

on test

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Space maker

Jeanneau's roomy Deck Saloon range has recently been expanded with the launch of its new 41DS.

Duncan Kent reports

The most recent launch in Jeanneau's renowned Sun Odyssey DS (Deck Saloon) range of ocean cruising yachts, the 41DS supersedes the older 42DS and is little sister to the 44DS, 50DS and 54DS.

Creating an attractive looking yacht with a deck saloon at just over 40ft (12.2m) is no easy task, but Jeanneau's stylist, Franck Darnet has done well with the 41DS. Although she's one of the most streamlined cruising yachts of her size, I felt her gradually sloping 'eyebrow' superstructure didn't quite suit this length of boat and would be more at home on a 50ft plus (15.2m) yacht.

The 41DS uses the same Philippe Briand-designed hull as the recently launched S/O 409, and as such she's equally quick and agile. Thoroughly

up to date in all aspects – flush hatches, twin wheels, walk-through transom and much more – she also sports several desirable options such as Jeanneau's much-vaunted 360 Docking system, incorporating a 360-degree rotating sail drive leg and bow thruster, which is purported to make parking up idiot-proof.

Flexible design

With 50 years of boatbuilding behind it, the Jeanneau yard (now part of Group Beneteau) has bags of experience when it comes to the creation of offshore and ocean-going bluewater yachts. In addition to highly-skilled design teams and the use of clever CAD design software, the yard also says it listens carefully to its owners and does its best to incorporate any useful suggestions into its next boat.

As well as high-tech computer aids for the drawing stages, Jeanneau uses a very contemporary composite build process, which it calls Prisma. In short this is a vacuum-bagging, resin injection system not uncommon in boatbuilding these days. But married to rigorous material inspection and analysis, the process ensures uniformity throughout the moulding

Easy to handle

The S/O 41DS has been specifically designed to be sailed by a couple on their own, with all control lines leading aft to helm-side winches

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Chines are back

This subtle chine in her quarter helps increase her stability and stiffness when she is heeled over

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stage and a top quality finish to the end product. Its efficiency and lack of waste products also enables prices to be kept reasonable and does less harm to the environment and its employees by reducing airborne VOCs to a minimum.

Short-handed

Like many modern cruising yachts the 41DS sports a bow thruster option (+£5K) for help when manoeuvring into tightly-packed berths. If you're really concerned about parking, Jeanneau can install its optional 360 Docking system (+£24K incl bow thruster), in which the sail drive leg rotates as well.

As she comes (furling main, 106 per cent genoa) her sail plan is relatively conservative, so I would definitely add an asymmetric to the sail wardrobe for downwind sailing in light airs. Unfortunately, you can't easily hoist a larger furling genoa as the sheet is led under the coachroof top very close to the clew, so it would involve fitting a second track on deck and finding a way to lead the sheet to the primary winch. Better to fly a gennaker or cruising chute sheeted through a deck block. If you do go for this, then you may as well add the convenience of the self-tacking jib for beating up small channels, as you'll have all the extra power needed for long reaches.

While I see the point in leading the sheets aft, it can sometimes complicate matters more. Now that almost every cruising yacht has twin helms, the German mainsheet system (where a one-piece mainsheet has each end leading to the opposite primary winch) seems to be being universally adopted. While being able to trim it either side may seem convenient, in reality the extra friction means you need a winch handle or electric winch to trim. Also, if you favour one side more than the other, eventually you'll run out of sheet on one side and will need to rebalance the system.



More importantly, though, the way the 41DS is set up, you only have one winch to serve the mainsheet and headsail sheet. So, when you want to tack you need to jam off the mainsheet, take it off the winch and wind the jib sheet on instead. While this gets easier as you become accustomed to it, it slows the tacking procedure down considerably.

Need to be nimble

On deck it's easy to move around thanks to clear side decks and good handrails, but the urge to hide as many lines as possible means the headsail furling line runs awkwardly

Contemporary style 4

This 'eyebrow' styling probably suits the larger models more than this 41-footer

'She is very easy to sail single-handedly, although a certain amount of winch juggling is required when tacking'

across the foredeck, creating an inevitable trip hazard.

