

# THE FRESHEST OF OYSTERS

Eddie Jordan, one-time Formula One team owner and now motor racing pundit, chose the new Oyster 885 to sail in the Oyster World Rally. *Lush* is the name and lush her nature. Toby Hodges considers the new breed of 80-footers, which are inviting owners into supersailing

“ Oyster have built enough boats to know what works – down to the provision of the bone china dinner service on the standard spec of the 885 ”



“ Just to make quite sure this latte-coloured yacht stands out from the crowd she has a big pink whale on the transom ”

**A**s a former Formula 1 team owner, and now a celebrated BBC F1 pundit, Eddie Jordan obviously isn't the sort of person to do things by halves. So when he signed up to Oyster's World Rally, which set off in January, having a 'regular' size Oyster wouldn't quite cut it.

No, the largest boat of the fleet – and of Oyster's production range – was the obvious choice. After all, the extra waterline length of this 885 would be needed to get to the destinations first, as might be expected in someone who likes the fast lane.

And just to make quite sure this latte-coloured yacht stands out from the crowd, she has a big pink whale on her transom alongside her name, *Lush*, an 8m pink whale on her gennaker, and Red Bull logos adorning her bows. This is circumnavigating, the Eddie Jordan way.

To get accustomed to Oyster cruising, Jordan had a 655 for a couple of years while the 885 was in build, and, according to his skipper Paul Adamson who was on the sea trial with us, he plans to do quite a lot of the rally with his wife Marie. His four adult children may join at various stages. The rally stopover dates tie in quite conveniently with the F1 schedule!

#### Semi-custom superyachts

Oyster are semi-custom masters, providing alluring designs with optimal use of space and a premium finish, and the 60-90ft/18-30m bracket represents the bulk of their current sales. The Ipswich-based company have built enough boats to know what works – down to the provision of the bone china dinner service on the standard spec of the 885.

So, while some layout options are offered and plenty of trim and finishing alternatives, even at this size, bulkheads tend to

**Above: Jordan on the rail of *Lush* (third from left) at the Oyster World Rally start** stay where they're designed, with clients choosing electronics and furnishings.

We went aboard the 885, the first of this new line from Oyster, during her commissioning period in Southampton. The 885 is a clever size, offering 30 per cent more internal volume than the 82, yet she's within the 24m MCA load line length limit for those wishing to charter and offers four double guest cabins – or three plus lower saloon.

The 885 is very much the modern Oyster, with high freeboard to create room for a raised saloon, positioned above an engine room with standing headroom, yet keeps a low coach-roof, drawn out smoothly by bringing the coamings aft. It's clever stuff from Rob Humphreys, who has given her a sprightly, seagoing hull that's not overly beamy.

#### Precision handling

The man credited with developing motor-racing luminaries such as Senna, Hill and Schumacher must appreciate the intricacies of a fine drive. I thought as we tacked through the tight passage north of the Brambles towards the eastern Solent. Humphreys and Oyster have done Jordan proud with the sensation provided on the 885. You can certainly feel her power at the helm; her twin rudders ease the load and ensure steering remains delicate.

Sailing upwind we managed eight knots in 12 knots of apparent wind, rising to ten knots as the breeze built. She felt every inch the mini-superyacht, a manageable and rewarding sailing boat. The helmsman is equally comfortable either standing or sitting and can swap between wheels without needing a passport.

The captive winch single-point mainsheet makes child's play of trimming, with a slow finite trim speed, or



Clockwise from top: those vertical hull windows have become an Oyster trademark; fold-out swim platform; the spacious engine room has full standing headroom in one part; the pink whale on *Lush's* transom; comfortable steering position for the helmsman standing or seated at both wheels





fast trim for when off the breeze or gybing. We went from gybe reaching to sails stowed in the stackpack boom to anchored in Osborne Bay within minutes.

*Lush* carries a fully battened main and 104 per cent genoa in Spectra carbon from North Sails, flown from a carbon Formula rig. On board with us was North's Neil Mackley, who explained the benefits of longevity and shape-holding that these fibres promote. He also remarked how much quieter the 885 seemed to be under sail compared with previous large Oysters.

### Room for a pitstop team

The guest cockpit and table are large enough to seat a F1 pitstop team in comfort. The benches are all 'floating', which allows for the ventilation ducts to be positioned out of sight behind them. It also hides the scuppers and drains, though the downside might be keeping those clean. A huge tinted and curved companionway hatch slides open with motor assistance, stowing far forward to allow good ventilation.

