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ON TEST

Fountaine Pajot Saona 47
SwissCat S48
Sunreef 74

THE MAGAZINE COMPLICIT IN THE DREAMS OF ITS READERS

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Text: Philippe Echelle - photos: Ph. Echelle and DR

Fountaine Pajot Saona 47'

Showing the future of the range?



After 40 years in existence and nearly 3000 boats built, the Fountaine Pajot yard counts only two models at 14 m: the Bahia and the Salina. The Casamance, the first flagship in 1985 was only 13m! The Saona 47, unveiled at the 2017 International Multihull Show at La Grande Motte in the south of France, now occupies a strategic position between the Helia 44 and the Saba 50. So what's it all about?

The changing faces of a brand and a range

Naval architects Michel Joubert and Bernard Nivelt (the fathers of the Charente Maritime 1 and 2 and the Louisiana, where it all began!) were the exclusive architects for the builder based in Aigrefeuille in western

France for more than 30 years. With the replacement of the Salina 48 by the Saona 47, the Berret-Racoupeau team of naval architects are now the exclusive designers of the sailboat range. The Lucia 40, presented in 2015 is now the entry model in the Fountaine Pajot family, followed by the Helia 44, the Saona 47, the Saba 50, the Ipanema

58' and the Victoria 67. This list shows the significant growth in the size of the different models! Cleverly, the manufacturer has not given up on the 12m segment, but did give up the 36 footer (forever?!). The market is showing a real leap in the direction of a demanding international clientele with large budgets. The conquest of image and more



● ● ● ● ► **THE KEY ESSENTIALS**

- 1: The Saona offers great performance. The balanced design, living spaces and sailing comfort are all a success.
- 2: Technical options such as the carbon mast and membrane sails all make sense on this model.

- 1 : Under maxi asymmetric spi and square-topped membrane mainsail, the Saona 47 expresses Fountaine Pajot's new character
- 2: Nothing prevents this (very) comfortable catamaran from romping along in a breeze
- 3: A good point for the ergonomics of the Saona: the helm station and the access to it are central to the spaces dedicated to comfortable relaxation
- 4: Lounge deck, beach club and other sunbathing areas all have their place on a catamaran dedicated to enjoyment
- 5: The access to the flybridge is safe and fluid and does not disturb the helmsman: a success!

ambitious brand territory is translating concretely into more luxurious boats which offer a renewed interior design and avant-garde lines. The challenge already seems to be being won economically (sales are up), and the appearance of the Saona rebalances the vacancy left by stopping production of the Salina, in a size crucial for individual users and cruisers.

Constantly evolving industrial manufacturing quality

The Aigrefeuille plant has been enlarged and modernized. It remains one of the world's largest manufacturing sites for resin transfer molding (RTM) injection molding processes. For the Saona, only part of the coachroof and the bimini use this technique, the rest of the composite work is "traditional" (infusion after manual insertion of the core and skins). For the manufacture of the hull, the outer skin is impregnated with vinylester (a polyester resin with higher mechanical and anti-porosity qualities). End-grain balsa is used for the core, and the deck is also in sandwich using the same method. The main bulkheads use PVC foam (multiaxial glass / Airex foam) and are glued and manually bonded to the hull. The skegs are inserted and glued into reservations in the underside of the hull. This means they will act like a fuse, not leading to an ingress of water in the event of the skeg suffering a serious collision. The rudder posts are held by self-aligning bearings.

