



# JP 54

## THE CRUISER OF THE 3<sup>E</sup> MILLENIUM

Imagined by Jean-Pierre Dick,  
designed by Guillaume Verdier and  
the designer Stéphanie Marin, the  
JP54 is truly revolutionary!  
A UFO that overthrows 40 years  
of tradition in fast cruising and is  
brim-full of new ideas. Design,  
comfort and performance  
are combined on board the same  
yacht. Exclusively for Voiles et  
Voiliers, Jean-Pierre Dick invited  
us along for the first cruise  
in New Zealand. It was pure bliss!

Text by Loïc Le Bras

VOILES

What a wake-up call! At the end of March, in Auckland, those to discover the JP54 were to experience a shock. Firstly taken aback, the speechless visitor gets his tongue back and utters a long "Wow!" and wonders why no one ever dared to revolutionize cruising before. Why do boatyards continue to produce stereotyped yachts? Without falling into blind ecstasy, we must recognize that a huge breath of fresh air has come along with this innovatively designed yacht. In passing, it has thrown a huge stone into the pool of preconceived ideas: those that pretend that comfort and performance are contradictory, that a comfortable boat is necessarily heavy and slow, and that a fast yacht is spartan. On the JP54, the comfort will exceed the average on yachts of the same size. It is also stylish, and when it comes to performance the gulf is huge. What monohull cruiser is capable of beating upwind at more than 9 knots, and charges along under spinnaker at 15 knots with as much wind? Answer: the JP54.

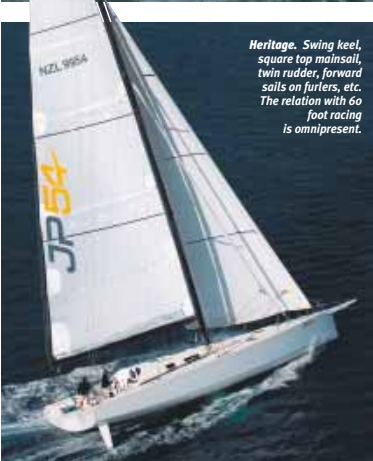
**BUILT OF CARBON/FOAM SANDWICH, THE JP54** is a top-of-the-range high-tech yacht. The care taken in its construction and finish was a real technological challenge. The powerful hull designed by Guillaume Verdier reminds us of the lines of the latest 60 foot monohulls by the talented architect of Safran, Group Bel and the very recent PRB.

The interior design, entrusted to Stéphanie Marin, revolutionizes the appearance of boat layouts with an elegant style, mixing round forms and taut lines. The original concept comes from Jean-Pierre Dick, winner of the Barcelona World Race and twice champion of the Transat Jacques Vabre. Disappointed by the seafaring capacities of a cruising yacht during his holiday in Corsica, "JP" imagined the boat of his dreams and had it built! "I wanted a fast, comfortable, seaworthy yacht", he tells us today. "Together with Luc Talbourdet, we later decided to add an important design touch to the interior to enjoy a feeling of well-being and to experience the interior as a work of art". It was a daring challenge, but through associating skills, the result has been a success. Jean-Pierre Dick, Guillaume Verdier, Stéphanie Marin, Luc Talbourdet, as well as Luc Barrissol, responsible for the



*Swift. Powerful and sails taut, the JP54 manoeuvres effortlessly thanks to three hydraulic winches.*

PHOTO: J/BOATS



*Heritage. Swing keel, square top mainsail, twin rudders, forward sails on furlers, etc. The relation with 60 foot racing is omnipresent.*

construction and Christian Dumard, project manager, have simply reinvented fast cruising.

**THE INTERIOR DESIGN IS THE MOST SURPRISING ASPECT OF THE JP54** - A functional work of art.

On entering, your eyes are first drawn to the astonishing galley/chart table unit. It is a real piece of sculpture. They then wander around the huge saloon space which continues far forward. On either side curves a long mango-coloured striped sofa seat. Despite our recollections of the 3D images published in the February issue of *Voiles et Voliers*, the surprise is complete, and there is an incredible impression of space. We must also see this unit rotate to understand the ingenuity of the system.

