

# WINDS OF **CHANGE...**

The German-made Dehler 35 boasts legendary fit and finish, lively performance, solid construction, and great local backing, discovers wind-swept **ALLAN WHITING**





Fast, ergonomically sound cruiser/ racer that's easily handled by a small crew, but with a full-face package option to mix it with the 40-footers



Cockpit design (top) focuses on ease of crew movement and line handling. The Dehler 35 (above) promises competitive racing and cruising fun, too. Instruments (opposite) are located above the companionway so everyone can see them.

**L**ike many yachtmakers Dehler was hammered by the Global Financial Crisis and the situation was compounded by the fact that the company had only just taken over Etap Yachts. After a late-2008 bailout by the German Government failed to stave off the inevitable, Dehler was acquired by the Hanse Group in 2009 and therefore should have a bright future. (Etap Yachts – physically unsinkable if not financially so — was taken over by the Belgian MIC Group and may surface once more).

Dehler yachts are renowned for their strength and speed and the Hanse-managed Dehler range would seem set to continue the tradition. The Dehler 35 was penned by Simonis Voogd Design in conjunction with Dehler's in-house specialists and retains some of the marque's key design elements. A trademark teak coachroof strip with flush hatches and the company's patented companionway hatch arrangement shout "Dehler". The companionway access design is brilliantly simple: a drop-down

door that's lockable at storm-board height, with a roof hatch that disappears neatly into a cabin-top cavity.

#### CREATURE COMFORTS

In an era when many new boat interiors are cubist, accentuating straight lines and squared off edges, the Dehler 35 has a more traditional flavour, with striped flooring, teak shower grate, shrouded lower mast and rounded bulkhead and cabinet edges.

The six-seat dinette centres around a double drop-side table that almost disappears when folded, allowing plenty of space for spinnaker packing under way. With only one side lifted up the table can seat four, while leaving the passageway clear. That walkway leads past a forward-facing, deeply-fiddled chart table and an L-shaped galley with top-opening fridge, double-bowl sink and two-burner stove with oven.

There are double bunks forward and aft to port, with the starboardside aft cavity devoted to a roomy head/shower and a vast storage space that's accessible via







**HIGHS**

- ▶ Great performance
- ▶ Excellent value for money
- ▶ Quality build, fit and finish
- ▶ Specific option packages
- ▶ Good racing ergonomics

**LOWS**

- ▶ Large wheel restricts transom access
- ▶ No anti-slip on coachhouse deck

a lift-up cockpit seat. Four opening ports in the saloon are closed by multiple, seaworthy clips and covered by roll-up translucent curtains.

These days, nearly all yachtmakers use hinged-up companionways for engine access but the Dehler 35 is different. In this boat the companionway and heavily insulated engine cover lift off, in conjunction with side-panel openings, so there's full access to the engine, its accessories and transmission.

### BUILD AND RIGGING

The Dehler 35 is built from handlaid balsa-cored deck and hull mouldings that are laminated



L-shaped galley (above) features top-opening fridge, double-bowl sink and two-burner stove. Double bunks are forward (this photo) and aft to port.

together, not bolted and glued. Floor beams are also laminated to the hull and aluminium reinforcing plates are laminated into deck stress points.

Iron/lead L-profile or bulb racing keels are available.

A 9/10-rigged Selden mast is keel stepped and sports twin spreaders with Dyform rigging and tackle-adjustable backstay. Running rigging is low-stretch Dyneema.

The standard boat is well specified for racing speed, with ample cruising equipment, but two packs enhance both aspects. The Windcraft Pack includes an engine upgrade to 20kW (27hp), cockpit cushions, anchor kit, two additional house batteries, CD player, Tactick Wireless T108 instruments, dodger and mooring kit. The Performance Pack includes a bulb keel, vinylester hull and deck construction, foam-cored lightweight interior panelling and doors, winch upgrade to HB46.2s, Cunningham, German mainsheet system with HB35 winches, spinnaker gear and rod rigging.

But there's more in the option basket: carbon wheel, removable cockpit table and transom utility boxes, teak sidedecks, powered halyard winch to starboard, carbon pole, powered windlass, racing propeller, chartplotter, radar and autopilot.

