

Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45 DS

Racy, stylish, quick and nimble—what more could you ask for?

The new Sun Odyssey 45 DS from Jeanneau fills the gap between the 42 DS, introduced in 2005, and the popular 49 DS (soon to be replaced by a new 50.) When you toss the incredibly successful 54 DS and recent 39 DS into the mix, it's not a stretch to claim that Jeanneau has come to dominate the deck saloon market. And if a manufacturer could choose one area of the sailboat market to dominate these days, chances are they'd pick deck saloons. Like them or not, they're the future of cruising and quite possibly the future of sailboats in general. Tunnel vision and tunnel living is kaput, from an interior perspective at least. Sailboats have emerged from the "dark" ages and Jeanneau is leading the way.

Like its sisterships, the Jeanneau 45 DS is instantly recognizable

by the teardrop portlights and rakish, southern European styling. This almost trademark look comes courtesy of Italian designer Vittorio Garroni. The hull and interior arrangement is the work of Phillipe Briand, who has been drawing boats for Jeanneau since 1984. Pairing different naval architects with Garroni has been an effective strategy. Jeanneau has maintained consistency with its deck saloon series while incorporating the latest innovations in performance and manufacturing processes. The 45 DS is modern and sexy but not trendy or gimmicky. It's fresh and reeks of quality, the marks of good design work. At 45 feet, this new model is well positioned to appeal to a wide swath of sailors.

The details

Your first impression of the new 45 DS depends upon what angle you see it from. Viewed in profile it's impressive. The sloping deck blends flawlessly into the hull and your eye follows this line instead of the flat sheer below. The ends are long with a stub bow and reverse transom stretching the waterline for added performance and interior volume. If, however, you spot the boat from the stern first, some of the design compromises become apparent. The beam is held a long way aft and there's a lot of it. Also, there is more freeboard, and hence windage, than you first realize. However, these compromises result in a spacious, functional cockpit and an incredibly roomy interior, no-brainer tradeoffs.

Below the waterline the 45 DS has what Briand calls, "an offshore performance hull." This translates into flattish ends, limited wetted surface and a high-lift fin keel with a 6-foot, 8-inch

draft. This apparent contradiction of combining a cruising deck and interior with a performance-oriented hull shape has served Jeanneau well. Nobody likes a slow boat or an uncomfortable boat. There are times, however, when the hull will pound a bit in a seaway, but that's part of the equation with just about every new boat. A shoal keel is also offered, reducing the draft to 5 feet, 4 inches, and this option is sure to be popular in many U.S. sailing areas. The deep balanced rudder is a model of performance efficiency but it's fitted around a beefy stainless stock. This exemplifies Jeanneau's construction ethos: think modern but build with solid materials and proven techniques. This is a responsible way to build boats and is one reason why, in an industry littered with failed companies, Jeanneau celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.

Jeanneau has embraced computer-aided manufacturing at its new plant near Les Herbiers in southwest France. The 45 DS has a solid fiberglass hull that is injection molded for uniformity. By using closed molds, dangerous chemical emissions are greatly reduced, benefiting employees and the environment. Glass-to-resin ratios are also streamlined for efficiency and strength. The hull is reinforced by a glassed-in grid system that ties in floors, stringers and facings. Bulkheads are tabbed to the hull. The deck is balsa cored except in high-load areas where it is solid laminate. On deck, Jeanneau has always had some of the best glass sculpting in the business, and the 45 DS is no exception. The workmanship is superb. This boat is well engineered and constructed.

On deck

It was a rainy morning when we backed out of the slip after the



Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45 DS
LOA 49'5"; LWL 43'; Beam 14'8";
Draft deep 6'8", shoal 5'6";
Displacement 29,542 lbs.;
Ballast deep keel 8,267 lbs.,
shoal keel 9,039 lbs.;
Sail Area 967 sq. ft.

Base Boat Price \$262,285

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Miami Boat Show. Gray skies and gusty winds promised a lively sail in Biscayne Bay. Maneuvering around the many boats hastily departing the show, I was surprised by the unobstructed visibility from the helm, it was almost like steering a center-cockpit boat. Jeanneau has done a terrific job of marrying a deck saloon with a functional raised cockpit that places the emphasis on performance. While the interior is bright, airy and provides nearly the same division of space found in most center-cockpit cruisers, the ingenious deck design allows the helm to be where it's supposed to be, in the stern. Don't get me wrong, I like center-cockpits, and have logged thousands of miles aboard them, but when it comes to sailing, steering from the stern is always better than steering amidships, especially if you can actually see where you're going.

The 45 DS cockpit is huge.



The interior of the new 45 DS is anything but dark and cramped.



According to Florida Yacht's Sales Manager Gunner Schrade, it's nearly as big as the 54 DS. Twin wheels are standard, not only on the 45 DS but on all Jeanneaus over 36 feet. The primary sheet winches are positioned for easy access from either helm. The secondaries are forward. Sail controls are led aft, to the end of the coachroof. The traveler is forward of the companionway with midboom sheeting and we all know the tradeoffs entailed with that arrangement. According to Schrade, most boats are delivered with bow thrusters and at least one electric winch, "just to make things a little easier," he added with a laugh.

