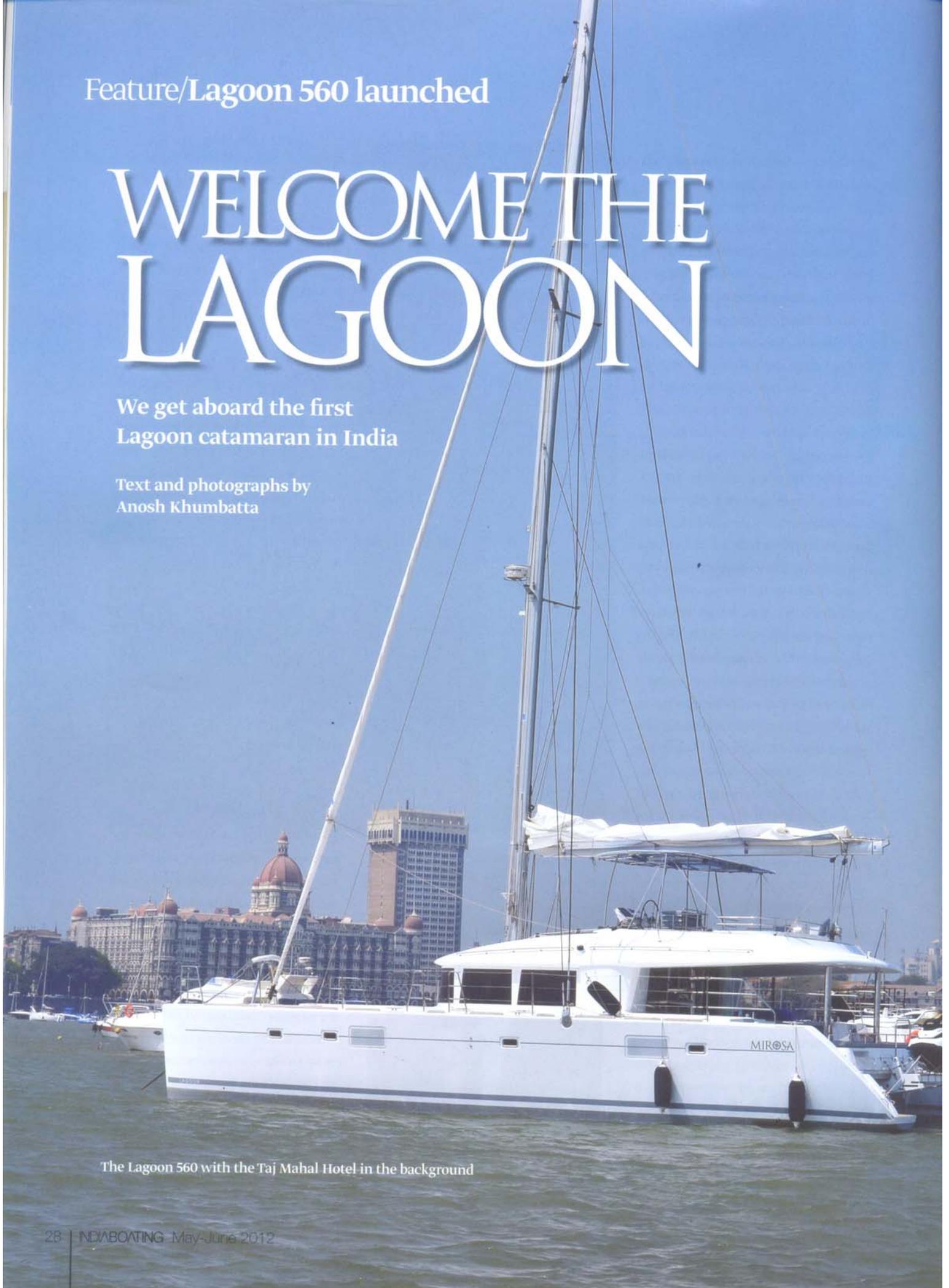


Feature/Lagoon 560 launched

# WELCOME THE LAGOON

We get aboard the first Lagoon catamaran in India

Text and photographs by Anosh Khumbatta



The Lagoon 560 with the Taj Mahal Hotel in the background



The seating area at the aft end of the flybridge

Catamaran builder Lagoon has been building world-class luxury catamarans since 1984, however it is only in 2012 that we have a Lagoon cat in Indian waters. The Lagoon 560 is the second-largest craft built by the French manufacturer and boasts four luxuriously appointed cabins in addition to indoor and outdoor lounging areas.

