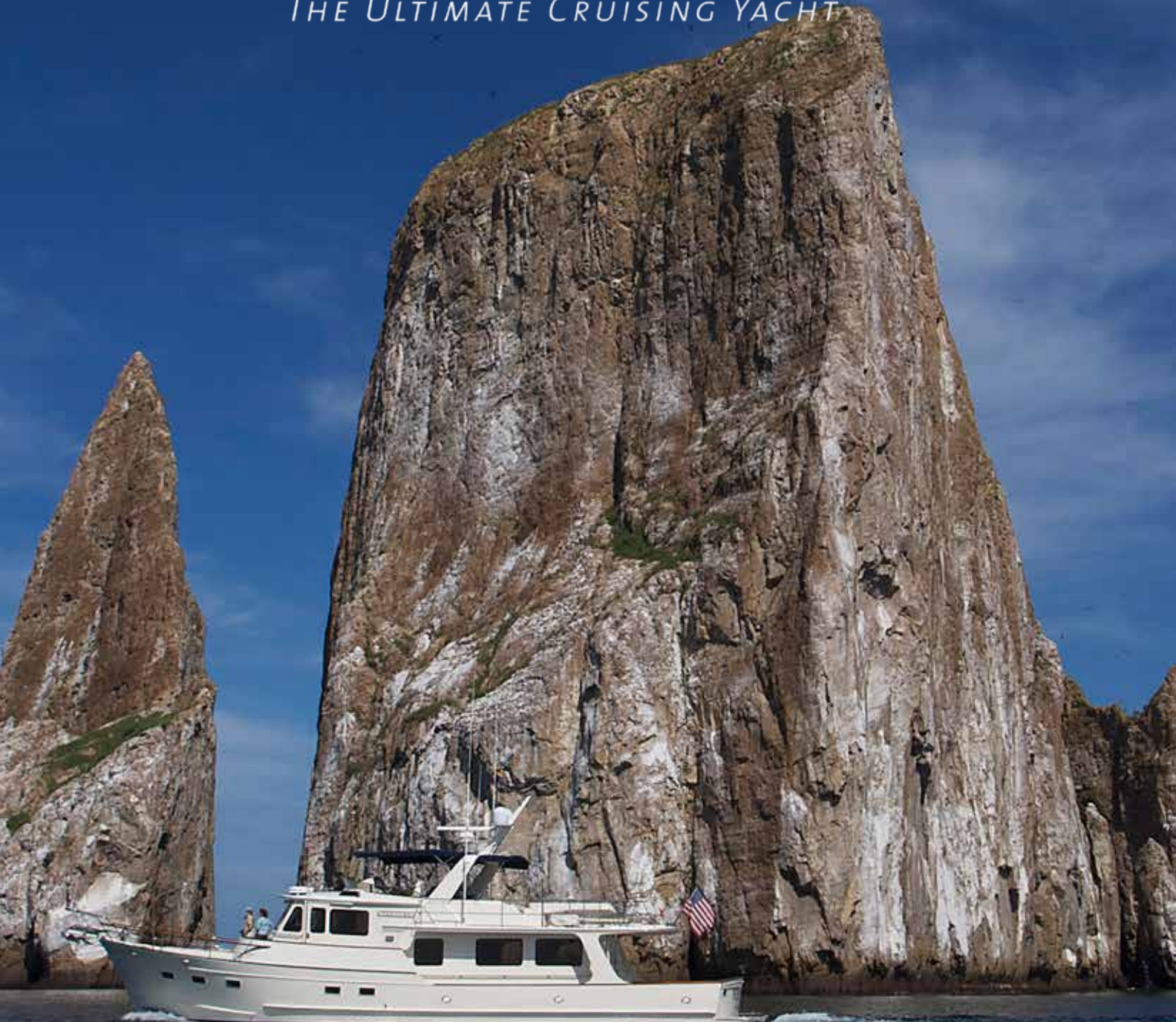




FLEMING

THE ULTIMATE CRUISING YACHT



AN INTERVIEW WITH TONY FLEMING

Now that more than a quarter of a century has passed since the introduction of the first Fleming in November 1986, I wonder if there is anything you could tell us about Fleming Yachts today, as the company approaches its 30th anniversary?

I find it hard to believe that so much time has passed since I watched that first boat come off the freighter in Long Beach harbor. It is a source of great satisfaction that the fundamental design has stood the test of time. Although the outward look of the boats appears to be little altered, literally hundreds of changes have been made to the systems and details. Continuing until today we have maintained a policy of constant refinement. Some have been fueled by new technology, others by our own experience, and many stem from suggestions from our customers and dealers.

This continual evolution results in a yacht which is always current, always the latest model. We continue to stick to our policy of quality not quantity, we don't wish to build more than twenty yachts a year, but we definitely do want to build the finest yachts. This hand built, limited production philosophy also helps maintain the resale value of previously cruised Flemings.



Ultra Anchors

“...destined to long term success on the world cruising stage.” Pacific Power Boat, July 2014

Could you give us examples of some of these refinements?

With so many, this is a hard question to answer. We have more sophisticated electrical systems using AGM batteries, high output alternators, and inverters on the DC side, and isolation transformers with automatic voltage boosting on the AC side. The latest Fleming's have a custom central monitoring system, with color touchscreens and iPad remote control. A significant upgrade made many years ago was the change to fiberglass fuel tanks using a design and materials which have been subjected to the fire test required by CE & ABYC regulations. We have upgraded engine controls, steering systems, shaft systems and laminating procedures. Items such as LED lighting, Stidd

helm seat, stainless steel Ultra anchor, bow thruster, and stabilizers are all standard equipment on every Fleming model.



Central monitoring system



Fleming 58 Engine-room

What about Engines?

The heartbeat of any motor yacht is obviously the engines. In all our boats, the standard power units are now modern diesel engines utilizing common-rail technology. These are much more efficient and clean burning than older diesel engines. We use Cummins and MAN marine engines which are proven, dependable engines, and both manufacturers stand behind their products, in much the same way as we do.

Can you explain what is meant by Common Rail?

Common Rail is simply a fancy term for a manifold. Fuel is held in this manifold at pressures as high as 27,000 psi. Electronically triggered injectors are connected to this common manifold. The timing and exact amount of fuel injected through each injector is determined by a computer at the precise moment of injection. It's also possible to have multiple injections of fuel per power stroke, which not only ensures a complete fuel burn but results in a much more efficient, quieter and cleaner burning engine.



Fleming 55 salon



Have any changes been made to accommodation?

For many years people have been asking about a centrally located master stateroom. We have responded by offering a full beam owners stateroom layout in the new Fleming 58, something which is not possible in the Fleming 55. The Fleming 65 and 78 already have full beam master cabin options, and customers will prefer different layouts depending on how they use their yacht. We also offer a day head in the pilothouse on all models except for the 55.

A commonly expressed opinion about our standard layout is the ease of getting from one area to another and the 'flow' through the boat. With our standard layout, you can stand at the aft end of the passage and see both the transom and the forepeak bulkhead. I don't mind admitting that my personal preference is for the standard layout because I don't like curved staircases on yachts; but for those who prefer the full beam master cabin layout that option is also available.

Tell me more about the latest new model, the Fleming 58. How does it differ from the Fleming 55?

After extensive research and input from existing Fleming owners, we identified the need for a boat to bridge the gap between the 55 and the 65. Our customers wanted a little more interior volume but they definitely didn't want to lose the Fleming look. While retaining the Fleming classic lines, the 58 is an entirely new boat, designed from the keel up. The 58 has a significantly longer waterline length, and greater beam, but is just as efficient as the 55. It has more freeboard which allows for a full height walk-in engine room. The beam is 18" (45cm) more than the F55 which makes interior accommodations larger, and also allows the installation of two helm seats in the pilothouse, as well as a day-head. Plus we are able to offer a full beam master cabin layout which is accessed via a staircase from the pilothouse. In order to make the staircase as safe and easy to use as possible we installed a full height vertical handrail so you can always have one hand on the rail when ascending or descending. We also added extra handholds on the other side and made sure that the stairs are not steep or narrow.



The feedback we learn from using our products is vital to the evolution of every Fleming Yacht.

Judging from the number of cruising articles published in the international yachting press, it would seem that you have literally traveled around the world in Fleming yachts. Aside from the joy of the cruising experience, what other benefits have these journeys offered?