This circular floor including the galley/chart table and "saloon" table block rotates to 180 degrees to displace the 600 kilos of the office/galley upwind. This principle is inspired by the rotating satellite in *Paprec-Virbac 2*, Jean-Pierre's ex-60 footer. When it turns around, every

**IF YOU LOOK AT IT IN DETAIL, IT IS THE WORK OF A GOLDSMITH YOU COULD SPEND HOURS CHECKING OUT EVERY LITTLE CORNER OF THE JP54.**

thing rotates at the same time: the water, gas, electricity, drainage, telephone, etc.

It was a real brain-teaser for Luc Barrissol. "We did thousands of designs for this boat, which ended up in the bin" Luc told me, to explain the difficulties they encountered and the countless modifications carried out.

"The aim was to create a light, attractive and functional yacht" - attractive in the care given to the interior finish, without the slightest counter-moulding! It was an incredible challenge! Example: the electric wiring of the overhead lamps is integrated into the

boat structure, and you could spend hours in raptures over the shape of each object. However, at the same time you are filled with impatience to see how this yacht fares at sea.

**AS YOU LEAVE THE MARINA, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PRESS A BUTTON**

to hoist the mainsail with one of the three hydraulic winches. Under genaker, we tacked from reach to reach to get out of Auckland Bay. The scenery passed by. Filled with

wonder, Jean-Pierre Dick rushed to the sail locker to take out the 300 metres square of the asymmetric. At the helm, she's a joy of smoothness and precision.

The position of the interior carousel can be felt immediately in the yacht's trim. With the 2.8 tons of bulb at the base of the keel swung to 40 degrees, the stiffness is faultless. When there's a puff of wind, the JP54 only reacts by accelerating. There's no sudden heel.

We sail round the island of Waiheke at more than 12 knots, with peaks of 15. Each taking it in turn, we took the helm enjoying the unique pleasure of that particular moment. If the running backstays are used for safety reasons when the wind is lifting, they are not required in a medium wind, thanks to the triple sweep-back spreaders. From a manoeuvring point of view, everything has been simplified around the three winches in the cockpit. There is no mainmast track but an aft bridle. We successively gybe, but there is no need for more than three crewmen.

As we approach the Man'o War Bay, after 25 miles of pure bliss, the sock swallows up the spinnaker and the mainsail falls all by itself without the slightest resistance. I am a little surprised that nobody starts up the engine before lowering the sails.

but it's already running in its electric version, since the inboard engine is a diesel/electric hybrid.

What a joy to anchor without disturbing the neighbours or the birds! The anchor, cleverly concealed in the jib boom, falls into six metres of sea. To reduce the draft by 3.50 to 2.50 metres, the JP54 can keel to 50

degrees to one side and fill a 900 litre air ballast on the other. Once anchored, all that is left to do is open the tender garage and pull on a single length of rope. And off you go! In a few seconds, the already inflated tender is in the water. That beats it all!

**ON USE THE INTERIOR TURNS OUT TO BE FUNCTIONAL AND PLEASANT**

You feel good inside. I am again surprised by the yacht's autonomy. We will not run the heat engine until the following morning to recharge the batteries, and yet, all day we've been continually using it to manoeuvre. Everything works on hydraulics: keel ram, carousel, winches, windlass, etc. Towards the end of the evening, with the Wi-Fi on board, we each settle down with our laptops to send our first impressions to the other side of the world. In the "small lounge" or on the small office desk in the aft cabins, there is always a 220 volt socket for the computers. Decidedly, nothing has been left to chance, as can be seen from the seawater jet built into the bow to clean the chain when it lifts full of mud.

