

By tinkering with the hull platforms and keel profiles, designer Gino Morelli has emphasized good sailing performance. Inset: the Sunsail version of the design



Cruising Multihull



## Leopard 38/Sunsail 384

> It looked as though this award would be a toss-up between a handsome pair of new cruising cats from France—the Lagoon 400 and Fountaine Pajot Lipari 41—until we stepped aboard the South African-built

Leopard 38 and its twin, the Sunsail 384. It was immediately obvious that here was one of the best-executed sub-40-foot cruising catamarans we have yet seen.

Although there is nothing truly groundbreaking about this design, it exhibits a level of refinement that cements Robertson & Caine's place in the top rank of production multihull builders. Designers Morelli & Melvin, paired with inhouse designer Anthony Key, came up with a build plan that utilizes fewer but larger and stronger moldings, and that has had a subtle but beneficial effect on the way the interior styling flows. One of the most notable differences from the bigger Leopards is the absence of the louvers on the forward face of the cabintop.

Gino Morelli set himself the task of stirring some more sailing spice into the cruising-cat mix, and says he's achieved that by tinkering with the hull platforms and keel profiles. Combine that with a choice of accommodation layouts that perfectly balances the opposing

needs of maximum volume for charter crews and long-term comfort for liveaboard couples, and you have a boat for all reasons.

There is a choice between four-cabin and three-cabin layouts. In the latter, the starboard hull is home to a large aft double

berth, an office/changing area amidships and a spacious head/shower forward. The four-cabin arrangement (as in the Sunsail 384) has a smaller head/shower in each hull but still manages to avoid feeling cramped.

The differences between the Leopard and Sunsail versions are small but marked. There's more water capacity in the Sunsail boat, as well as a pair of built-in solar panels atop the molded roof. Both boats have air conditioning and a nifty two-drawer fridge/freezer setup, and a cleverly designed dinghy davit with its own electric winch that gets the dinghy up high so it doesn't spoil the view from the cockpit.

These boats all arrive from South Africa on their own bottoms, so their seagoing abilities are not in question. All in all, the

Leopard 38 is a fine entry-level catamaran, well built, well designed and well suited to both short-term and long-term cruising. [sunsail.com](http://sunsail.com), [leopardcatamarans.com](http://leopardcatamarans.com)



The interior is well thought out for a variety of uses