My travels have certainly provided me with boundless pleasure and experience. More importantly, they have allowed me to evaluate the performance of our boats and their systems as well as providing a test bed for new equipment and ideas. Distance aside, to give an idea of the different conditions the best example would be the transit from Alaska to Nova Scotia. In Alaska we nudged ice floes aside; we traveled down the west coast of North and Central America and went 600 nm offshore into the Pacific to visit the Galapagos Islands where we dipped south of the Equator. We passed through the Panama Canal and through tropical waters, and the Gulf Stream,



into the waterways of Florida where our shadow floated across the manicured lawns of waterside homes. We passed by the Statue of Liberty up the Hudson into the narrow Erie Canal and the fresh waters of the Great Lakes. Down the mighty St Lawrence Seaway and river into the north Atlantic. Later, in Venture II, we passed north of the Arctic Circle when we circumnavigated Iceland and were back in fresh water when we navigated the Rhine River to Dusseldorf.

I don't know of any other yacht builder who carries out such intensive testing and real world sea trials, but the feedback we learn from using our products is vital to the evolution of every Fleming Yacht. So far this has added up to more than 58,000 nautical miles of cruising – and counting!

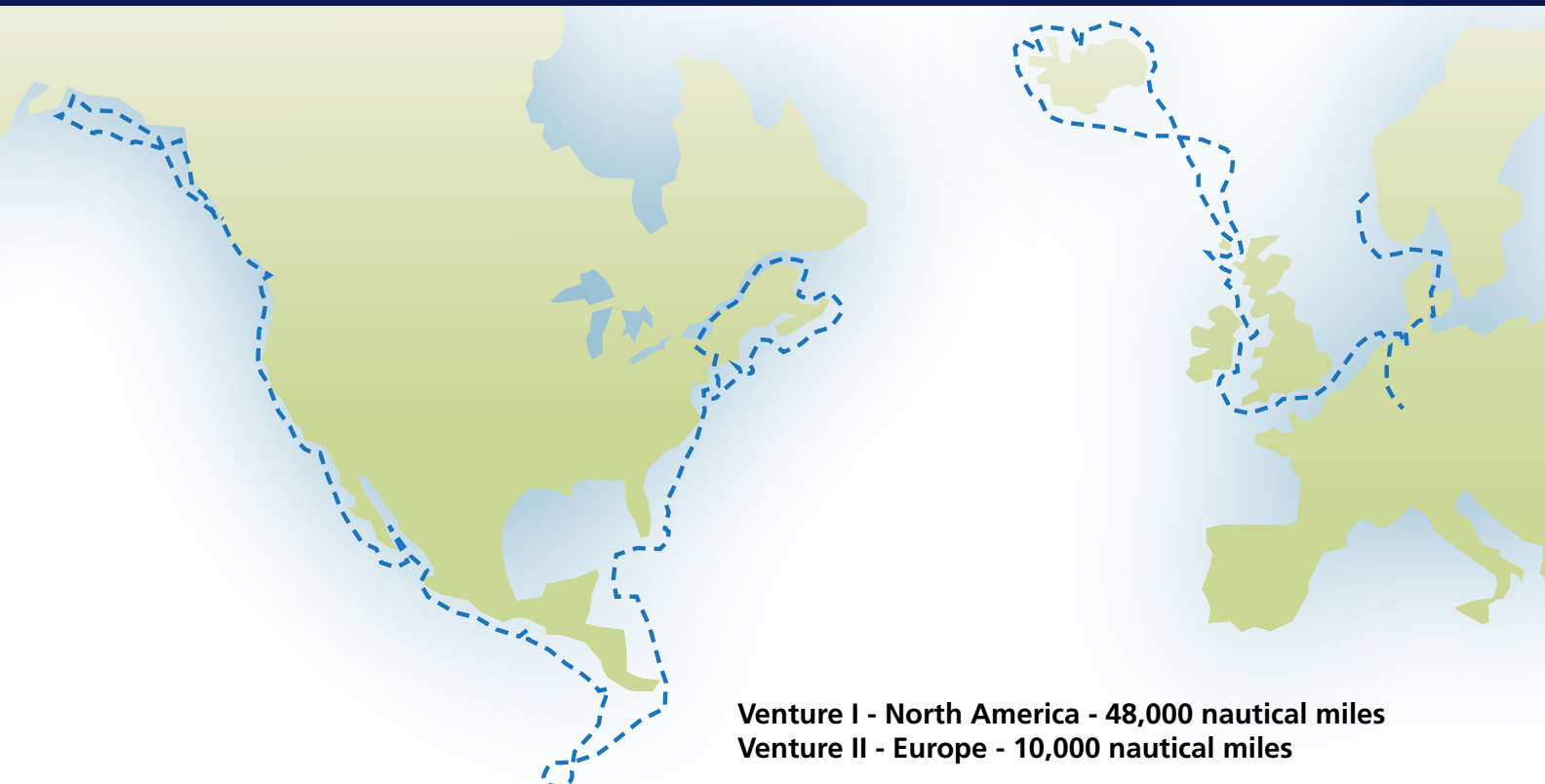
What else have you noticed from using the boat under all conditions?

I am very pleased that the advance thought we gave to fundamental features on using the boats have worked out so well. A very good example is the fact that we have safe and useable side decks along both sides of the boat and the location of the gates along those side decks. They not only make boarding very easy from the dock but the provision of additional gates at pilothouse deck level makes boarding equally easy when you are alongside a dock which does not float up and down with the tide.

The importance of getting on and off the boat is a subject not given the attention it deserves especially at boat shows where boats are often tied stern to the dock where all boarding has, by necessity, to be from the swim platform. But this does not represent real-world conditions. Boats more commonly dock



“I have every confidence that she will take her owners and crew wherever they choose to cruise comfortably, safely, and reliably.” Steve D’Antonio, *Passagemaker Magazine*, 2011



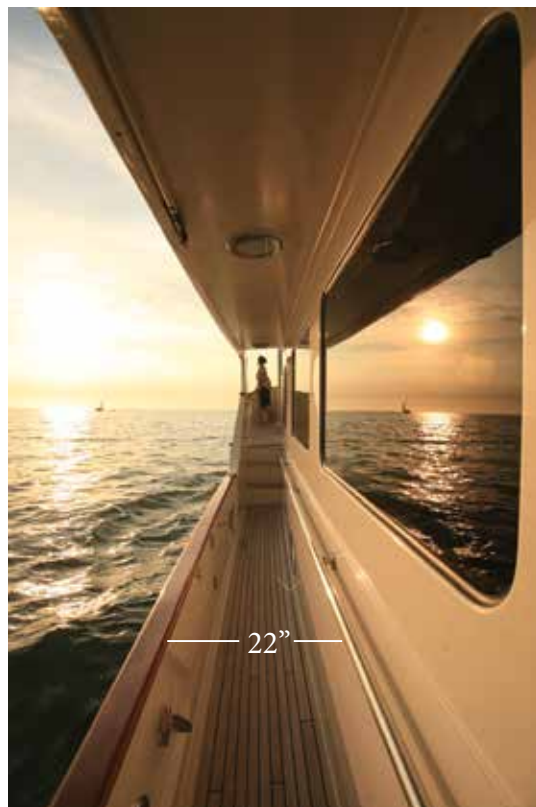
alongside a jetty and it is important to be able to step onto the dock from the middle of the boat. Keep in mind that, if the side decks are high above the jetty, there won't be any steps on the dock at that time. I have observed that it is usually the woman who has the arduous and more hazardous job of dealing with the fenders and lines during the docking procedure, while her male companion moves a few levers back and forth. This, in my opinion, makes it even more of an important safety issue. The davit on our boats lowers the tender right beside the boarding gate.

Can you give any examples of equipment which has been changed, retrofitted or pioneered in Ventures I and II?

We have a responsibility to decide which equipment is best suited for each application, and to ensure that it's installed correctly, and can be accessed for service. The two Fleming 65's that I've cruised on extensively have been a test bed for real-world use of equipment. We have swapped out engines, and installed the Seatorque shaft system, the Böning monitoring system, and fly-by-wire steering – all of which since became standard equipment on the Fleming 65.

I understand that Fleming Yachts offers a fiberglass rail cap in place of the standard teak. Could you comment on this?

In my opinion, there is nothing to rival a teak rail cap when it comes to making a fine motor yacht appear shipshape and Bristol fashion. Unfortunately it must also be said that maintaining this rail cap is time consuming and expensive. After a great deal of experimentation and accelerated environmental testing, we have come up with a fiberglass alternative which looks exactly like teak but which is actually fiberglass and can be treated like any other part of the boat. This is a proprietary product we call Burrwood, out of respect for our East Coast dealer, because it was they who first introduced this idea to our boats. Many of the rail caps on the Fleming are curved, vary in width and are thicker than on those on most boats so making the rails out of fiberglass cuts down on the use of precious teak.



— 22” —



Burrwood caprails

Could you comment on how the pricing of Fleming yachts compares with competitive boats?

Certainly. When making comparisons of anything it is important to ensure that you are really comparing like with like – or apples to apples - and not to some other kind of fruit!