Her cockpit is spacious and well protected by tall coamings – although you'll have to step over the lines across the top to get onto the side deck, and the midway step

Sail choices

Jeanneau offers a choice of headsails – a self-tacking jib or this standard 106 per cent furling genoa

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Twin rollers

Twin bow rollers are very useful when anchoring in open, windy areas

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outboard is very narrow. The helm area is roomy enough and there are small rope bins each side – the top of which make useful seats for the helmsman. A twin bottle gas locker is under the starboard quarter, a deep lazarette to port.

In contrast to most modern production designs, Jeanneau has stayed with the step-down transom for the DS range, as opposed to the large drop-down platforms fitted to its standard cruiser series. Although it looks slightly better, a larger boarding platform is rapidly becoming popular for charter and bluewater use, and saves money when moored in a marina.

At the aft end of the cockpit sole is a raised lip – probably to stop things rolling out when dropped, but it is so high (6in/15cm) that I think it could cause more accidents than it prevents. There's also no dedicated or obvious place for stowing a liferaft.

Good performer

Now for some positives! She's balanced, light on the helm and keeps her course with the minimum of effort. We had a very benign test

Winch juggling

The primary winches serve both the mainsheet and jib/genoa, which involves jamming off one sheet to trim the other



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day with Force 3 winds and calm seas, so we weren't able to push her that hard. But it was enough to feel how quickly she gets into her groove and I could easily leave the helm for two or three minutes at a time without her drifting off course.

Tacking her small genoa is dead easy – most times we didn't need to winch the sheet even. Tacking angle of 80° were easily achieved, although I believe they would be improved further with the performance sails option pack.

In around 12 knots true wind we made 5.8-6.2 knots close-hauled (3 to the apparent wind), increasing to 6.4kn at 45° and 6.8-7.0 knots when close reaching at 60°. Her hull lines work very well in light airs, with the quarter chine biting in for extra stiffness when heeled in the gusts.

Downwind she slowed to a more conservative 4 knots-odd, with the genny tending to flap when the wind came from beyond 150° off our heading. With her sleek underwater lines, however, I'm convinced an asymmetric would have added a further 2 knots plus to that figure.

To Jeanneau, deck saloon obviously means big windows. Because, apart from the large aft cabin, that's the only real difference between this and the standard 40 Headroom is still only just over 6 (1.85m) and the seating isn't raised. Now, to me the original and true meaning of 'deck saloon' is where either the cabin sole is at deck level or the seating is raised to offer panoramic views. The 41DS has

Deck saloon 1

Although Jeanneau calls this a deck saloon yacht – and it does indeed have very large windows – there's no raised seating to give panoramic views outside. Hull lights help keep it bright, but do little to improve the view when seated

Chart table 2

This is a good size if you prefer standing at the chart table. The locker below can either be a bottle store or a drinks fridge

neither, although that's not to say it isn't spacious, bright and comfortable.

There is only one layout available – two cabins and two heads. The aft cabin is full-width with good headroom, plenty of handy stowage and a roomy 6ft 5in by 6ft 2in (1.98m x 1.90m) double berth. The heads has a shower stall with acrylic door panels and can be accessed from the aft cabin or saloon. Natural lighting and ventilation is provided by several opening portlights, one of which is in the riser of the transom step. Our boat had a water tank and five large batteries beneath the berth.

Other accommodation

Her forecabin is also spacious and has an ensuite heads/shower, only smaller. The V-berth measures 6ft 9in by 6ft 6in, narrowing to 2ft 3in (2.05m x 2.0m > 0.68m). Stowage is good in a tall hanging/shelved locker, but the bowthruster and two batteries take up much of the space beneath the berth. Headroom is perfectly acceptable at 6ft 1in (1.85m), but to achieve it a 4in

(10cm) step down is necessary, which initially caught us unawares.

The folding saloon table can be lowered to form a double berth with two 2in (5cm)-thick infill cushions. Opposite is a short settee, which also serves as a chart table seat. I'm sure it could be easily modified to provide a further sea berth. The chart table is oddly proportioned, although fine for chartwork standing up. There's plenty of chart stowage and the bosun's stores below can be fitted with an additional fridge.

The switch panel is reasonable, with a multi-function level gauge, but there is not much room for instruments on the console.



