

BUILDING BRIDGES

It's easy to enjoy a flying bridge—from the wind in your hair to the superior vantage point—when someone thought about **the details** before it was constructed.

Here are **ten of our favorites** and why they rise above.

BY CHRIS CASWELL



SUN DECK

The flying bridge on the Hargrave 84 has a clever sunroof, with a net to catch the fabric when folded (above). The entertainment area includes a full bar with stools, plus curving settees to welcome guests (left).



FLYING BRIDGE...

what does it really mean?

In the old days of sailing ships, it was a gangway running from the raised afterdeck to the raised foredeck but, with the advent of steam, it became the name for the open platform above the enclosed navigation bridge. It was where the crew fried in the tropics, froze in the Arctic, and were unprotected in battle, but it provided the best view for navigation, as well as the ideal location for the primary compass—farthest from magnetic influences.

Today, boatbuilders have morphed the word to "fly-bridge," a word that must have old-time YACHTING editors shredding their nautical dictionaries from the grave. To cap the confusion, some foreign builders (notably the Italians) have shortened the term even more to "fly," unfortunately leaving Americans thinking of either an irritating insect or the zippered opening in your trousers. Neither makes much sense.

Flying bridges come in all shapes and sizes, as you will see. Since most boaters spend a large part of their time afloat enjoying the fresh air and sun from the flying bridge, it makes sense to choose a well-designed one. Here are ten that stand out for thoughtful design.



CRUISING TO JAVA

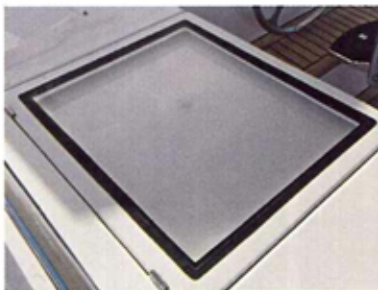
With a fully equipped outdoor galley, the Cheoy Lee Serenity 68's bridge has a double bench seat next to the helm for guests (above). Take homey comfort to the next level: The cupholders are molded in, each with a slot to accommodate the handle of a coffee mug (above right).



HIGH AND DRY

The Viking 60's flying bridge offers great protection for electronics in two lockers on either side of the helm (above), but the slick setup is the hinged Lucite panel over the three displays, allowing them to show their data, even when they're buttoned up (left).





PAPER TIGER

We love the old-school chart holder, made of waterproof Lucite and located—where else?—next to the helm on the Marlow 72's flying bridge (inset). Sturdy rails on the windscreen and counter are ready for service in any sea conditions (above).

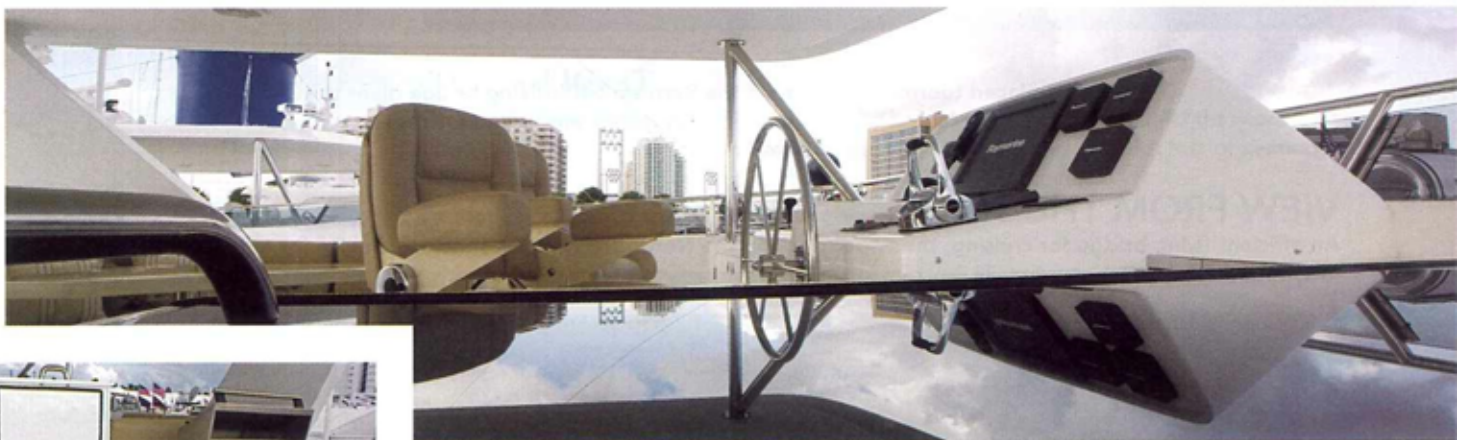


TABLE STEAKS

High-backed settees and sea rails on the tables and countertops are offshore touches right at home on the flying bridge of the Outer Reef 65 (above). The spacious barbecue area has plenty of room to work, for simple and delicious entertaining outdoors (left).



BILLY BLACK

CAT'S CRADLE

This Leopard 47, the Moorings charter catamaran, has a flying bridge with an aft helm for great visibility (below), a full wet bar, and two forward settees including one that reclines (right).





FLYING FISH

The aft-placed tournament helm on the Bertram 540's flying bridge gives the best view of the cockpit for fishing (above), and also welcomes guests forward to a wraparound settee with their own fridge.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

An efficient flying bridge for cruising, the upper deck on the Nordhavn 72 has a spacious dinette for alfresco meals (below). Gentle stairs with sturdy rails (bottom left) provide access to great visibility with an eye height greater than 30 feet.

BILLY BLACK





TOP FLIGHT

The oh-so-Euro bridge of the Sunseeker 86 has a streamlined helm (left) that could have been lifted from an Aston Martin. Big sunpads fore and aft, plus lots of seating around two tables, encourage cruising companionship (above).



SEATS OF POWER

Upstairs on the Grand Banks 59 Aleutian, one finds a good mix of raised Stidd seats and comfortable, high-backed settees, with tables sized to leave space for easy movement (below). Curving teak stairs provide secure access (left). □