We can start with the definition of size. Length is really a very inaccurate way of doing this. Size is much better defined by displacement which is often described as the size of the hole the boat makes in the water. For example the full load displacement of a Fleming 55 is just over 80,000 lbs. (36,300 kg); for the 65 it is 124,600 lbs. (56,500 kg). Thus an increase in length of just

16.5% has resulted in an increase in displacement of over 55%. The Fleming 58 has a full load displacement of 105,600 (48,000 kg) so in this case an increase in length of 5.9% has resulted in an increase in displacement of 32%.

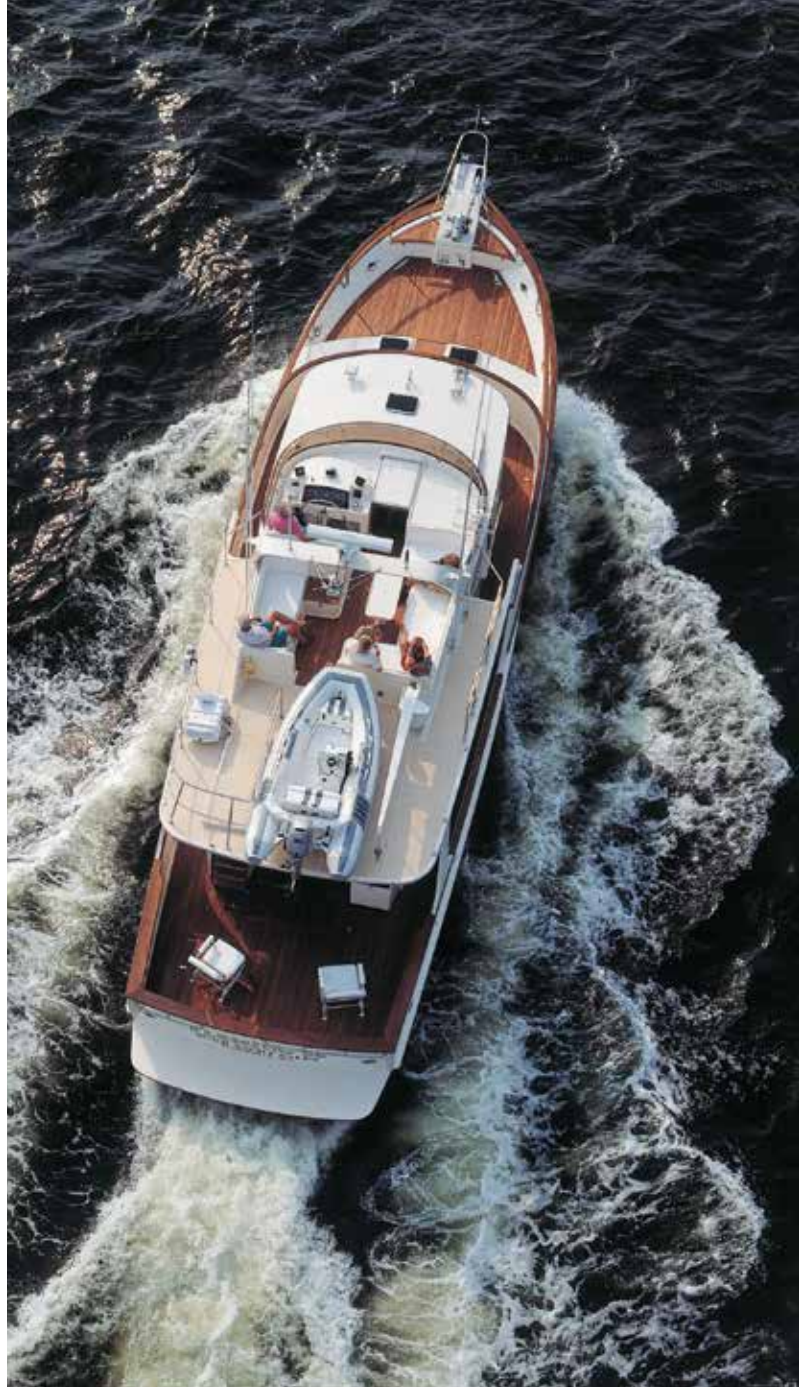
In the case of the Fleming none of that weight is 'dead' weight. We use no ballast in any of our boats so all that weight is useful - by which I mean that it consists of fiberglass, wood, metal, and equipment etc. It is all used to provide strength or perform some function.

The next consideration is whether a vessel is designed and constructed to meet the conditions under which it is to operate. Actually our boats were designed to do this long before the introduction of the current regulations which in our case has simply resulted in a process of proving what we have been doing all along. Nevertheless, that is the way things are measured these days so we now have one member of our team whose sole job it is to make sure that the boats comply with the full set of regulations including ABYC, USCG, CE, Canadian and Australian standards. Incidentally our boats have qualified for CE Category "A" Ocean Class since 1999.

Keeping up with the ever-changing regulations on an annual basis has added cost, but also provides the reassurance that the yacht is designed and built in such a way that it will be safe to use.

When comparing boats you really need to do your homework in determining what comes standard. Fleming Yachts include as standard the equipment that we believe is necessary for the operation of a modern yacht. We see no point in starting with a basic price to which the buyer has to add significant amounts of equipment simply to get away from the dock.

Then you need to compare the quality and specification of the specific equipment offered. Suppose we take stabilizers as but one example. You need first to evaluate the brand to ensure it is the best available and that the vendor offers good service and support. Then there is the question of specifications. We use oversize fins and actuators which provide effective stabilization at lower cruise speeds. Other builders provide smaller fins which will not prove effective until you reach speeds higher than that at which you want to run, or which the vessel is capable of running in



“They are built to a standard and not to a price.” *Tradeboat*

rough conditions, when you really want the stabilizers to work. It is also worth bearing in mind that boats with higher centers of gravity must logically be more inclined to roll and will therefore need larger stabilizers to resist the forces.

Fleming Yachts has a reputation for providing excellent service. Could you say something about this?

It all starts with our philosophy in using what we believe is the best equipment, installing it according to sound engineering principles, and

making sure it is accessible for maintenance. All boats require service and the quality of that service can make the difference in the pleasure quotient of owning your boat.

The people who actually interface with our customers are our dealers most of whom have been with us going back many years. They are not only enormously experienced in servicing the boats but regularly go to extreme lengths to provide the very best of service.

We are still building in the same yard in which we started and, although we have added a few along the way, we are still represented by the same dealers, who visit the yard regularly for training and updates. This continuity can only have a beneficial effect on quality and service.

Could you summarize the reasons why you believe that the Fleming range of boats have achieved their sterling reputation over so many years?

I think that the reasons are all very simple and begin with a using a proven seaworthy hull design. The flared bow keeps the boat dry and capable of handling rough water. The general appearance of the boat stands out from the crowd by its elegance and practicality. It is not faddish and will never go out of style. At the same time the Fleming has low center of gravity and is safe and very easy to board.

The interior layout is practical, straight-forward with no sharp corners or dangerous stairs. From midships you can see the transom and the watertight forepeak bulkhead. The galley and pilothouse are designed to be practical at sea. The structure and engineering are of an exceptionally high standard reflecting our aeronautical engineering background. Special emphasis has been given to smooth and quiet operation and easy access to all equipment. The design is kept up to date by continuous innovation and our company philosophy, along with that of our hand-picked dealers, places a high priority on customer service. In short it is because attention is given to every aspect of the design, construction and service that has earned Fleming Yachts their reputation. Too many boats are judged simply by their interior volume and the buyers learn the hard way about the importance of less obvious aspects.



How long have Flemings been in production, and how many Fleming's have been delivered?

The first Fleming 50 was delivered at the end of 1986. The first Fleming 55 was delivered in 1990. Next came the Fleming 75 which was introduced in 2000. The first Fleming 65, my own yacht named *Venture*, was delivered at the end of 2004. The Fleming 75 was upgraded to the Fleming 78 in 2011, and the first Fleming 58 was launched in 2013.

At the time of writing we have just shipped 55 hull number 235, 58 hull number 007, and 65 hull number 037. Fleming 78 hull number 004 is due to complete early in 2015. Unlike some other builders our hull numbering is sequential starting at 001, the only hull number that we skip is number 13. Therefore the total number of Fleming's built to date is 292.

Chuck Hovey Yachts - Seattle office





Staff at Burr Yacht Sales

Where are Flemings built and how did you arrive at this decision?

