

# BEACH ACCESS



## *Lagoon 380 Catamaran*

*by Zuzana Prochazka*

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**B**each Access is a Lagoon 380 catamaran that sits on a mooring in Newport Beach, California. Monika and Glenn Twitchell live aboard and they are planning to go cruising in a few years so you might think they're out there to practice living aboard without the umbilical cord of 30amp power. However, they are actually living aboard because their boat is a very comfortable, livable and a manageable platform that (with the exception of a periodic run to the pump-out station) keeps them very self-sufficient and cost effective.

A few years ago, the Twitchells identified the boat they wanted when they saw a Lagoon 380 at the boat show in Oakland. Much about its design and layout appealed to them and they started looking for a used version to take them cruising to Mexico and the Caribbean. Soon after, a Florida broker notified them that he had a 2000 model that was extensively outfitted for cruising but the owner's plans had changed. Hull #60, re-named *Beach Access*, was shipped to Vancouver and the delivery down the coast served as an excellent shakedown cruise for the Twitchells.

### Design, Construction and Performance

A unique feature on Lagoon catamarans is that their saloon windows are vertical instead of angled. When you think of the solar heat that is generated in your car via the windshield, you will understand how angled windows can heat up a boat too. But the vertical windows on *Beach Access* keep the interior cool and comfortable. The 380 also adds a circular and slightly angled coach roof that makes for an attractive and distinctive look.



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The hull construction is polyester and Vinylester resin with a balsa sandwich and a balsa cored deck. There are four watertight bulkheads at the bow and stern of the hulls and the boat is a solid one-piece mold with laminated wooden bulkheads.

The 380 will motor between seven and eight knots at a cruising RPM of 2500 depending on wind and waves. Upwind sailing in a breeze less than 10 knots will not set any records and pointing is a bit compromised as the Lagoon has no daggerboards to keep it tracking. But like most multihulls, its favorite point of sail is a beam or a broad reach and it can sail 12-13 knots under the right conditions. The draft with the regular skegs is just under four feet.

### Cockpit, Deck & Rigging

The large cockpit on the Lagoon 380 will seat eight comfortably and is open to the interior of the boat with a large sliding glass door and a sliding window to the galley. The helm station on port is well protected from the elements by the cabin top and provides good visibility forward.



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The decks are wide and clear and all lines are led aft for easy handling by a couple. The single spreader rig is deck stepped and rises almost 57 feet above the water. The main is fully battened and has a very full roach. There are only two winches that manage the operations of hoisting, trimming and reefing sails, so it couldn't get much simpler. There is direct access to the cockpit from the port hull transom and hatches on both hulls aft provide excellent access to the sound-proofed compartments that hold the twin Yanmar 27HP diesels (upgraded) with Saildrives. There is an engine cut-off switch in the cockpit as a quickly accessible safety measure.



The Lagoon 380 has eight deck hatches and two additional opening compartments by the mast that open onto the chain locker and the built-in electric windlass. The anchor chain runs inside a fiberglass track that extends from the foot of the mast forward to the crossbeam chainplate and makes for good footing, allowing you to stay out of the trampoline when anchoring.

The storage in the forward parts of both hulls is incredible and provides two garages for lines, fenders, buckets, and in the case of *Beach Access*, a watermaker installation. Since a catamaran is basically two boats, the storage is amazing in general but that's where it gets tricky. Nature may abhor a vacuum but humans cannot tolerate a void, and we have a tendency to fill it with anything that will fit. Of course, weight is a very serious issue on multihulls, especially when it is far forward, so although the 380 provides the room, a prudent mariner will need to exercise restraint when filling it.

#### **Systems, Tankage & Options**

There is a sizeable list of options that owners of the 380 may choose from and include everything from the bimini and type of upholstery to a selection of Raymarine or B&G instrumentation, a water cooled reefer, 12V fans and a Lazybag sail









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cover. An upgrade is also available for the tankage – an optional extra water tank of 86 gallons by the mast to keep the weight amidships, and larger aluminum fuel tanks for 68 gallons total.

The beauty of getting a well-found, slightly used boat is that you get a lot for the money. Thanks to its previous owner (and without much of a price premium), *Beach Access* has a Spectra watermaker, Kyocera solar panels, a nice Avon RIB and closed cell foam cockpit cushions. The dinghy davits however, were standard and are nicely integrated right at the factory.

#### Layout & Accommodations

The Lagoon 380 comes in owner as well as charter versions which differ only slightly; the owner cabin is in the starboard hull with a full bath forward, a large queen berth aft and a desk space in between, whereas the charter boat has identical hulls with four cabins and two shared heads amidships. Again, storage is excellent with plenty of hanging lockers and shelf space. The main saloon has 6'5" headroom and comfortably seats eight at the central table with additional storage under the settees. The galley up layout keeps the cook in the middle of the social action and the sliding glass window instantly connects the galley with the cockpit.

The nav station is positioned just inside and close to the helm for good communication. My only

complaint here is that even with the swing-out seat, there is little to brace yourself against in rough weather and the whole station is like a bit of an afterthought in the saloon design.

One of my favorite features is that *Beach Access* has a hatch overhead in the separate shower stall through which the owners snake the hose from the Sunshower on deck, so there's no need to run the engine in the anchorage for a quick hot water spritz. As a "monohuller" I feel a twinge of jealousy when I see the containers of flour, pasta or what-have-you that sit atop the free spaces in the galley. They never have to be put away when heading out of the harbor because on a platform as stable as a catamaran, there is little need for the usual careful stowing of all loose items as is common on monohulls.

Another great feature is one that might not be top of mind until you dial in living aboard. Since the Twitchells are on a fore and aft mooring, wind shifts tend to effect their sleep as sometimes the wind comes from the stern and slaps against the hulls. Anyone who's tried sleeping through a night of that will appreciate this... Due to the Lagoon's shallow draft and easy maneuverability, Glenn and Monika have worked out a system by which they can spin the boat around on the mooring just with line-handling. According to Monika, they have it down to just a few minutes which



allows her to barely wake up when the wind shifts at 3:00 am. Who among us monohullers can claim to be able to do that?

### History & High Marks

The first Lagoon catamaran was a 55 footer and was launched in 1987 during a time when the advanced labs at Jeanneau built several winning vessels for the world racing circuit, including Route du Rhum and Atlantic solo races. Lagoon touts that it is via the "trickle down" technology that the production boats get to take advantage of their racing sisters' advancements. When Beneteau took over Jeanneau in 1995, it brought purchasing power and a worldwide distribution network and the Lagoon product line expanded. The Lagoon 380, currently the smallest but also the most popular of the fleet, was launched in 1999 and well over 300 hulls have been built to date.

I asked Glenn and Monika separately about their likes and dislikes on the various design features of *Beach Access*. Without hesitation, Glenn pointed out that one of his peeves was that in order to change the oil in the Saildrives, the boat had to be either hauled or beached because the drains are on the bottom and a lift pump cannot be used. But they both agreed instantly on what they loved about their boat – its livability and sociability. The comfort and fun factors rank high with *Beach Access* and in the end, isn't that what most of cruising is supposed to be about anyway? ⚓



### Lagoon 380 Standard Specs

Designer:	Peteghem/Prevost
LOA:	37' 11"
LWL:	37' 11"
Beam:	21' 5"
Draft:	3' 9"
Displacement:	17,700
Sail Area:	851 sq feet
Fuel Tankage:	53 gallons
Water Tankage:	79 gallons

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