A sophisticated silhouette

The latest IT tools used by architectural teams make it possible to visually optimize the audacious creations needed to stay ahead of the

game. The work done on the coachroof of the Saona is a perfect illustration. The specifications impose a semi-flybridge cockpit, a double sunbathing area on top of the coachroof, a comfortable and safe flybridge cockpit and a good amount of headroom in the saloon, all without penalizing the aesthetic perception or the bridgedeck clearance! Moving all of these constraints into an ergonomic shape and ending up with pleasing lines is a challenge, but Olivier Racoupeau has succeeded perfectly in this. The overall profile remains familiar, but it is in flux, with new design elements. The exterior faces of the hulls are pleasing to the eye, a discreet strake toward the top of the topsides and a decorative strip above the waterline, stretch the form and lengthen the boat's perception. The hatch recesses contribute to making the brand immediately recognizable. I liked the clever design of the forefoot and the join to the deck, softening and modernizing the look of the bow. The fit of the coachroof is neat, and the windshields blend in nicely with the horizontal lines of the coachroof and the bimini. The overall fineness of the superstructure is remarkable, given the abundance of comfort aboard. Tinted windshields, flush deck hatches, combined with a multitude of aesthetic details, serve to generate a pleasing look. Consequently, the Saona comes across exceptionally well.

Very welcoming outdoor areas

The access to the bench-seat on the flybridge and the double sunbathing area cleverly positioned on top of the coachroof is remarkable because it is safe and can be used without disturbing the helmsman.



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The communication between the helm station and the cockpit (by a small internal staircase) is ergonomic, simple and direct. The exterior deck lounge has a transverse bench facing forward (on the rear beam) and a lounge facing aft (a nice watchkeeper's berth!). The generous-sized table can seat 8 guests, on the L-shaped sofa and the central seat. The exterior refrigerator and grill (on the aft beam) transform this lounge area which is well-protected from the sun and the wind (but open to the anchorage) into a wonderful maritime tavern. Additional cushions on the foredeck allow you to rediscover this area at anchor or in light airs.

Saloon and cabins: a definite urban-chic style

The current trend is towards reducing the size of the "inside dining room" but this does not penalize the Saona (which is generally aimed at blue water cruising in warmer climates) especially since the cockpit is really sheltered. Stools around the central island (which can be equipped with a lifting flap) will allow for dining "at the bar" if the weather is cooler. Galley fittings and refrigeration (sliding drawers in stainless steel) are beautifully crafted; the large door retracts on both sides, really opening up the galley-saloon area. Isabelle Racoupeau's stamp is clearly identifiable here, with beautiful upholstery in a modern and comfortable shape, carefully-designed living spaces and a contemporary decorative style skillfully transposed into the nautical world. The portlights in the ceiling of the saloon offer a good view of the sails from the galley or from when you are sitting. The owner's cabin to port is attractive: a real "home sweet home"! The recessed television is fixed on a pivoting, articulated bracket. The light is superb, there a good-sized shelf above the desk and abundant storage. The woodwork is neat, everything impeccably adjusted, the carpet is comfortable in bare feet, and the bathroom is beautiful. The arrangement of the starboard aft cabin is traditional, facing forward, while the forward bunk is athwartships. This innovative installation on this size of boat is very pleasant, and it highlights the welcoming feel on board and contributes to a perceived luxurious quality, which is both comfortable and tasteful.

We had the swell from behind, with the wind rising to 12-13 knots. It was nice to observe the beautiful, even sliding motion across the water and the delicate support of the hulls on the water and the bow that lifts with determination

The engine compartments

Our Saona test boat is a very upgraded model and equipped with a multitude of equipment (generator, reversible air conditioning, carbon mast, membrane sails, fiber rigging, extra refrigeration, hydraulic platform ...). The layout of all the technical installations is nevertheless quite intuitive: the yard's intention here, being to regroup all the main functions in the engine compartments. On the port side, the service batteries are located on a shelf, optimizing their accessibility for monitoring and potential replacement (in addition, this makes the solar panels closer, for a short cable run!). The choice of 4x150A gel batteries seems technically, economically and ecologically sound. The mechanical and electrical environments are all nice and clear. The Victron 2000W inverter-charger, the circuit breakers, starboard engine



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6: Even in good breezes, it's pleasant to stay up on the flybridge

7: A generous outdoor table for 6/8 guests. The cockpit refrigerator and the integrated grill transform this area which is well protected from the sun and the wind into a delicious "French waterside eatery"

8: An "urban chic" style in good taste, well designed and skillfully transposed into the marine world

