

# Le Cat

Anarchist Jens sends us this report on the VPLP designed [LeBreton 45](#)



Somehow a sailing vacation was not possible this year. While planing a land based alternative we identified - the Boat Show in Cannes just in our desired time frame. So, why not visit yachts in their natural element instead of on cradles indoors? And Indeed, the Salon Nautique de Cannes has it's very own special charm, even though most of the yachts are motor vessels. But climbing on yachts in barefoot and in shorts and t-shirt in warm summer weather is really fantastic. There were lots of beautiful yachts, newest models, and some you wouldn't

see anywhere else. But of the beauties we liked the The LeBreton Sig45. I've monitoring this special carbon fiber cruiser project for a while now, but seeing her finally in reality is kind of breathtaking.

The question of whether we could come aboard was happily welcomed, so we entered and found ourselves in a different world. The boat is wide, very wide. So the open bridge deck provides lots of space. But all the sail handling machinery is cleverly located - all sheet handling is done from the steering benches, and very special is the winch pod behind the mast. Here, the work should be very easy. [VPLP](#) and Bruno Peyron have really done a good job!

Then we visited the cabins below decks. There are 6 good sized berths in three rooms, a small but cozy saloon, a good galley, a comfortable navstation, and two rest rooms with ultra lite toilet bowls. Somehow I feared a bit the combination of black and white in fotos as this normally looks ice cold. But here in the Mediterranean sun, this worked very well, friendly, light and pleasant. From the saloon benches you have got a good view over the surrounding harbour. I immediately liked it. The yard has done a fantastic job.



Later we met Mr. Hugo LeBreton. The discussion ended up with an invitation for a test ride. Two days later wind and business dated and allowed a short ride with this great boat. While it was quite calm in the morning, at about noon we have a very pleasant 16-18 kn sea breeze, best test conditions. There were some more guests gathered and together we helped Hugo LeBreton, his Partner Bernhard and Hugo's sister to prepare the boat.



Setting sail is in general no big problem. Except for the main. The halyard leaves the mast somewhere in the middle close to the pivoting point. That means you can not work with the gravity pulling the halyard down, but you have to pull it horizontal. Well we were three pulling, get it up quick enough. But there is enough place on the deck to this. The remaining meter I did with the winch handle, and this worked as comfortable as I expected it to be. For cruising I'd opt for an electrical winch here. Furling the fore sails is extremely easy and quick, since the lines are

led direct aft, with very few diversions and not too much friction. After the luff tension has been adjusted with the cunningham, the engines stopped and we were sailing.... What a feeling!

The speed logs in at about 12 knots. But we are still too close to the Lerins Islands, and loads of power boats uselessly churning up the sea. A couple of minutes later, Bernhard had trimmed here a bit and there, the speed increased to 14 knots. Not bad. But Hugo is still not satisfied: there must be something wrong, we're quicker. He sent Bernhard down to have a look on the GPS. With a big smile he returned... 17 knots, in 16-18 knots of Wind. Not Bad to be honest. The instruments are badly calibrated says Hugo. There was no time to recalibrate them lately. Bernhard waved me over to the lee Hull, and asked me to take some shots through the emergency porthole. Have a look there is the Sig45 Logo on the rudder.... And indeed, in each gust, the Windward hull lifts a bit out of the water and shows the rudder. While doing so, the boat smoothly accelerates. A insecure feeling does not come to my mind. It's just a fascinating thing how the water flows below the other hull. Sitting here for a while I also can't report that she is noisier than other boats I sailed before.

The boat simply slices through the little waves, flies rock solid. Even when we hit some power boaters wakes (a 20m Power Boat) you don't recognize it. On a mono, approaching the wake I had looked for some grab rails, but not on this boat. Instead we were moving around on the huge bridge deck discussing relaxed or enjoying the ride. Great. From time to time, the leeward hull takes some spray, but elsewhere she is a dry boat. A bit later my base-cap flew away, showing the strength of the apparent wind! I'd guess something between 25 and 30 knots. This explains the only annoying thing I found while sailing on board. The constant hum from the Diamonds made of carbon fiber. These are oscillating in the strong apparent wind, and the mast is the perfect resonator. Well here we need to change something, Mr. LeBreton said, that's not good. After the Gybe the hum was gone.



Then we tack. The self tacking Jib is no problem at all. Changing the mast rotation and switching sides is the only thing you need to do. Just a few seconds later we are at full speed again. Fantastic. Later I'm allowed to take the tiller for a while. There is not much pressure on helm. You can feel the streaming of the water but you can direct her with two fingers, and she reacts on each and any movement of the tiller. But she is no way nervous, or over reacts. No she just does what you want her to do. That's superb!



Sailing her according to the telltales and keeping her in the groove is much easier than I thought. Two degrees more, three less. No problem. Such a steering precision I've never had before on any other sailboat. Much too early comes the signal to return. Lets bear away and unfurl the gennaker Wow the boat accelerates any further. Now the speedo shows 17 knots, and look on the GPS shows 20 knots over ground.

And still she sails completely relaxed. The feeling on the helm hasn't changed. She still reacts on each any command. That's crazy. But even though the acceleration in each gust is remarkable, it remains gentle. It's not like is reported from some racing multihull, where accelerations pulls you off your feet. Now we identify a big powerboat behind us, but she can't get any closer. We keep the distance for a while. This must have been frustrating for them.

Even though everybody wanted to go on with this race, we needed to gybe back to the harbour.

Dumping the main and furling the gennaker is a piece of cake. Berthing with wind from abeam is also no problem. We just let the wind do most of the job, just waiting for the right moment to go backward into the box. We help to bring the boat back into exhibition shape, then an exhilarating sailing afternoon ends for us. Many thanks to Mr. LeBreton for the invitation!!!

What is so special about this boat? The Look? The Speed? Yes, both of them. She will definitely be a head turner in any port. She simply looks great. And the speed, for sure. Which cruiser/racer will sail 20 knots in just 17 knots true? But the real sensation is the how easy, relaxed or cool she sails while still remaining exhilarating. This mixture makes her unique on the market, and something really special. You must sail her to understand this.



She is a real boat from sailors for sailors. Not just another motor home with antifouling paint like some other cruising multihulls. And the price? Yes, the price is quite high, but keep in mind that similar built and intended monos (there are the Marten 49 or the Baltic 50 in my mind) that have similar price tags. And now? Ah, yes, with a mono like the mentioned ones, you have the ability to take part in regattas. In any way, the LeBreton Sig45 is a very, very special boat. - Jens Krauß