

## Four Yorkshiremen... Bloody luxury

The Jeanneau 53 is a medium displacement coastal and blue water cruiser that offers a bit of 'bloody luxury' according to *AY* editor, Barry Henson.



**REMEMBER THE FAMOUS** Monty Python skit called Four Yorkshiremen, with each Yorkshiremen trying to outdo the others about the deprivations of their childhood.

"Right. I had to get up in the morning at ten o'clock at night half an hour before I went to bed, eat a lump of cold poison, work twenty-nine hours a day down mill, and pay the mill owner for permission to come to work, and when we got home, our Dad and our Mother would kill us and dance about on our graves singing Hallelujah."

"And you try and tell the young people of today that....they won't believe you."

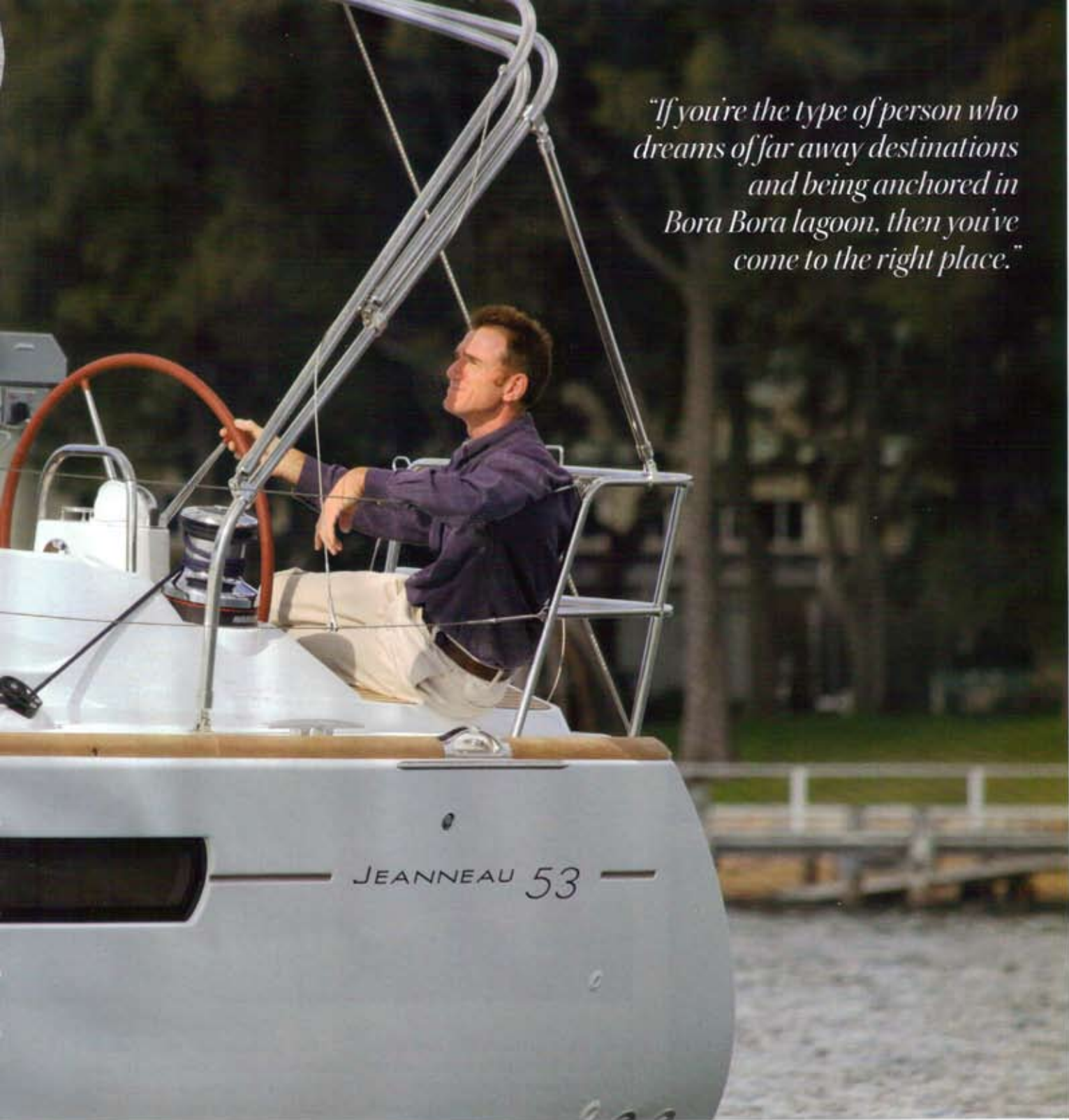
I feel a bit like one of the Yorkshire-

men because the boat I'm about to review is all about 'bloody luxury'...but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Jeanneau is one of the world's largest manufacturers of cruising boats. This month I'm looking at one of their larger designs, the Jeanneau 53.