### The Lagoon 560

The new craft is 56 feet long, has a beam of 31 feet and has three levels. Up top is the flybridge, where the helm is located ahead of an outdoor seating area. One deck lower, the main deck provides seating in the sheltered stern cockpit, an air-conditioned saloon with attached galley and another outdoor area ahead of the saloon.



Yann Masselot and Saif Shaikh, Head of Sailing Operations at Ocean Blue Boating, at the helm of the 560

Descend the steps into either hull and a well-appointed cabin can be found in each. The master cabin also has dedicated access directly to the stern cockpit; perfect if the owner wants to take a morning swim and head directly into his cabin for a shower. All cabins benefit from en suite heads and showers. Powered by a 207-square-metre (2,227-square-foot) sail area or by twin diesels, this craft is perfectly equipped

for long, peaceful sails. Although she sleeps eight, you could easily host a party for 30 aboard this boat.

The craft was formally launched on March 16, 2012, and I was lucky enough to be invited aboard for the first official sail in Mumbai Harbour. Also aboard was Yann Masselot, Sales Director at Lagoon, and I was able to glean a few insights into how Lagoon promotes craft in a market like India.



Feature/Lagoon 560 launched

The spacious stern cockpit



The view into the master cabin from the stern cockpit

### Setting off

We pulled away from the Gateway of India powered by the 560's diesel engines, and left the city behind us. Although the engines are well-insulated and vibrations could hardly be felt on deck, the true feel of this sailing catamaran could only be experienced once we were away from the coast and hoisted the sails. An uncanny silence descends once the engines are switched off, punctuated only by the waves lapping at the hull and the wind whistling overhead. Powered by the wind alone, we steered out towards the open ocean at a healthy seven to ten

knots, and I was able to get Yann into the saloon for a chat.

### Chat with Yann

Yann was very clear about the fact that India is on the way to becoming a very important market for luxury yachts. He also pointed out that the process could be hastened by the introduction of a proper boating infrastructure, which is currently lacking in India. He was quick to draw parallels with the market in China, where marinas have been constructed over the last few years, resulting in a booming market today.

Lagoon catamarans have been available in India for almost two years now, and I ask Yann where we fit in with Lagoon's future marketing plans. His answer was quick, "Our strategy for the next five years is to prioritise three regions. One is China, one is India and the last is Brazil. We have decided to invest in these three regions and market our brands and products aggressively." This seems like good news for boaters in India but, considering that having luxury marinas dotting our coast is still a few years away, I ask Yann what the plan of action is to sell boats in India. "We have to keep pushing to establish the brand name in a new market," says Yann, explaining that being early will ensure that consumers know about the product even before marinas are built. "It is very important that Indian people understand what luxury catamarans are, what they are made for and who Lagoon is. We are number one in the world and we have to make sure that this fact is well-known in India." Yann went on to relate that owning a larger boat — like the 56-footer we were on board — is easier, as the owner has a crew and someone is always on board. The sale of these larger boats will push the creation of infrastructure which will, in turn, open the doors to buyers of smaller boats who would need a marina to moor their craft.

It seems like this French boat builder is here to stay, and we can only be thankful for the faith that such manufacturers have in our luxury boating market. **IB**

*For further information, contact:*  
 Ocean Blue Boating Pvt. Ltd.  
 Tel: +91 22 6457 2244  
 Email: sales@oceanblue.in  
 Website: www.oceanblue.in