The following day, we tacked upwind to return to Auckland. The wind rose from 5 to 25 knots. In calm weather, all you need to do is position the galley/chart table block forward to lift the rear of the boat and increase speed by a few tenths of a knot. Once again, the precise steering offers all the sensations of a racing boat combined with the serenity of cruising. The only difficulty when the wind lifted was to find the right keel angle. In the absence of a daggerboard, the keel must not be swung too far, or there is a risk of side-slip. Once again the manoeuvres are quick with hydraulic winches. We furled the genoa, then the jib, and finally with the self-cocking spinnaker.

There is only one drawback in this concept of praise. Although manoeuvring is assisted and simplified, the JP54 is not an ordinary boat. Confirmed experience as a sailor is necessary to appreciate the incredible potential of this revolutionary yacht to its full.

**Innovation.** As for his previous 60 foot racing yachts, Jean-Pierre Dick has always been an innovator.



PHOTO: J/BOATS

# DESIGN: ELEGANT AND FUNCTIONAL

**T**he layout of the saloon and the rotating carousel are the two major innovations of this extremely stylish and functional interior. Every detail of the JP54 was designed with an aesthetic aim in mind. Even the mast bulkhead and its two large openings contribute to the interior design. They separate the central "small lounge" space, just before the two Breton beds and the huge bathroom. The whole of this makes you feel like you are in a large loft.

By entrusting the interior design to the artist from Nice, Stéphanie Marin, who had never set foot on a yacht before, the Jean-Pierre Dick team made a very daring gamble. "At least we knew that there would be no preconceived ideas about the interior layout of a yacht", Luc l'Albouret now congratulates himself, president of the IMOCA and general manager of Absolute Dreamer, Jean-Pierre Dick's company. The concern for detail can be found in the illuminated grab rails. Always with the aim of simplifying life, the Absolute Dreamer team imagined tailor-made travel bags separated into compartments like a small cupboard. Their shape was designed to fill the vertical space against the engine bulkheads of the aft cabins, or horizontally under the forward Breton beds. So there is no need to empty your bag when you come on board! Lockers for foul weather gear and a boot rack have also been built in. To reduce the space occupied around the saloon table, there are inbuilt Russian doll style stools permitting eight people to dine around the table. Based on the principle that there is only one bathroom in an apartment, "JP" and his team decided not to have a number of narrow bathroom areas, but to design just one very large one in which you are not likely to bash your head when taking a shower. And the all-carbon toilet is mounted on a purchase to maintain it vertical, even when heeling. Really nothing has been left to chance!



PHOTO: HOWARD/STYLO



**1 Starboard or port?**  
Demonstration in pictures of the two positions of the central carousel. 600 kilos with the batteries and hydraulics which are transferred from one side to the other by pressing a button! Note the illuminated grab rails at the back of the saloon.

**2 Breton beds.** The two twin forward berths are Breton beds which can be closed by a curtain. Below, a large amount of storage can take the customized travel bags, designed like mobile wardrobes.

**3 Bio design.** All round forms the ergonomic galley has an 80 litre refrigerator, but a small worktop area. There is not fixed oven, but a Cobb; a small portable barbecue oven that can be hung up in the cockpit.

**4 Huge.** A single but huge bathroom on board, with a rotating carbon washbasin staying vertical when the boat heels! The shower space at the entrance is huge.

**5 Unique.** On board each item is a work of art. In the image of the saloon table and its tree-shaped stand. The long symmetrical sofa-seating has 139 different cushions! A real puzzle to put together the first time.

**6 Office.** Boat-rack to the bottom, clothes locker behind and light-well above the office corner in each of the aft cabins. Two 220 volt sockets are concealed in the clothes locker and another in the bed-head.

**7 Asymmetric.** The aft port cabin has greater headroom. All the grab rails on board are made of carbon - except for the illuminated ones - and the cabin lights come on simply by touching the LEDs.