I was trained as an aeronautical engineer, however as technical director for American Marine, (Grand Banks) I had been building boats in Hong Kong and Singapore for 24 years, so I had plenty of experience building boats in that part of the world for customers in the US and Europe. In 1985, when I started the Fleming project, Taiwan offered the best choice of yards capable of building the type of boat I had in mind. After extensive research, I selected the Tung Hwa yard to build the Flemings. This proved to be a great choice as we still only build in that same yard which has been expanded and modernized to meet the demands of production. We have excellent relations with the yard and they build exclusively for Fleming. Many of the craftsmen have been working on our boats since the beginning. Continuity and a co-operative relationship with the builder are

essential for producing a reliable and quality product. One of the things that most people do not understand is the pragmatic nature of the boatbuilding yards in that part of the world. They are capable of building superb boats, but if the customer does not want to pay for the quality, the same yard is perfectly happy to downgrade accordingly. Unfortunately, most people who went to Taiwan at that time were looking for yards that would build as cheaply as possible. I chose the yard that could and would build to the highest standard, not the lowest price. They continue to build only to the highest standards and take as much pride in our boats as I do. The majority of the price of a boat reflects the materials and equipment that goes into it and that remains the same no matter where it is built. As the boats get more complex and technology changes so, unfortunately, do the prices. For example the modern common-rail engines are much more fuel efficient and cleaner burning than their mechanical counterparts but they are much more expensive. Nearly all of the price increases over the years have been because of increases from suppliers or an upgrade in the specifications.



Staff and construction crew at Tung Hwa

What considerations did you have in mind when designing and building this boat?

In 1985, the fashion was turning towards the sleek, Eurostyle type boats which look great at boat shows, but are quite impractical for cruising in the real world. My objective was to build the ultimate cruising/live-aboard yacht for a retired or semi-retired individual or couple with reasonable accommodations for occasional guests. The kind of boat that I would want for myself. The Fleming is a classic low-profile motor yacht with a pilothouse configuration which will never go out of fashion – but it incorporates the latest in features, equipment and engineering. I chose the pilothouse configuration with split level access to all areas of the boat and generous, protected side decks as being the most practical and functional arrangement for a boat of this type. Our original objective was, very simply, to build the best coastal and offshore cruising yacht using the experience acquired over many years of building and operating boats. I took a fresh and objective look at every system and every piece of equipment and selected only those which would be the best and the most practical for a boat intended for serious blue-water cruising.

are therefore quite slow. Since speed is not a consideration, these boats generally have single engines with the extra space being used to carry additional fuel. Combining the lower fuel consumption, that is typical at the lower speeds in any hull design, with the additional fuel capacity gives these boats a longer standard cruising range. This type of hull design has a salty look but there are other disadvantages that make this type of hull a poor choice for a cruising yacht. Commercial trawlers have much deeper drafts and completely different stability considerations than yachts - primarily because commercial trawlers need large holds capable of carrying many tons of fish. Due to the low moment of inertia of the waterplane typical of a full displacement hull, yachts using this type of hull generally roll excessively and frequently require lead or steel ballast to meet minimum stability requirements. These adverse roll characteristics are particularly noticeable when low on fuel and stabilization is almost essential.

At the other end of the scale are boats designed for fairly high speeds, which requires that they be light in weight and have a flatter, planing bottom. They tend to have limited range because they have neither the internal volume nor the load capacity to carry the large amounts of fuel burnt

“One glance inside and it becomes immediately obvious that she is meant for both unpretentious yet sophisticated entertaining and comfortable living.”

The same philosophy still holds true today. Every change in design or construction is carefully weighed before being implemented and, if we go a certain direction, it is because we choose to do so for practical reasons and not simply to follow the latest fad.

Can you explain different hull shapes and how that relates to the Fleming hull?

Mono-hulls fall into three basic categories. These are full displacement, planing and semi-displacement.

Full displacement boats have a design that is loosely modeled after the hull design of commercial fishing boats. With this type of hull, regardless of how much power is added, the boats are limited to their hull speed and



Fine entry and vanishing chine

when traveling at high speed. Even though these boats have the ability to run fast they seldom do so for extended periods because it can be uncomfortable for the crew and fuel consumption is high. Limited fuel capacity - combined with high fuel consumption - means frequent refueling stops which, apart from the cost and inconvenience, restrict cruising range and opportunities. Even at reduced speed the ride is less comfortable because of the flat underbody and light weight construction necessary for attaining the higher speeds. This type of hull design is normally found in high speed sport fishing boats and day cruisers, but is a very poor choice for a blue water cruiser.

When designing the Flemings, we chose the middle ground giving the boats semi-displacement hulls with moderate deadrise and an underbody optimized for speeds around 16 to 18 knots which we feel is the maximum speed at which even fast boats run for extended periods of time. In practice, many Fleming owners enjoy running their boats at 9 to 11 knots which is an extremely comfortable and very economical speed. The 55 Fleming hull design is extremely efficient with a very fine entry, rounded bilge sections forward, and a hard chine, modified vee aft. The generous flare of the bow and the soft forward sections make for a comfortable ride in virtually every sea condition. The wave-making component of the hull resistance, particularly at passage-making speeds, is very low, and there are few boats of comparable size that can compete in terms of fuel economy at any speed.

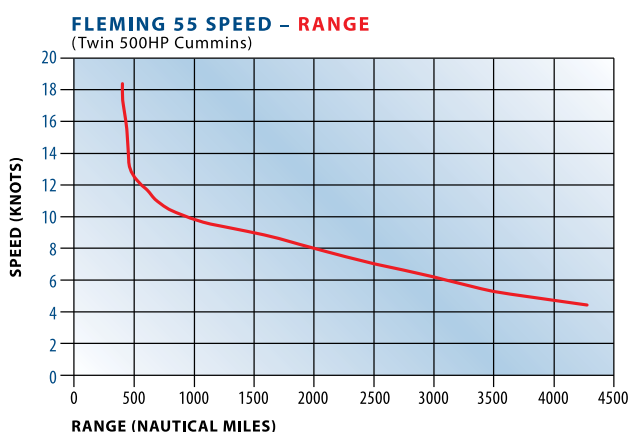
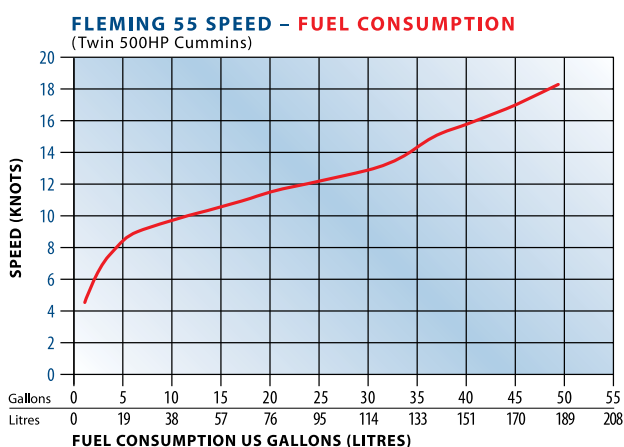
Flemings running at passage-making speeds of 6 to 8 knots have similar fuel consumption to displacement boats and several of our boats have crossed the Atlantic and cruised to Hawaii. However, most cruising owners want a boat that is self-sufficient for extended periods and primarily use their boats for cruising along the coastlines of the world. For the occasional extended trip they can use bladder tanks rather than have their coastal cruising capabilities and their self sufficiency compromised by the need to fill up the boat with prodigious amounts of fuel that is rarely needed.

Semi-displacement hulls with twin engines generally have generous waterplane areas and low centers of gravity which make them very stable, contributing to comfort and safety at sea

as well as to convenience and safety at the dock. Normally semi-displacement hulls do not require stabilizers, although stabilizers do contribute greatly to comfort on long voyages on any vessel, and therefore all Flemings are equipped with properly sized stabilizers as standard equipment.

Have you ever considered building a single engine version of the Fleming 55? Since your keel is already a foot deeper than the propellers it would appear to be an easy task?

I have not. The fuel advantage of a single engine installation, if there even is one, is insignificant compared to the safety factor and responsiveness inherent in a twin engine installation. I find the little auxiliary engine that some manufacturers use as a get home engine, while certainly better than nothing, is a poor substitute for a second engine. Over the years I have seen too many disabled engines or power trains to make a long blue water cruise without a good spare engine. The Fleming has no problem maintaining a good cruise speed on one engine and it only needs 15 degree rudder deflection to maintain a constant heading, so there is plenty of rudder in reserve for adverse wind or sea conditions.



There are many factors that can affect the comparative fuel efficiencies of a twin engine versus a single engine installation in the same boat. In light weight boats the reduction in weight from eliminating the second engine is a major factor in favor of the single engine, however in heavy cruising boats it is not very significant. In most cases the single engine installation will have a very slight advantage due to the reduction in drag from eliminating one strut, one shaft and one rudder. Our own tests, conducted over hundreds of miles in real life conditions, showed that running on two engines actually burned less fuel at a given speed than running on one. Keep in mind that the basic principle of model tank testing is that the same boat at the same weight will take a specific amount of energy to move it at a given speed. It is basically irrelevant whether that energy is obtained by burning a given amount of fuel in one engine or in two.