9: The near-disappearance of the interior dining area is the current trend with this size of boat



emergency starter switch are fixed on the watertight bulkhead and perfectly identifiable. Large-section cables cross the boat on the bottom of the nacelle (I would have preferred to have seen a dedicated cable duct). The imposing Onan 12kVA generator is housed to starboard, and on both sides, the access to the motors is excellent, with a great feature being steps in non-slip aluminum. The lower hull molding allows for easy cleaning, and the electrical cabinets for the circuit breakers are splashproof. The top of the rudder posts pass through an aluminum structural plate bolted to the

With the traveler well-eased, the catamaran regained a more balanced helm in gusts of over 35 knots.

aft bulkhead, and the autopilot and the linkages are attached to steering arms as well as the helm cables.

Two very complementary test sails!

Our first trip out would have been great for learning about light to medium airs, which are not necessarily ideal for this luxurious version, being heavier than the standard boat. In the Baie d'Aigues Mortes, in the South of France, we had 10 knots of wind out of the SE after the International Multihull Show closed. There was a significant chop on the water, indicating bigger winds offshore. Nevertheless, after a few boatlengths, I immediately got a good feeling about the boat: the membrane sails by Incidences, the fiber rigging and the fixed carbon mast are superb (the sail areas remain identical to the standard version). The maxi asymmetric spinnaker provides a real power boost in this light weather and allows the Saona to pick up earlier in the breeze. After a gybe to starboard, we had the swell from behind, with the wind rising to 12-13 knots. It was nice to observe the beautiful, even sliding motion across the water and the delicate support of the hulls on the water and the bow that lifts with determination. The boat is alive at the helm, swift for a cruising boat and comfortable and pleasant to trim. Peaks at more than 9 knots are not uncommon! Coming back on the wind confirms the boat's good disposition. For our "second round", we were in the Baie d'Hyères a few weeks later, under a powerful Mistral. We set out with 1 reef and a few rolls on the genoa with 30-35 knots of wind on the beam. By bearing away slightly to find a better compromise with the waves, the Saona was regularly sailing at over 10 knots, often at 12 with a peak at 13.7 knots. With the traveler well-eased, the catamaran regained a more balanced helm in gusts of over 35 knots. The second reef with a 50% reduction of the genoa restored serenity before gybing. The Mistral was starting to become unleashed, now established at more than 40 knots, with bursts over 45 knots and returning to port on a close reach became imperative!



OLIVIER AND ISABELLE RACOUPEAU

The Saona 47 marks a turning point in our approach to the hulls while working unequivocally on performance. The inverted bows allow for a longer waterline and the design of the sheer reduces visible freeboard and windage. Added to this, the weight is not excessive. Fountaine-Pajot DNA is clearly in evidence. The restlessness of the hull design is reinforced by the modern style of the superstructure and the two-tone appearance of the coachroof. As for exterior comfort, the relaxation areas are numerous and well dimensioned, from the lounge deck to the cockpit and the forward sunbathing area.

The aft section is where the most noticeable deck innovations are. The introduction of an aft platform transforms the sugarscoops, and as and when required, it becomes a beach club or perfectly integrated outdoor galley. It also makes all the functions of the dinghy easier, from boarding to hoisting. Inside the boat, the chic decor offers charter versions with four identical cabins or an owner's version with an exceptional suite for a sailboat of this size.

In addition to the work on the construction, special attention was paid to all the aesthetic and functional details.

10 : The good quality Alpi cabinetry highlights the creative interior layout

11: The deck saloon opens wide onto the cockpit. The upholstery has been redesigned. Note the portlights in the coachroof ceiling which allow a direct view of the set of the sails from inside



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I must say that this trial was (against all my expectations) easy. The well-balanced helm offered appreciable accuracy and softness. The spray that was picked up by the bows didn't really reach us, or hardly, and the Saona progressed at speed in some furious gusts. Between 8 and 9 knots against a short and choppy sea, I felt few impacts under the bridge-deck, and that deck stability is reassuring despite being in squalls at near 50 knots.

