



## BEST LARGE MULTIHULL 50FT AND ABOVE

### Neel 51 ↑

**S**ix years after winning *SAIL*'s Best Boat cruising multihull category with the breakthrough Neel 45, veteran racer/boatbuilder Eric Bruneel has returned to America with another stunner, the Neel 51. Despite the obvious similarities—not the least of which is its three hulls—the 51 is a very different animal, a big trimaran with vast interior space that can carry six people across an ocean rapidly in real comfort. Most of that space looks out through a set of large windows in all directions, and the entire vessel is neatly built and nicely finished, featuring a decor and design with a contemporary French flair. Like the 45, the galley, navigation, social spaces and master accommodations are all up on the main bridgedeck. However, in contrast to the 45, the amas of this boat are large enough to hold two more owner-size cabins,

comparable to those of a catamaran. Aft, large sliding doors let the saloon blend seamlessly with the afterdeck, while belowdecks, mechanics, rejoice: the interior of the central hull includes a big standup “basement” devoted to all the mechanical and propulsion systems, including a walk-around engine room and easy access to the generator, batteries, air conditioning, tanks, watermaker and whatever else an owner might want to include. (As an added benefit, this placement also keeps the heaviest parts of the boat low and centrally located.)

The rig is simple and efficient, the decks are easy to traverse, and the raised helm station provides excellent visibility and is a central gathering point for the control lines. In bad weather, the skipper can also sit inside near the smoothest-riding part of the boat at a nav desk resembling a drone control station and steer with the autopilot. Oh, and there's a panoramic view of the outside world from there, too. Bottom line: the Neel 51 is a fast, seaworthy voyaging yacht with an interior larger than catamarans 10 feet longer, making it the judges' easy choice as the Best Flagship Multihull for 2019. [neel-trimarans.com](http://neel-trimarans.com)