Another reason why we believe in two engines is redundancy. In the past the majority of engine problems tended to get blamed on bad or contaminated fuel, so it didn't matter how many engines you had, they would all be affected. However today's fuel systems include very effective fuel filtration and polishing systems and a modern engine is more likely to suffer from a software, electronics or sensor issue than a fuel problem. Our engines are installed with completely separate support systems for each engine, in effect we have two single engine installations in the same hull.

Have you tried the Gyro type of Stabilizers that are advertised?

Yes, back in 2004 we installed and tested a pair of gyro stabilizers in my Fleming 65 "Venture". The units in question were an early prototype version which were noisy and caused vibration. Gyros are certainly more developed these days, but several issues still remain. We found that the gyros work OK when anchored, but did not work well when underway, particularly in a following sea. The gyros are physically large, heavy and expensive and with a low profile stable yacht like the Fleming, the gyros would need to be the higher power version, or you would have to install multiple units. They also take some time to get up to operating speed. The active fin type stabilizers work very well



underway, and are standard equipment on all Flemings. The fin type stabilizers are also available with an "At Rest" feature and we have installed this on several new Fleming's to date.

I imagine that the ultimate in stabilization would be to have hydraulically driven active fins for use underway, and a gyro (or two) for use at rest. Personally I try to find sheltered anchorages where stabilization is not required.

When you talk about speeds, are you talking about advertised speeds or real world speeds?

Most manufacturers talk about speeds of their boats in the condition they are when they leave the factory - stripped bare and light on fuel. We talk about speeds the way customers actually use the boats - fueled up and equipped with tender, electronics, owners gear, etc. Our boats that cruise at 16 knots are actually faster in reality than many boats that advertise a 20 knot cruise speed.

I note that the Fleming 55's are offered only with twin Cummins 500 hp engines. Would a pair of smaller engines be a better choice?

Not really. The larger engines swing larger propellers and may well burn less fuel at a given speed than the smaller engines. Meanwhile, the extra power provides a useful reserve which permits higher speeds when circumstances dictate.



We provide backup engine controls (gear and throttle) on all Flemings as standard, this is after all a critical system.



Boat deck aft control station

For example, you may wish to reach the safety of the harbor ahead of bad weather, take advantage of a favorable tide or to arrive at an unfamiliar harbor in daylight. In addition, the extra power improves responsiveness when maneuvering and when transiting tricky inlets or areas of strong currents and confused seas. These are all important safety considerations. The Fleming hull design offers flexibility in operation at both low and high cruising speeds as well as comfort in all the speed ranges at which most people cruise.

What about pod drives, do Fleming offer this much talked about new technology?

No, we don't offer pod drives. Whilst I admire the technology they are not suitable for our type of yacht which has a full length deep keel protecting the running gear. I think pods are very vulnerable to damage from grounding and I imagine they are very expensive to repair. They are also reliant on an electronic control system and I'd be concerned about what happens to your drive system when the electronics fails.

I can see the attraction of pod drives with joystick controls on light weight deep-v type boats which easily move sideways due to their increased windage and lack of keel. The joystick control is also attractive to the less experienced boater. We offer two brands of joystick control systems as an option and these are particularly useful at our aft boat deck and cockpit docking stations.



What is CE Classification and does it count for anything?

The letters CE are an abbreviation for European Conformity which, in one form or another, applies to products sold into the European market. The application that concerns us here applies to boats.

This certification is based on the standards originally promulgated by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) which cover the entire vessel and its systems. These include the boat's designated type of use, stability and buoyancy, structures, cockpit drainage, visibility from the helm, and the fuel, electrical, steering, and fire protection systems. Onboard equipment, including engines, electrical equipment, pumps, tanks, hoses, electrical cable, hatches, portlights, navigation lights etc must also conform to CE standards and be marked accordingly. In fact it is mandatory to produce a technical file for each boat model which includes the CE certificate for all the materials, as well as for each and every piece of equipment, used in the boat's construction. Window size and related glass thickness are also covered by the regulations.



Within this classification are four categories of use - the toughest of which is Category A which is defined as the "Designed for extended voyages where conditions may exceed wind force 8 (Beaufort scale) and significant wave heights of 4 m and above but excluding abnormal conditions, and vessels largely self-sufficient.

We have been meeting the CE requirements for Category A since 1999 when they were first introduced and long before anyone outside of Europe had even heard of them. Actually, it was not difficult to meet the basic requirements of the regulations because our boats have always been built with seaworthiness and rigorous engineering standards in mind. What did take a lot of time and effort was acquiring certificates for every cable, fitting and piece of hose plus proving to the CE inspector, who visited the yard on several occasions that everything on the boat and our construction methods were in compliance. To quote just one example we

had to demonstrate that the fuel tanks met fire and other regulations by actual testing by an independent testing house. By visiting the yard the inspector was able to see boats at all stages of construction and inspect areas which are later hidden from view. Most surveyors do not have this opportunity. It's what you don't see that is going to keep you safe even though it may be the looks and the fit and finish which attracted you in the first place.

All Flemings destined for the European market have carried this certification since 1998 but the fundamental factors involving stability,



seaworthiness and engineering are inherent in every Fleming built.

Of course we don't expect the majority of Fleming owners to voluntarily subject themselves to Category A conditions but it is reassuring to know that the boat is designed and built to take them.

How do Flemings compare to other boats with respect to convenience of boarding?

Most of the boats available today can only be boarded at the transom swim step or by having

steps on the dock. On all Flemings, including the 78, you can step directly from the dock onto the generous side decks through the mid-ships bulwark doors and, when you do, you will notice the inherent stability of the boat. The Fleming can also be easily boarded through an optional upper level boarding gate adjacent to the pilothouse door which is a great benefit when tied up alongside very high piers or in areas of extreme tides. The aft bulwark doors are also positioned right where the tender is lowered so that it is a very simple matter to board or leave the tender, something that is very difficult on many other designs.

Why did you choose a hallway to access the staterooms as opposed to a staircase from the pilothouse and a midship stateroom? Isn't the hallway just wasted space?

This deceptively simple question has no pat answer because the full soup-to-nuts explanation goes to the heart of the fundamental character of the boat and what makes a Fleming a Fleming. Everybody understands that everything in the design of any boat is a trade off and priorities have to be set as to what the designers believe to be important. As an engineer, I always consider functionality first and foremost and the original mission statement was to produce a classically styled, safe and reliable cruising boat with excellent sea-keeping qualities and capable of withstanding the hazards likely to be encountered in extended coastal and offshore cruising. This begins with having the right hull shape and a low center of gravity



Side deck boarding gate

from the salon to the stateroom level and three steps up to the pilot house. The alternative, a higher, curved stairway leading down to a lobby from the pilothouse, requires steps which are, of necessity, wedge shaped and which, on many boats, taper to almost nothing, making them dangerous and difficult to negotiate while underway.

Stairs from the pilothouse to the accommodation turn the pilothouse into a traffic area for anybody, from any part of the boat, wishing to go below to use the head etc. From the salon this would involve going up three steps to the pilothouse, across the pilothouse and down six, curved stairs to the lobby and the same in reverse on the return journey. Apart from the inconvenience, this traffic through the pilothouse detracts from its primary function which is, of course, navigation and piloting. Without the stairs, during night running, the pilothouse can be fully isolated by an optional

“Superb aesthetics. Robust construction. Flexible accommodations.” Yachting Magazine

as these determine the sea keeping qualities of the boat as well as her appearance and ease of boarding. The Fleming has a low profile and her hull is relatively fine forward which keeps her tracking well in a following sea unlike those boats which have much fuller forward sections and have a higher freeboard in order to meet the designer's priority for maximizing interior space over other considerations.

Curved staircases from the pilothouse leave a little more floor space for the staterooms but the central hallway arrangement is more efficient and safer. In the Fleming 55 there are four steps down



door and be maintained in complete darkness while crew members have full use of lighting in the galley, salon and stateroom areas. We call the Fleming a pilothouse boat and we designed it to have a real pilothouse and not a concourse with a galley. When you hear owners praising the “flow” through their boats, they are voicing their appreciation for the forethought given to convenient access.