As aboard the Oyster 625, technology has obviously filtered down from Oyster's recent foray into the superyacht world – 100ft/30.5m and 125ft/38m models – and with the 885 much


**Seeing purple: pale limed oak is offset by bright highlights in saloon, crew mess and master cabin**

time was spent on insulation with acoustic consultants Sound Research Laboratories.

The composite bulkheads are thickly packed with Rockwool. No hard fixings are allowed to be drilled through; instead items are bonded on. Engine and machinery are installed on soft, resilient mounts.

The high-torque, low-revving 330hp Cummins engine consumes just 40lt of diesel per hour at cruising revs – that's a tidy cruising range from a 3,500lt fuel tank – and it proved barely audible as we ghosted out from Ocean Village. Mooring is aided by hydraulic retractable bow and stern thrusters.

The deck layout is impressive. A double anchor roller is contained so neatly in the chunky bowsprit it's hard to pick out the anchor. Forward of the large dinghy well is an inner forestay attachment for a staysail or hanked-on storm jib, and around the mast base is a recessed deck cavity that hides blocks and winches.

Sheets are led aft under the deck, through the extended coamings to the primaries behind the helms, and crew manning these winches have both coaming protection and chunky foot chocks; if venturing onto the windward deck you do 



## Dimensions

LOA	27.08m	88ft 10in
LWL	24.18m	79ft 4in
Beam	6.33m	20ft 9in
Draught	3.50m	11ft 6in
Displacement	74,000kg	163,142lb

Designed by Humphreys Yacht Design

Interior by Sallyanne Holmes of Holmes Interiors and the Oyster Design team

[www.oystermarine.com](http://www.oystermarine.com)



Above: another Oyster trademark – the guest's vast relaxation cockpit is free of sail-handling systems

need to step over the loaded runner, however. A full-beam lazarette aft is ideal for all the toys, bosun's equipment, fenders, etc, and there is a large sail locker forward.

There is no large social area below in this format, but six of us sat comfortably at anchor in the raised saloon with impressive views. The aft table is designed either as a coffee table or to flip over to extend the main table. The limed oak joiner work, achieved by white-washing the grain, looks striking, and the triple vertical windows have become an Oyster icon.

The full-beam aft master suite for Eddie Jordan is certainly 'lush' – open and minimalist, it's light and airy, and the use throughout the yacht of light colours, contrasting dramatically with purple furnishings, makes this first 885 feel suitably contemporary. Even the paintings have been commissioned with purples in them – along with the colours of the Irish flag!

Forward of the saloon to port is a large aft-facing chart table, with good instrument space and within reach of the generous switchboard panel and a large wet hanging locker opposite.

"EJ" didn't want an us and them mentality [with the crew]," skipper Paul Adamson explained – understandable for a circumnavigator. Nevertheless, it's easy to work it that way, as a sliding door can shut off the galley, engine room and forward accommodation. The midships cabin to port is dual-purpose (crew or guests), and further forward there is a double en-suite and Pullman. Private access to these crew cabins is through the sail locker and heads forward. There are also large hatches above each cabin for scrambling on deck. Adamson will crew *Lush* with his wife (the chef), an engineer and a hostess.

The passageway galley has plenty of worktop space and is adjoined by a compact mess for two forward, with the engine room entrance aft. Although we had just been motoring for over an hour, it was still cool when I entered the engine room – the result of efficient fans and a good amount of space. The engine room has standing headroom to starboard where a workbench is situated and there is excellent space around all the machinery. *Lush* incorporates most options, but Oyster have allowed space for any equipment future owners may opt for.

## Simply does it

Skipper Paul Adamson was on board for the build and wanted to keep everything on the yacht as simple as possible. "We're going on a round the world trip so want things to work," he explained. So equipment favours function over glamour for worldwide service appeal: Raymarine instruments, 'normal' batteries, a wipe-clean induction cooker so no gas bottles to source, and a commercial-grade dishwasher that can wash and dry dishes in three minutes to use less genset time (even though she has 10kW and 15kW generators).

Although this was the first of a new line, *Lush* was fitted out in just 12 months from a bare hull. The 885s are hand-laid up in glassfibre with Kevlar and carbon laminates, with vinylester resin as the outer laminate. Southampton Yacht Services have shown how good semi-custom production can be – the build quality, detailing and finish is certainly up to superyacht standard.

Following her circumnavigation, *Lush* will be available for charter through Oyster Yacht Charters.