### Design criteria

According to Performance Boating Services, the NSW dealer for Jeanneau, the 53 is designed as a coastal and blue water cruiser. If you're looking for a boat that will bring you lots of meat trays, sorry, this isn't it; but if you're the type of person who dreams of far away destinations



*"If you're the type of person who dreams of far away destinations and being anchored in Bora Bora lagoon, then you've come to the right place."*

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## First impressions

My first impression of the 53 is one of size. This is a big boat. With a beam of 4.77 metres or 15' 7" in the old measure, the 53 has quite a large beam that it carries almost all the way aft.

## Stern to stem

Working from the stern forward, the 53 has a sugar scoop stern that incorporates a drop down swim ladder and hot and cold shower. The LED nav lights are

standard. The boat I tested had a hydraulic Navtec backstay, part of the 'performance pack', or if you feel the need for a bit of exercise you can hand crank it in like the rest of us. There is a waterproof life raft locker built into the stern. To launch the life raft you lower the transom and voila...raft afloat. This is a fairly smart idea. Not only do you keep your raft dry, which should extend its life, but the stern is the most likely place from which to launch your life raft. An additional watertight compartment in the same area is designed to house the optional 7 Kva genset.

There are two big lazarette lockers, one under each helm seat (dual helm)

with an additional good sized lazarette on the port side of the cockpit. The dual helm looks a bit like Starship Enterprise with all the instrumentation. The controls for the Yanmar 110 hp engine are to port.

The cockpit of the 53 has some nice features that are worth commenting on. The first thing you need to know is that the 53 has a huge cockpit that can easily seat 8 people. This is an entertainer's cockpit that will be popular in any anchorage.

The teak cockpit table has a wine rack underneath (don't you love the French), a 12v outlet, a hideaway cup holder and covered storage bin in the centre of the

**ABOVE:** Note the location of the primary winch right next to the helmsman.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** The forward facing nav station is clean and functional.



table. To keep the cockpit clear of obstructions Jeanneau have mounted the Harken traveller on the cabin top.

All lines are led aft through Spinlock jammers. The primaries are Harken 70s and the secondaries are Harken 46s. Electric winches are available as an option; having at least one on a cruising boat of this size is de rigueur.

Before we leave the cockpit it is worth noting one more nice feature, an under floor, self-draining rope locker at the base of the companionway for keeping all your lines nice and tidy.

## Walking the deck

The deck is wide and clear with hold holds forward to the mast. The genoa cars are adjustable under load. The mast, boom and vang are by Z-Spar. The standard boat comes with lazy jacks, but a roller furling main is available as an option.

The performance pack, which I mentioned earlier, gives you Dyneema halyards, a feathering prop, a hydraulic backstay and Mylar sails. At \$32,000 the performance pack adds a bit to the price, but you'll appreciate the added sailing performance, unless of course the boat is going into charter.

Forward of the mast is an expanse of deck space that makes the centre court at Wimbledon look small. If you're a sun worshipper (not sure if that's politically correct anymore?) or if you're looking for a space to strap down your RIB, then this deck will suit you just fine.

At the pointy end is one of the best sail storage lockers I've seen on a production boat. With a climb down ladder, a well for outboard engine storage, a battery for the bow thruster and a wealth of shelving, this is a locker that will bring a smile to the most jaded cruiser. No more



piling tonnes of gear on deck as you look for your anchor snubber, this is a locker that will enable you to put everything in its place.

Forward of the sail storage locker is a separate anchor well with anchor windlass. Rather than equip the boat with an anchor package of their choice, Jeanneau have taken the anchor and chain out of the standard package allowing the owner to choose their own gear.

Back on deck the 53 has a double bow roller with a Profurl furler.

## Any down below?

Ask any yacht designer what two things they would like to create their dream interior and they'll tell you head height and beam and this boat has both those things in spades. Some interiors feel a bit claustrophobic, but this salon feels like a room.

*"This is an entertainer's cockpit that will be popular in any anchorage."*

Stepping down the companionway stairs there is a forward facing navigation station to starboard. The design of the nav station is functional and attractive. You have a half-chart sized table top with the chartplotter (optional) mounted in a wooden side structure that is angled toward the navigator. Radios and instruments can be mounted on a side panel directly above the electrical switches.

To port is a U-shaped galley with a three burner cook top, oven and grill. An interesting addition is a stainless steel over-the-cooktop exhaust fan similar to what you see in modern kitchens. There is a side and top loading refrigerator with an optional top loading freezer.