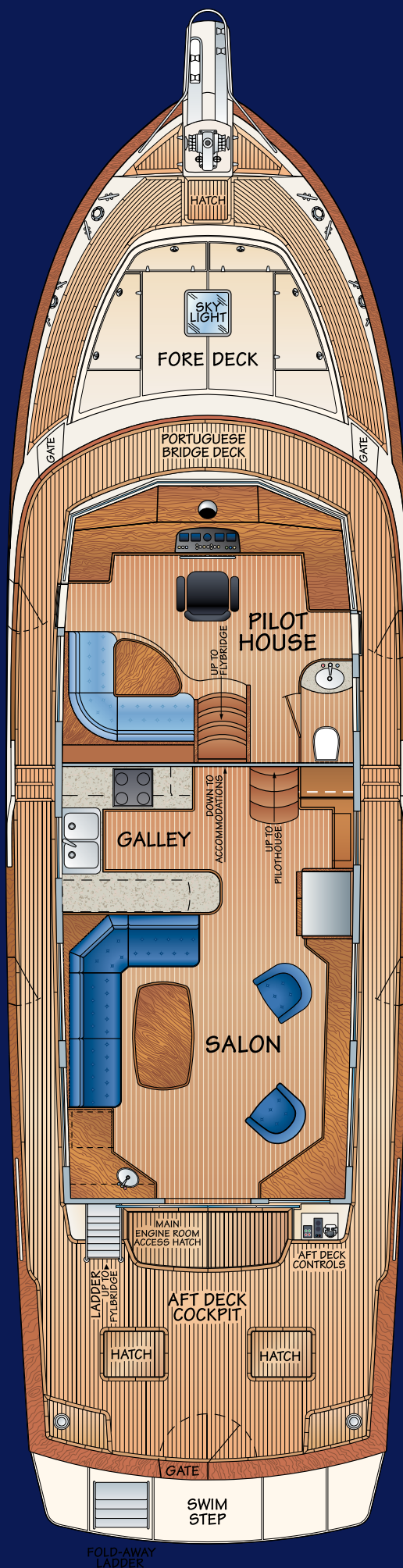
There are also a few misconceptions concerning the forward stateroom. Some people are concerned about the lapping noise of the boat when at anchor. We do not experience this because all Fleming models have a “vanishing chine”. The boats that do suffer from this annoying noise have a hard chine or spray-rail.

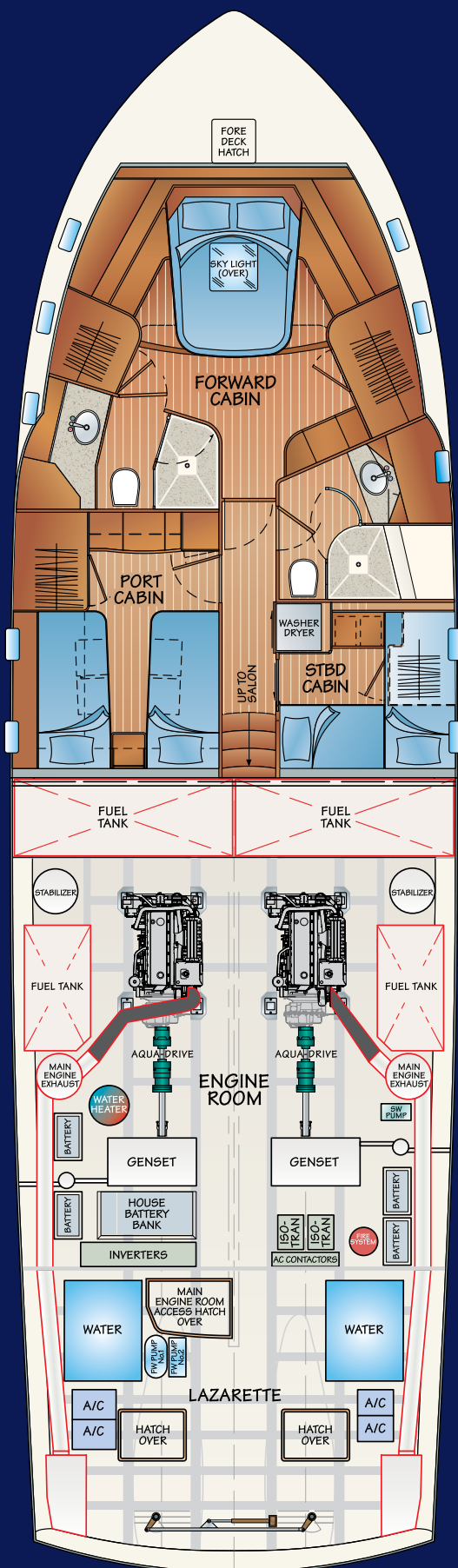
It is commonly believed that there is unacceptable up and down motion in the forward cabin. Whilst it is undeniable that there is more motion the further forward you go, I would like to quote what Sid Stapleton wrote in a review of the Fleming 55, titled “Passagemaker”, which appeared in the August 1992 issue of *Motorboating & Sailing*. You may recall that Sid Stapleton took a Grand Banks from Maine to Alaska so he knows what he is talking about.

“Elsewhere I’ve criticized builders for putting the master stateroom in the bow, because on overnight passages in heavy seas, pounding would make it impossible for the off-watch to get a decent night’s sleep. In the case of the Fleming I have to eat my words. Its motion in a seaway is so easy that sleeping in the bow stateroom simply isn’t a problem.”

Sid Stapleton

So you can see from this that not all forward staterooms are created equal which, again, takes us back to the Fleming’s fine lines forward. I entirely concur with Sid Stapleton’s opinion after sleeping soundly every night in the forward cabin of our Fleming 65 “Venture” while we made the non-stop passage from Seattle to Southern California at a time when the weather was such that the harbours along the coasts of Washington and Oregon were closed to recreational traffic. Being under the foredeck, the forward cabin has skylights which provide more light and ventilation. These double as escape hatches as required for meeting CE Category “A” classification.





I do admit that making the bed in the forward cabin on the 55 used to be a chore but this was addressed in 2008 by a modification which allows the bed to slide aft. It also lifts up at the touch of a button to access the storage areas beneath as well as the bow thruster motor.

Knowledgeable boaters appreciate that, in the forward cabin, you are more aware of how the boat is behaving when swinging on the hook. I know this allowed me to sleep all the more soundly during our many nights at anchor in Alaska's deep bays and unpredictable weather.

But don't you have a curved staircase in the Fleming 78?

Yes we do but that boat is large enough for us to work some cunning changes into the design of the staircase which, although they find it easy to use, few people are aware of. As the stairs descend, their gradient decreases, the width of the stairwell increases, as does the width of the individual treads. Also we have direct access into owner's cabin from the salon which saves you having to go up into the pilothouse.

What is Fleming policy on model year and improvements to boats that superficially never seem to change?

We continue to follow the original objective - reinforced by a policy of ongoing refinement to the basic design - which has so convincingly proved its worth over the years. We are always adding new features and upgrading equipment in response to feedback from users and to take advantage of the latest technology. We do not follow the model-year concept which was borrowed from the automobile industry. When we encounter a new idea we institute it in the next available hull.

Why does Fleming continue to use solid glass construction when cored construction seems to be so popular?

While cored hulls are lighter and cheaper to build, since less glass and resin is required, there is no question in my mind that solid glass construction is far superior and is well worth the additional expense.

Hull stiffness comes from hull thickness and one way to achieve this is to use a core material sandwiched between two relatively thin skins. This sandwich construction provides a light, stiff hull but it does have certain drawbacks. The biggest technical problem with cored construction has always been in assuring a complete and consistent bond between the core and the laminate skins - something which must be taken on faith since it is not visible in the laminating process. Furthermore it is normal for this bond to weaken over time as the hull is subjected to repeated impacts from wave action. Should this bond fail, the hull will lose all of its structural integrity. Because the outer lamination is relatively thin it offers less resistance to penetration than a solid glass hull.

On the Flemings we have always used solid glass for the hulls reinforced by an interlocking matrix of frames and full-length box-section stringers. This stiffening lattice is mostly hidden under the sole in the forward accommodation or under tanks and equipment in the engine-room and in lazarette where the stringers rise at the aft end to support the transom, and to reinforce the rudder ports and raise their tops above the waterline.

In a cored hull, the installation of thru-hull fittings requires especial care and, although this is usually well done by responsible manufacturers, the integrity of the hull is vulnerable to sloppy work by boatyards once the boats have left the builders. If a thru-hull is installed without cutting back and sealing the core – or even if the outer skin is cracked or penetrated for any reason – water can enter and saturate the core which compromises its strength and is extremely difficult and costly to repair. There are many knowledgeable people in the industry who believe that there are only two kinds of cored hulls - those that have water in them, and those that are going to have water in them. A recent tour of repair yards has shown that not much has changed over the years in that respect.

The resistance of a solid glass hull to penetration is an important consideration and one which was proved in a spectacular fashion when a Fleming 55, running at 16 knots, ran head on into a large channel marker on the Intra-coastal Waterway. The 55 demolished the marker and would have come away unscathed had



Hull reinforcement stiffens a solid glass hull

it not been for the steel framed solar panel that sliced into the hull but failed to cause significant damage. The Fleming was able to continue under her own power for another 800 miles until it was convenient to haul out.

Some race boats, which are kept out of the water between races, have used Kevlar in their very lightweight cored laminates for additional strength; however Kevlar has other characteristics, such as its affinity for absorbing water, that make it undesirable for use in boats that stay in the water year round.



