



Cousteau Ships: Alcyone daughter of the wind

Alcyone was named for the daughter of the Greek god of the wind, and her voyages have proved that wind can add both power and speed to a ship's performance while sharply reducing fuel consumption.

Designed to test a revolutionary propulsion system and an innovative hull design, the Cousteau vessel Alcyone with her thrusting Turbosail™ cylinders has borne divers and film crews around the world since her launch in 1985. Backed by twin diesel engines, working in computerized ballet with the Turbosails, Alcyone achieves one-third fuel savings -- and pollution savings. Designed by André Mauric, her hull combines the advantages of monohull (fore) and catamaran (aft). She serves as a stable platform for filming or science and the unique split of her rear deck provides quick access for divers or boats.

Her maiden trans-Atlantic voyage was the beginning of fifteen years at sea. She traveled the length of the Americas, around stormy Cape Horn, to Cocos Island, the Sea of Cortez, the Channel Islands of California and Hawaii. She stopped at the World Expo in Vancouver then continued to Alaska and the Bering Sea. From there she descended across the Pacific Ocean to Papua New Guinea, Australia, Indonesia, Madagascar and South Africa. After a brief respite, Alcyone bore the Cousteau crew inland to the Caspian Sea for the Year of the Ocean expedition. In 1999, she crossed the Atlantic once more to begin her mission to the St. Lawrence River. She spent 2001 near The Cousteau Society's headquarters in Virginia, undergoing her first major overhaul in fifteen years. At the moment, she is in La Rochelle, ready for upcoming missions for the Society or the International Court of Arbitration.

How the Turbosail works:



A small fan draws air into the 33-foot towers, boosting wind speed over the leeward side and creating forward lift several times the power of traditional sails. In the diagram, F is the force created by the fan; R is the resistance, or drag, of the airflow; P is the push of the deflected air.

Specifications :

Length: 103 ft.
Draft: 7 ft. 8 in.
Width: 29 ft. Passengers (& crew): 12
Cruising speed: 10.5 knots Turbosails: height 33 ft. 5 in.
Surface area: 226 sq. ft.
Diameter: 4 ft.5 in.