# FAST, EFFORTLESS CRUISING

Inspired by 60 foot monohulls, the powerful hull is combined with a swing keel and stacks the 600 kilos of the carousel to get the full potential from this yacht. Considering it to be a cruiser, and not a racing cruiser, Jean-Pierre Dick and his team have refused to have the yacht IRC rated. The very simple deck plan advocates facility. The pit has been brought back to a single starboard hydraulic winch. When launched, the large cockpit had not yet been fitted with the small central arch which offers a support for moving about and is the base of the folded cockpit table. Likewise, it was still missing the rope bag which prevents halyards and sheets from lying about on the floor of the cockpit.

To clear as much living space as possible in the cockpit, the manoeuvring has been brought back and centred on three winches, two of which behind the helmsman for the headsail sheet and running backstay. The clutch systems built into the boom for reefs considerably reduce the effort needed, but require a little getting used to, to understand how they work. The JP54 does not lack storage with lots of lockers in the cockpit and a huge forward sail locker divided into compartments to make it easier to use. Halyards, fenders and sails each have their own space. The Absolute Dreamer team wishes to market this new yacht as a limited series. However such a dream does have its price. Although we have not been told what this is, we can estimate it on the basis of the overall quality, between 1.5 and 2 million Euros.

L.L.B.

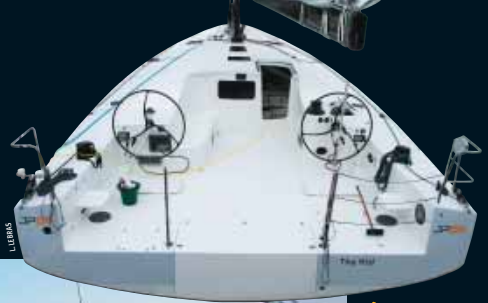


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**1** **Fantastic!** Once the inflated tender has been taken out, the huge empty garage is transformed into a swimming pool platform for the children, who can get in and out of the sea whenever they feel like it. In this huge bare cockpit, the small central arch acting as a support for the folding table is still missing. There is a single seat in the cockpit, but the stools inside can be used as extra seating around the table.

L.L.B.B.S



L.L.B.B.S



**2** **Powerful.** Under the large asymmetric spinnaker, the JP54 serenely charges along at more than 15 knots. The anchor, always in its place, is concealed in the jib boom and is scarcely visible - the never-ending concern for the attractive and practical.

**3** **Comfort.** The helmsman has large precise steering wheels, and, under his feet - following the VOYO - an adjustable navigation board in three different heeling positions. No ropes are to be found on the clean-lined roof with hatches flush with the deck.

**4** **Clever.** Similar to what can be found on some Amel yachts, a seawater jet works automatically with the windlass to rinse the chain when the anchor is lifted. In harbour or at anchor, a retractable bow thruster makes manoeuvring easier.

**5** **Pit.** All the pit manoeuvres are brought back on the starboard and are trimmed with a single two-speed hydraulic winch. You need a little practice to get used to handling the many cleats.

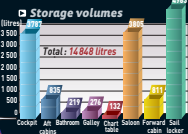
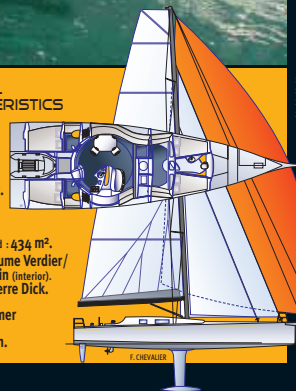
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## TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Length overall: 16.45 m.
- Beam: 5.30 m.
- Draft: 2.50-3.50 m.
- Displacement: 9 t.
- Ballast: 2.8 t.
- Sail area upwind: 216 m<sup>2</sup>.
- Sail area downwind: 434 m<sup>2</sup>.
- Architect: Guillaume Verdier / Stéphanie Marin (interior).
- Design: Jean-Pierre Dick.
- Manufacturer: Absolute Dreamer (Tauranga, NZ).
- Price: Unknown.



### Strong points

- General concept.
- Very original and effective design. Performance well above average.
- Construction quality.
- Many clever tricks.

### Weak points

- Small galley worktop area.
- Yacht only meant for experienced sailors.



[www.jp54.fr](http://www.jp54.fr)