Fleming 58 pilothouse



Are the Flemings “overbuilt’ as some have said?

Actually, it is almost impossible to overbuild a blue water cruising yacht. 95 % of the time you will never get in seas that will test the limits of your boat or run into a floating cargo container at night in the middle of the ocean, but on that rare occasion that you accidentally end up in that situation, it is reassuring to know that boats identical to yours have survived horrendous seas fully intact and that your builder has tried to design for any eventuality. Less well constructed vessels - if they survive at all - might end up with all of their cabinetry all over the salon floor. If our focus was more on quantity than quality, we could make significant reductions in our production costs without any of the changes being noticeable to the buyers, but we would know, and our goal is to build the best boat we know how to build and not to sell the most boats.

Why do Flemings have a full-length keel when so many boats seem to be eliminating them?

All Flemings have full length keels which extend significantly below the rudders and propellers. We believe this to be an absolutely essential feature for any serious cruising yacht. No one ever intends to run aground but, sooner or later, it happens to almost everyone. With a full length keel this can result in nothing worse than a red face but, if the running gear is the lowest point of the boat, then even a minor grounding will almost certainly result in severe damage to propellers and rudders and a Mayday call for immediate outside assistance followed by a huge repair bill. The full keel also imparts stability and accurate tracking in large following seas.

The downside of a full length keel is the additional wetted area which is one reason faster boats tend to leave it off. Even though, when fitted with the appropriate power, Flemings exceed 20 knots, speed is not our first priority and the additional drag caused by the keel is of minor importance compared with the extra security it provides.



Deep full-length keel protects the running gear





The primary reason why most boats do not have full keels however lies in the expense and difficulty of including them. For reasons of economy most boats are laid up in one piece molds. This limits the depth of a keel to how far a man can reach into a slot to lay up the fiberglass. This is a very short distance, only a fraction of the depth of a Fleming keel. To accomplish the deep keel on the Fleming requires a two- part mold. This also allows us to mold in integral stainless capped mid-guards which protect the hull sides when lying alongside a pier.

The interior of our keel is filled with closed-cell foam and sealed off from the main hull with heavy laminations so that the boat will not leak even if the keel should suffer major damage. A Fleming 55 which lost almost 1/3 of its keel during an inadvertent grounding on the under water concrete remnants of an old bridge was still able to return home without any water entering the boat and with all running gear undamaged. As additional protection, a stainless steel shoe is installed on the underside of the keel and it is very rare to have any significant keel damage during a grounding incident. In most cases the captain simply backs off and moves on with no damage whatsoever.

A case has been made for strut extensions extending just below the props but, while these are clearly better than nothing, they are too fragile to substitute for a full length keel. When boats impact the sea bed they do not do so delicately but hit with considerable force and surge up and down with the waves - imparting forces of thousands of pounds to the points of contact which will, at best, sink into the seabed or, more likely, break off or be driven up into the hull.

I have read about hull to deck joints failing on quite well known boats. How does Fleming address that scenario?

This joint is critical to the strength and safety of any fiberglass boat and there have been horror stories of this joint failing on even the most prestigious and expensive of yachts. In the Fleming we have not just one joint but two! The hull and deck are joined both at the top of the bulwarks and also at their base where the hull and deck are glassed together. We have two joints – one at deck level and one at the top of the bulwark – which means double strength.

There is also the added reassurance from buying a well-proven boat. Over the past twenty eight years Fleming has delivered over 290 boats and, inevitably, some of them have been caught out in weather that no one in their right mind would have chosen to go out in. There has never been a case of structural damage to one of our boats although I am sure that there were occasions when their crews would have preferred to be on shore. While riding out a hurricane at a Bahamas marina a few years back one of our boats broke pilings and demolished a pier with only minor cosmetic damage to the Fleming.

How does Fleming address the noise and vibration issues that plague so many boats?

It is quite common for customers to comment on their first Fleming ride to the effect that they have never before ridden on a boat as smooth and as quiet. Noise and vibration contribute to fatigue and we decided right from the outset to eliminate these. From hull #1, we used the Aquadrive CVA anti-vibration system which has revolutionized standards of smoothness and quietness by allowing free

movement between the engine and shaft and, by transferring the thrust from the propeller directly onto the hull rather than through the engines where, in conventional installations, the thrust is transferred to the hull through the engine mounts. With the Aquadrive, much softer mounts can be used and this additional softness, carefully matched to the vibration characteristics of the engine, results in further reduction to the noise and vibration transmitted through the hull. As a further bonus the thrust bearing protects the engine and transmission from damage in the event of the propeller hitting a log or some other obstruction and you need never again be concerned with shaft alignment.

The flexible mounts and thrust bearing brackets are bolted to full-length steel bars encapsulated deep inside the fiberglass lamination of the engine stringers – each one of which is a full five inches wide with its top surface dressed, and trued, with mirror-finish stainless steel. Fleming pioneered the use of internally reinforced engine beds dressed with polished stainless steel over twenty five years ago and this idea has since found its way into other brands of boats.

We still use the Aquadrive system on the Fleming 78, but the Fleming 55, 58 and 65 are



Seatorque shaft tube with rope cutter

now fitted, as standard, with the Seatorque Bolt on Shaft System (BOSS). This is a totally enclosed, oil filled, self-contained, shaft and thrust bearing assembly. It achieves the same thing as the Aquadrive, in that the thrust is transferred from the propeller directly onto the hull rather than through the engines, but has the added benefit of the propeller shaft being enclosed thus reducing the drag, and increasing propeller efficiency. It also eliminates the need for a stuffing box, and cutlass bearings.



Sea torque thrust housing

The engine room is insulated from the rest of the boat by lead-based sound insulation and foam. Its interior surfaces – including tanks – are sound deadened and faced with an attractive, easy-to-clean sound board. On the 58, 65 and 78, fuel tanks extend the full width of the engine room forward bulkhead and insulate the engine room from the accommodation. On the 55, the space between the forward tanks is aligned with the accommodation passage stairs. Interior bulkheads are sandwich construction with lead-foam sound insulation inside.

All Flemings now have fiberglass composite salon soles using honeycomb construction which offers additional stiffness and insulation. All the engine hatches are clamped down tight on rubber gaskets and double hatches are fitted in the service openings over the engines to further contain the sound. The result is a boat in which you can hold a conversation in a normal voice and one in which the vibration is reduced to barely detectable levels, even at the higher cruising speeds.



Engine room access with folding safety rail

Some people say that too much space has been given over to the engine room in the Flemings? How come?

All boats are a compromise. Some designers put the emphasis on interior space at the expense of accessibility or even stability while we have tended to give higher priority to aspects concerning practicality and seaworthiness even at the expense of losing some interior volume. We believe that is a worthwhile trade off. It has been our policy to ensure that, not only should every piece of equipment be the best suited for the purpose, but also that it should be easily accessible for service and maintenance. This policy is most clearly evident in the engine-room.

I don't see any air intake vents on the sides of the hull. Where does the intake air for the engines come from?



Intake air is brought in through vents under the cockpit coaming.

In the average boat, intake air, laden with salt spray, enters the engine-room high up from intake vents on the outside of the hull. Salt not only enters the engines but also settles on every surface in the engine-room causing rust and corrosion. In the Fleming, cool intake air is brought in through vents under the cockpit coaming and is separated from its burden of spray before entering the engine-room through vents in the aft bulkhead.

How are the fuel tanks constructed?

Fleming has been using fiberglass fuel tanks for many years. These tanks are far superior to any metal tank since there are no concerns about corrosion or weld failures. The Fleming



Dual fresh water pumps

tanks are laid up over male molds imparting a smooth surface to the inside of the tanks. The inner layers are laid up with vinylester resin while the outer layers use fire retardant resin, and the outer surface of the tanks is then coated with a fire-proof coating. All the baffles are fiberglass. The tanks all have integrally molded sumps allowing them to be fully drained. Our tanks are far superior to commercially available fiberglass tanks, some of which do not even have baffles. Even though all Fleming's are equipped with remote-reading electronic level indicators in the pilothouse, the Fleming tanks are also fitted with clearly readable sight-gages. Very little can go wrong with a sight-gage and having a simple mechanical back up to an electrical convenience is an example of the thought process behind the boat. As another



Fleming 65 engine room

*“She is an able vessel well-suited for many missions, and she will look good doing all of them.”
BoatTEST, 2014*

small example, the “tails” of all hose clamps are fitted with a plastic protector to prevent you being gashed by the sharp edges - an event all too familiar to anyone used to working in the average engine room.

What about the water tanks?

