



Divinycell is helping Palmer Johnson shape the future

Established in 1918, Palmer Johnson Yachts takes its name from the founder's son, who turned the company from working with fishing vessels to building some of the world's most distinctive boats for sport and leisure. The latest addition to its legacy will have Diab core from bottom to top.

Palmer Johnson Yachts has a rich history, with celebrated sailing champions and many notable names among its output. *Fortuna* spent a decade as the fastest yacht in the world. *Turmoil*, the first explorer yacht, has circumnavigated the globe three times. *La Baronessa* is the largest aluminum yacht ever built in the USA.

Over 200 yachts have been produced by Palmer Johnson, all of which are still afloat. But none is quite like the one currently in production. Having pioneered the move from wood to aluminum, the company is charting a new course. Carbon-fiber composites, though most common in sailing racers, are the basis for its remarkable new motor yacht: the Super Sport 48.

Lighter than aluminum yet stronger than steel, carbon-fiber composites will form the entire bulk of the Super Sport 48. Carbon fibers, which are frequently used in the aircraft industry, have four times the E-modulus and 2–3 times the tensile strength of fiberglass. This lets Palmer Johnson defy the idea that space and comfort necessitate a slow, utilitarian design. The advanced choice of materials is allowing a quantum leap forward in structure, style and performance.

The Super Sport 48 design, which combines the space and stability of a trimaran with a monohull format, is the brainchild of Berkely March, a finalist in Boat International's 2008 Young Designer of the Year Awards.

Now a Palmer Johnson employee, March developed the concept as part of a university dissertation on yacht and powercraft design. Though altogether new, it is also unquestionably Palmer Johnson.

The Super Sport 48 will have an efficient hull with a bulbous, wave-piercing bow, but its most notable feature will be the sponsons. Extending from both sides at the aft of the yacht, the sponsons will provide extra stability while retaining the smooth, daring Palmer Johnson style. Creating five times the dampening characteristics of a monohull, they will lighten the yacht's load by eliminating the need for gyro stabilizers.

At present, the Super Sport 48 is in the hands of Brødrene Aa, the Norwegian boatbuilder molding the hull and superstructure. Brødrene Aa, an international expert in carbon-fiber sandwich constructions, has used vacuum infusion for more than a decade and has worked closely with Diab since 1974. Once again, Diab is supplying Brødrene Aa with many different densities of Divinycell, which will be used in the Super Sport 48 from hull to deck to mast. The combination of Divinycell with carbon-fiber reinforcement yields a strong, rigid sandwich weighing 40% less than traditional materials.

Once completed, the yacht body will be finished and outfitted in the USA. It will feature an owner's suite with full-height windows on the main deck, plus four guest cabins, two garages and a beach club on the lower deck. On the bridge deck there will be an upper saloon, as well as a spa and an optional helm position. In all, the Super Sport 48 will sleep 12 guests in addition to captain and crew, combining top-notch comfort with the speed and emotion that are Palmer Johnson's signature.

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