There's a huge lazarette that gobbles up lines, fenders and even an inflatable dink. The molded stern steps are easy to access and a hot and cold shower is well placed to keep the crew fresh after every swim. There's a dedicated spot for a generator under the transom, a nice feature if you decide to add one later. A close look at the spec sheet shows that the cockpit table is optional, but is of course a necessity for two reasons. First, meals and drinks are best enjoyed in the cockpit when the weather is nice, and second, you need the support of the table when underway, especially the stout stainless handrail at the forward end.

In-the-mast roller furling is standard along with a 140-percent genoa headsail. Sheet leads and tracks are well inboard as are the shrouds, allowing for tight sheeting angles. Deck fittings are robust. Sleek stainless handholds line the coachroof at a decent height, you don't have to crouch or ease along on your fanny to use the handholds, and modern teak decks are friendly indeed and provide secure footing. There's plenty of lounging room on deck. The anchor locker can accommodate serious ground tackle.

Down below

The 45 DS interior shows the evolution of Jeanneau's deck saloon concept. The boat maximizes the abundance of space, taking full advantage of natural light and cross ventilation. "Yes," my wife Tadj declared when she dropped below

during the show, "I could definitely live aboard this boat." The mix of Jeanneau's laminate called Fine Teak with solid teak edgings and creamy white headliners makes for a clean, elegant and yet still inviting aura below. I could live aboard the 45 DS too.

Two interior plans are available: two cabins and two heads, or the three-cabin, two-head model. If you don't need a third private cabin, take a hard look at the two-cabin layout. It includes two sumptuous staterooms, each with island berths and heads with showers. The forward stateroom includes a writing or makeup desk, several small lockers on both sides of the bunk and a large hanging locker. The owner's stateroom aft includes comfortable dressing and lounging seats, a hanging locker and wide shelves outboard. The three-cabin model includes double side-by-side cabins aft. The advantage of this arrangement is that one of the cabins makes a good sea berth on either tack.

The expansive saloon incorporates a U-shaped settee to starboard and straight settee opposite. Naturally light and ventilation are superb; two factors that definitely impact crew happiness while underway. Of course that's code for seasickness, but I have observed that when the crew doesn't feel like they're in a cave below, they're less prone to motion sickness. There are well-placed, leather-covered stainless grab rails on the nav desk, along the companionway steps and in the saloon.

The L-shaped galley is to starboard. There are double sinks and a two- or three-burner stove with oven. There's a lot of stowage, including lockers above and behind the countertops and stove. I like the low acrylic face that keeps the galley tidy but allows the cook to be part of the conversation below. The fridge is top and side loading and the galley drawers are mounted fore-and-aft and have positive latches, meaning that they won't fly open in rough seas. The nav station is opposite the galley. The desk is designed to house a laptop, reflecting the reality of PC navigation. The electrical panel is readily accessible



Modern European styling means bright, open interiors, top, a nav desk designed to hold a laptop computer, top middle, and lots of counter and storage space in the L-shaped galley, bottom middle. The stub bow gives the 45 DS a muscular look, above.

outboard the nav station and, not surprisingly, a glance behind reveals immaculate workmanship.

Under sail

Out the on bay we shut down the engine and unrolled both sails. By the way, the standard power plant is a four-cylinder naturally aspirated 54-horsepower Yanmar diesel. This is wonderful engine, fuel efficient and low maintenance, however it seems a bit undersized for the 45 DS. Yanmar's 75-horsepower model is a popular option.

The winds were from the south, gusting to 20 knots. We tacked south, carefully monitoring our depth as we worked toward the Rickenbacker Causeway. We made several short tacks across the narrow ICW. The 45 DS was impressively nimble. The sailplan is easy to handle, and we gained way quickly after each tack. When we finally gained a bit of sea room, we eased off onto a close reach and accelerated smartly. Our speed varied from 6 to 8.5 knots

depending upon the gust of the moment and the boat stood up well to the short blasts.

I have grown accustomed to twin wheels but I can't say that I like them. I prefer to stand amidships, conning the boat from the centerline, but I know I am a dinosaur in many respects. The helm was light and balanced. The 45 DS felt right in the water, I had the feeling that Briand knew just what he was doing with this boat. We eventually fell off and reached back toward Government Cut. The rain came down hard but we didn't mind, the sailing was great. We sped along, sailing flat and under full control with all sail set. It was nice. Gunner took the helm as we approached Miami Beach Marina, and did a fine job of bringing the boat into the slip stern-to.

Despite a weak dollar, the new 45 DS is competitively priced and represents a fine value. There's little doubt that the 45 DS will help Jeanneau continue to dominate the deck saloon market.

The twin wheels of the 45 DS provide the helmsman with excellent visibility, top right, while the curved cockpit seats and table make above deck living quite comfortable, right. The squally conditions off Miami put the Jeanneau to the test.