Luxurious aft cabin

One of the most desirable features of a cruising yacht is a comfortable owner's cabin. A space of these proportions is quite rare in an aft-cockpit design, but you'd struggle to notice the difference between this well-lit, spacious cabin and one you'd expect to find in a centre-cockpit boat



She has a fine galley to starboard, with moulded sink and drainer, good size top-loading fridge, built-in microwave, two-ring cooker/oven and integral rubbish bin. Although it is bright below, airflow relies on two mushroom vents and four small hatches above. There are no opening side portlights.

Engine access is good all round, with the main steps lifted and side and rear panels open.

DUNCAN'S VERDICT

Just about every boatbuilder today says its yachts are an ideal compromise between luxury accommodation and top sailing performance. The 41DS does a good job at marrying the two, although it didn't put across the wow-factor when I went below.

The sleeping accommodation is comfortable and the designers have done an excellent job of fitting a large aft cabin into an aft-cockpit boat. The ample space has been used wisely, although for bluewater work she needs a little more thought towards sleeping options at sea.

With the 409's slippery hull, she's a great performer under sail and should see off many of the heavier displacement cruisers with ease.

So to sum up, though not the boat for a circumnavigation, she makes an excellent coastal and offshore waters cruiser.

SAILING ABILITY: ★★★★★

COMFORT: ★★★★★

BLUEWATER: ★★★★★

THE SPEC

PRICE FROM £197,754

LOA: 40ft 5in (12.3m)

LWL: 36ft 1in (11.0m)

Beam: 13ft 1in (4.0m)

Draught (Standard/shoal):
6ft 10in/5ft 1in (2.1m/1.6m)

Displacement: 7,650kg (16,865 lb)

Angle vanishing stability*: 126°

Sail area (main/genoa):
363/348sqft (33.8/32.4m²)

Fuel: 200lt (44gal)

Water: 530lt (116gal)

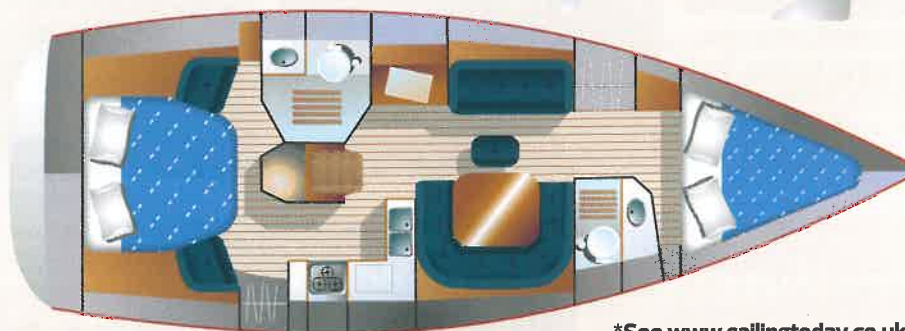
Berths: 4/6

Engine: 40hp Yanmar diesel

Transmission: Saildrive, 3-blade fixed prop

Designer (ex/int): Philippe Briand/Franck Darnet

UK supplier: Sea Ventures,
Tel: +44 (0)23 8045 5333,
www.sea-ventures.co.uk



*See www.sailingtoday.co.uk for definition

IF THE SUN ODYSSEY 41DS ISN'T RIGHT FOR YOU...



DUFOUR 410 From £151,000

The new Dufour 410 has twin wheels, drop-down transom platform, dedicated liferaft and inflatable stowage, a wider cockpit and larger, more comfortable cabins aft. All hatches are now flush and there's an option to convert the cockpit seats into sunbeds.

See www.dufour-yachts.com for UK dealers



OCEANIS 41 From £177,400

The new Oceanis 41 is beamier than ever before, which gives her further improved stability and added stiffness under sail. The extra width also makes room for a generous, light and airy interior that has been designed specifically for luxurious family cruising.

See www.beneteau.com for UK dealers



HANSE 415 From £151,654

A quick performer under sail, the beamy Hanse 415 has a lot to offer. She has a wide choice of comfortable accommodation layouts as well as a roomy, twin-wheeled cockpit and drop-down transom platform.

Inspiration Marine +44 (0)23 8045 7008
www.inspirationmarine.co.uk