Conclusion

This boat's superb options of the Axxon fixed carbon mast, the Dyneema rigging and the membrane Incidences sails provide extra performance (especially in light and medium airs, as well as a general added value, but the qualities of the boat are undeniable. The ergonomics of the helm station are a success and provide a lot of safety and great visibility. Dynamic qualities are good for a catamaran equipped with such a level of comfort. The standard version without a generator or hydraulic platform and equipped with a watermaker should still reveal a high speed potential. I must agree with the manufacturers that this yacht fits in well with their new multihull family.



- ◆ Overall comfort
- ◆ Helm station
- ◆ Quality of the options of the version we tested
- ◆ Profile
- ◆ Interior design



- ◆ The plumbing (under pressure) for the deck bridge shower crosses the wiring coming from the batteries
- ◆ Halyard bag too small
- ◆ Diameter of steering wheel a little small
- ◆ Excellent choice with the Karver hook for reefing, but inadequate halyard diameter
- ◆ No intermediate clutch for the genoa to allow the winch to be freed up

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Builder	Fountaine Pajot
Naval Architect	Berret-Racoupeau Yacht design
Interior Designer	Isabelle Racoupeau
Construction	Balsa/glass/poly-vinylester sandwich in infusion process /bulkheads in Airex foam
Length	13.94m
Beam	7.70m
Draft	1.30m
Light displacement	13.8t
Mainsail area	75m ²
Genoa	52m ²
Motors	2x50hp (2x60hp as an option)
Fresh water	700l
Diesel	2x470l
Versions offered	Maestro (Owner's hull to port + 2 double cabins/2 bathrooms) and Quintet (5 double cabins, 5 bathrooms)
Price ex-tax: Maestro	€ 476,000€ / Quintet: € 486,000
Principal options in € ex-tax:	
Offshore Equipment Pack	17,000
Inverter-charger	1,530
Three-bladed folding propellers	1,997
4x100W solar panels	3,820
Floor carpet	1,430
Exterior upholstery	900
Garmin Electronics Pack 1	10,500
60l/h Watermaker	10,050
Bowsprit and deck hardware for gennaker or asymmetric spi	6,118
Gennaker	5,580
Electric genoa winch	3,338
Pre-installation for washing machine	500
Full safety equipment	3,200
10 person liferaft	1,682
Commissioning	11,600
Handover	3,250
Options on the boat we tested (carbon mast, fiber rigging and membrane sails):	60,000

12 :The owner's cabin: you're guaranteed to be won over!

13: The bathrooms on the Saona are particularly well-designed

14: Access to the bunks, ventilation and light have all been the subject of particular attention by the interior designer

15: The hydraulic platform for the dinghy (with lateral mechanisms) also serves to function as a beach club

16: Nice, clear technical installations, and an accessible battery bank

THE COMPETITION

MODEL	LEOPARD 48	LAGOON 450S	NAUTITECH 46	ANTARES 44
YARD	LEOPARD	LAGOON	BAVARIA	ANTARES
UPWIND SAIL AREA IN M ²	144	128	112	100
WEIGHT IN TONNES	17	16,1	10,8	10,2
PRICE EX-TAX	€489,000	€373,000	€389,700	\$968,000

The layout of the outdoor saloon is traditional, but the redesigned upholstery enhances the comfort

The helm station is well designed, very safe and offers good visibility

The carbon mast by Axxon is superb and offers real added technical value

The visual integration of the coachroof is an aesthetic success



Bravo for the subtle integration of the flybridge seat: comfortable and safe

The excellent membrane sails offer extra performance in light and medium airs, and the maxi spi is formidable in 10 knots of wind

The sail-handling console is nice to use and the winches are well-sized (electric option essential).

The 50hp Volvo motors are discreet and well balanced, though the option of folding propellers is a must

The clever design of the forefoot and the connection to the deck modernize the appearance of the bow

The outboard topsides are pleasing to the eye, and the discrete strake and the decorative strip above the waterline extend the perception