The cook top is Corian with inserts to cover the stainless steel sinks.

Moving forward the salon has a U-shaped settee and salon table to starboard with a straight settee to port. With this boat's massive beam Jeanneau has been able to fit an additional two leather dining chairs around the side of dining table enabling eight to sit comfortably around this table.

On many modern yachts you're offered the option of two settees or a settee with a pair of easy chairs. The easy chairs are great in port, but next to useless when you're at sea when you'd really prefer settees for use as sea berths.

Jeanneau has solved this 'either or' dilemma with a convertible settee. The

**MAIN IMAGE & INSET:** The cockpit table open and closed. The cockpit is large enough to seat 8 comfortably.

**OPPOSITE, TOP:** The galley has all the comforts of home including an exhaust fan.

**OPPOSITE, CENTRE:** The climb down forward sail locker has a built in well for your outboard.

**OPPOSITE, BOTTOM:** The salon is luxurious, yet functional. Hand holds are recessed into the ceiling.

*"I love the look of the centreline, raised platform bed. This is definitely a 'closer' in terms of selling your partner on the boat."*

**RIGHT:** The aft cabin is a fair dinkum double with lots of storage.

**FAR RIGHT & INSET:** The port side settee, which you can sleep on, converts to two easy chairs with a bar and side table in between.

**BELOW:** The owner's cabin has some nice touches like this desk/vanity and the raised platform bed.



port side settee is divided into three sections with the middle section capable of folding forward to create a side table, so what you end up with is two easy chairs with a side table in the middle. Best of all behind the now folded middle seat is a bar complete with wine rack and glass storage. You have to hand it to the French. I sometimes fantasise that the first thing a French naval architect figures out is how to store the wine, then he designs the boat around it. In any event, this settee is right at the top of my

Christmas wish list.

A couple of further features I'd like to comment on: there are plenty of handholds for making your way across the salon in a seaway; there is a Bose stereo system with a USB connection for your IPOD (standard), and; under the floorboards you'll find a series of custom storage boxes for keeping your spares and food organised.

The Jeanneau 53 is available in a four cabin layout with 2 doubles forward and two doubles aft. Alternatively you can

have a large owner's cabin forward with two doubles aft. The boat I tested had the latter layout.

The owner's cabin is quite impressive with nice woodwork, a vanity/desk, heaps of storage and ensuite. I love the look of the centreline, raised platform bed. This is definitely a 'closer' in terms of selling your partner on the boat. At the same time it's important to keep in mind that these berths are really only useful in port or in the calmest conditions. Thankfully the 53 has plenty of sea berths in the aft cabins and settees.

While I'm on the topic, let's talk about the aft cabins. The aft cabins are both nice sized doubles with adequate storage; no skimping on space here.

A last comment on the interior: Jeanneau has done a good job on the ventilation. I counted 7 opening hatches all with OceanAir shades and mozzie screens and 11 opening portholes.

## So how does she sail?

I tested this boat in light airs on Pittwater and to be honest I was a bit concerned at how she would perform given how beamy this boat is. Thankfully, those concerns were misplaced. She moved reasonably well in light airs. We did 4-4.5 knots in a breeze that fluctu-



ated between 8-9 knots.

I ran her numbers through my sail calculator program and the results surprised me. The 53's displacement to LWL ratio came up as 204 and her sail area to displacement ratio came up as 20.19. Those numbers indicate that while she is medium displacement for a cruiser she has a reasonably powerful sail plan (remember the boat I tested had the performance pack). When I ran the numbers with her standard sail area, the sail area to displacement ratio came up as 18.25, a bit more moderate and probably just right for a charter boat in the Mediterranean.

By the way, if you're interested in doing the sail calculations on

your own boat or on boats that you're considering purchasing, I use Sail Calculator Pro v3.53 which is freely available on the web at <http://www.image-ination.com/sailcalc.html>

The Jeanneau 53 base boat is \$549,000. The performance pack with max prop and hydraulic backstay will set you back an additional \$32,000 (approx) so the boat as tested was \$581,000. Not bad for a bit of bloody luxury...but you try and tell the young people of today that...and they won't believe you! **Y**

*For more information on the Jeanneau 53 contact Performance Boat-ing Sales on 02 9979 9755.*

## Boat Test Specifications

|                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| Overall length       | 16.06m   |
| Waterline length     | 13.96m   |
| Beam                 | 4.77m    |
| Displacement (empty) | 14,935kg |
| Standard keel weight | 4,985kg  |
| Standard keel draft  | 2.28m    |
| Shallow keel draft   | 1.80m    |

*Philippe Briand Yacht Design*

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