Water tanks in the Flemings are very heavy walled polyethylene moulded in one piece in the USA and consequently have no joints and no welds. We previously used stainless steel which, despite its popular reputation for excellence, is in fact vulnerable to crevice corrosion. The corrosion-resistant surface of stainless steel is only a few microns thick and, should this become disturbed and there be insufficient oxygen present to replace it, corrosion can occur very rapidly – especially at the welds. In some instances, we found that chlorinated water was sufficient to trigger the problem. Polyethylene is totally inert and is used universally for the storage of drinking water – as well as for corrosive chemicals.

Why doesn't Fleming use sea chests?

Larger vessels sometimes offer sea chests rather than individual seacocks for water intakes. Sea-chests can provide some advantages with centralized access but, as is usually the case with all things, there are also disadvantages. For a sea chest to be useful, either the top surface needs to be some distance above the waterline - so that the top can be removed when at sea, even when the boat is surging up and down – or the whole chest needs to have its own, large isolation valves and, because you cannot afford to have all intakes closed off at one time, this means having a second sea chest on the opposite side of the boat connected to the first. Another disadvantage is that intake hoses must all lead to this central point from wherever each piece of equipment is located. This can result in long hose runs – full of seawater – which have to slope consistently up with no high points. I considered sea-chests back in 1985 but, after carefully considering all the factors, concluded that we were better off to have individual intakes each adjacent to its respective

piece of equipment. Another factor is that some pieces of equipment require scoop strainers while, for others, a scoop is a recipe for disaster so individual intakes need to be tailored as required for the appropriate use.

It seems that every few months there are new developments in electronics and associated electrical systems. What is Fleming's policy on this?

Electrical systems continue to evolve as new technology becomes available and demands for electrical power increases. All Flemings have high-output, externally regulated, alternators on the engines, and two battery chargers for redundancy. Using large capacity inverters (one on the 55, and two working in tandem on the larger boats) together with large banks of AGM batteries reduces the need to run the AC generators as often. The generators have a proprietary exhaust muffler/separator which reduces exhaust noise down to a whisper. This results in environmentally responsible, virtually silent operation, with no exhaust or noise to disturb quiet anchorages overnight. Isolation transformers with automatic voltage boosting feature are standard equipment as we believe this is the safest way to bring shorepower onboard. To reduce power consumption and heat, all Flemings are equipped with LED lighting throughout.

We do not advocate installing electronics at the yard. This is because, as with all modern electronics, anything you buy is the 'old' model by the time you open the box. The lead time on purchasing, shipping to the yard, installing the equipment and shipping the boat to the dealer requires a minimum of four months so it is counter-productive to buy early and, in my opinion, it is best purchased from, and commissioned by, a knowledgeable local dealer who will be responsible for it working correctly. In my experience, electronics are responsible for most of the teething troubles on a new boat.

A salesman for another brand of boat told me that Fleming does not bond their throughhulls fittings. Is this true?

I doubt there is a single boat built anywhere today in which the through hulls are not bonded. I'm afraid I find it inconceivable that the salesman did not know this so I would have to question his motives for making such a ridiculous statement.



Every Fleming ever built has had every through hull – plus fuel fills and deck railings – bonded and checked with a meter at the factory to ensure continuity.

Can a Fleming be ordered with non-skid fiberglass decks?

The short answer is yes it can. However, very few buyers have chosen to do so. I have to admit to having a strong preference for teak over fiberglass as a non-skid material. It looks better, is much less abrasive should you fall and is a much more reliable non-skid either wet or



Double soft-mounted generator with proprietary hush chamber exhaust



dry. All my own boats have had teak decks and I really cannot say the maintenance has been an issue. Fiberglass non-skid still needs to be scrubbed and maintained and can be slippery in wet conditions when the depressions in the design fill with water.

Where is Fleming headed in the future?

Because we chose to build our boats with a classic look and not chase after the latest fad, Flemings will never go out of style and will continue to stand out from the crowd. First Class engineering has always been high on our list of priorities and we have followed a program of continual refinement to the basic design. Going forward we will continue to refine, upgrade and improve all four Fleming models.

Our dedicated team consists almost entirely of people with hands-on boating experience and we make personal use of the boats we build. As part of this program, Fleming 65-001, named Venture, was retained in the company as a test boat and to date has covered over 58,000 nautical miles of cruising. This has allowed me to evaluate the performance of our boats and their systems as well as providing a test bed for new equipment and ideas.

Why does Fleming sell exclusively through authorised dealers?

Flemings are sold and marketed only through authorized, factory trained, dealers because it is only with their specialized knowledge of the boats and their familiarity with their local area that we are able to guarantee a high quality of service to our customers. Essentially, we are outsourcing the sales and service aspects of our business to people who are better qualified in that field thereby leaving us to concentrate on what we do best which is to design and build boats. The bottom line is that a good dealer organization, like ours, is the most efficient way to handle the distribution of our yachts which also means the lowest initial price and the best service for our owners.



Recessed cleats and custom hardware



First Class engineering has always been high on our list of priorities.

Does Fleming get involved in the sale of used Flemings?

No, not directly, however we do work closely with our dealers and support them in their efforts to make the purchase of a used Fleming a special experience. That would, of course include assistance in resolving any technical issues that might come up during survey. Anyone interested in a used Fleming should contact their closest Fleming dealer. I would also strongly encourage them to review the FAQ's on the Burr Yacht Sales web site for some very informative and useful information on purchasing a used Fleming.

"If ever there was a go-anywhere cruiser, this is it!" Motorboat and Yachting



Is there anything else that you would care to add?

The Fleming 55 is a boat where everything came together just right and it has certainly achieved classic status. There are only a very few boats in boating history that have been as well received right from the outset by knowledgeable boaters. From the time the first Fleming appeared on the market, others have tried to produce their own versions, however these imitations have yet to match the original in style, class, or functionality. If imitation be the sincerest form of flattery, then I guess I have every reason to feel flattered.

“Tony Fleming must have known from the beginning that he had a winner in his Fleming 55. But only through a consistent program of upgrading, improving and refining the original has it reached its current status of a thoroughly modern living legend.” *Yachting Magazine, September 2011*



FLEMING

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USA East Coast: Burr Yacht Sales • Mr. Mick Shove
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tel: +1 949 675 8092

www.chuckhoveyyachts.com • email: info@chuckhoveyyachts.com

Europe: Fleming Yachts Europe Ltd. • Mr. David Miles
Building 2, Shamrock Quay Marina • William Street
Southampton, Hampshire, UK SO14 5QL • tel: +44 (0) 2380 337289
www.emingyachtseurope.com • email: info@emingyachtseurope.com

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email: info@emingyachtseurope.com

Italy: RBS Yachts • Ravenna, Italy • tel: +39 0544 17 661 49
www.info@emingyachtseurope.com • email: jmp.astol@rbsyachts.com

Spain: Yes Yachting • Almeria, Spain • tel: +34 950 497 825
email: info@emingyachtseurope.com

Scandinavia: Marstrand Yachts • Mr. Peter Johansson
Hospitalsgaten 7 • S-440 30 Marstrand • Sweden • tel: +46 735 430 800
www.marstrandyachts.com • email: peter.johansson@marstrandyachts.com

Canada: Fleming Yachts Canada • Mr. Rob Butler
1535 Coal Harbour Quay • Vancouver • BC V6G 3E7 • Canada
tel: +1 604 687 8943 • www.yachtworld.com/grandyachts/
email: rglassford@grandyachts.com

Australia: Fleming Yachts Australia Pty. Ltd.
Mr. Egil Paulsen & Mr. Sam Nicholas

Unit 6, 1 Bradly Avenue • Kirribilli NSW 2061 • Australia
tel: +61 2 8920 1444 • mobile: +61 414 233 030 or +61 412 864 443
fax: +61 2 8920 1411 • www.emingyachts.com.au
email: info@emingyachts.com.au

New Zealand: Orakei Management • Mr. Jason Snashall
12-14 Tamaki Dr. • The Landing, D Pier, Orakei Marina • Auckland, New Zealand
tel: + 64 (9) 280 1050 • mobile: + 64 (21) 929 592
email: jason@orakeimarina.co.nz

Southern Africa: Mr. Anthony Worsdale
tel: + 27 (0) 833 775 536 • email: rad@wall.co.za

Our Dealer Network - All Fleming Yachts are sold through our world wide dealer network – most of whom have represented us for many years. Staffed by people with enormous experience in operating, servicing and selling Fleming Yachts – they all stand firmly behind the product and provide after sales service second to none.

New methods and materials are continually being introduced to improve the functionality and safety. The Fleming 55 is built to comply with CE Ocean Class Category A or NMMMA/ABYC standards.



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Fleming Yachts, Inc.

1760 Monrovia Avenue • Suite A18 • Costa Mesa, CA • 92627 • USA • tel: +1 949 645 1024 • email: information@flemingyachts.com
www.flemingyachts.com