### UNDERWAY

You can tell that a boat wants to

go when it's bobbing in its pen, tugging at mooring lines in a way that suggests it can't wait to break free of shore ties. This liveliness was obvious as we approached the Dehler 35 — she was noticeably more responsive to wash than the cruising types that were its pen pals.

Clambering aboard was easy enough, but required a step around the dominant steering wheel.

The Dehler's engine is neatly encapsulated in a well insulated box, so very little noise and almost no vibration found their way on deck as we motored clear of the Pittwater marina and headed into a stiff sou'easterly breeze.

The standard North D-cut sails unfolded quickly and adopted a shape that showed they'd be okay for social racing as well as cruising. For two-sail racing the Dehler 35 would be fine two-up and for spinnaker work four or five

crew would be ideal. An under-deck Furlex furler is standard and a double-luff jib foil is available.

The spreaders are only mildly swept back, allowing the mainsail to sheet well out for downwind running under conventional spinnaker. Halyard winches are sized to handle spinnaker sheets, leaving the primaries for brace work.

A multi-purchase backstay adjustment is fitted, but the cleat is at the hull end — a long reach for the helmsperson. It can be rerun, with the cleat on the top block, or replaced by a bridle stay arrangement.

The rack-and-pinion helm works like a 'circular tiller', having no lost motion in its action and spurring instant reaction from the huge rudder. Wheel diameter is sufficient for a hiking helmsperson to retain perfect control and well-positioned foot braces are fitted.



The dinette (above) caters for six, and the table can still service four with one leaf folded down, leaving a clear passage to starboard. Cabin blinds (this photo) unroll and clip up for privacy.

Out of the box the Dehler comes with a two-line multi-purchase mainsheet and cam-cleat car, running on a full-width traveller. The line is hauled in as a double-strand for coarse trimming, then as a single line for fine sheeting with

twice the purchase power. The effort level won't tax the average mainsheet trimmer, but the downside is a big pile of endless sheet in the cockpit when the boat is hard on the wind. However, aluminium-plate-reinforced winch





**[DEALER PROFILE: TEAM WINDCRAFT]**

Although it's difficult to imagine the Australian yacht scene without the Hanse brand, that's pretty much how it was in 1999. Peter Hrones, founder and managing director of Team Windcraft is delighted with the decision he made 11 years ago in the small boatbuilding town of Greifswald, on Germany's Baltic Coast, to import Hanse Yachts. That's how Team Windcraft began and although Hanse remains the company's highest sales volume brand to date, with more than 200 deliveries, it also distributes Moody, Dehler, Halberg-Rassy and Dragonfly yachts, and Fjord motorcruisers. Also, while the company's head office remains in Sydney's Pittwater, there are offices in Sydney's Middle Harbour, and in Melbourne, the Sunshine Coast and NZ. So, what's the secret to Team Windcraft's success? We managed to get most of the Pittwater gang together and discovered how it is structured. The company works a tad like a swimming duck, with highly visible, calm sales and office staff as first customer contact, backed-up by a lower-profile, highly-skilled support crew. "What makes us different from most dealerships is that we do everything in-house," said Hrones. "That was my aim right from the start, but, obviously, that didn't happen until the company was selling enough boats to justify the costs. "We don't need sub-contractors for the work we do, commissioning new boats, fitting locally-supplied options and

refurbishing used boats: we have qualified, experienced staff in Team Windcraft, who know the boats and have on-line access to all the factory information. "This saves the customer time and money, because we run our service section as a break-even department, whereas sub-contractors have to show a profit. "We're also blessed with being located at the Bayview Slipway, where the crew has the same dedication to excellence that we do — it's a great relationship. "Another important distinction we make is to treat used-boat buyers exactly the same as our new-boat customers — they're all part of the Team Windcraft family," he said. Trade-a-Boat has experienced the family-fun aspect of being part of the Team Windcraft customer base, when we've attended a couple of their rallies. The brand and company loyalty is obvious among Team Windcraft clients. Pittwater boat buyers soon get to know Peter Hrones, Bob Vinks, Mary Bickley and David Stiles. Sydney people will meet Tim Vine, John Cowpe and Greg Cockle. Sunshine Coast customers come across Nick Cox and Col Thomas, and the hardy souls who sail on Port Phillip encounter Roger Poulter, but they won't necessarily meet the Pittwater-based service guys until after purchase. Allan Bridge, a commercial skipper, oversees customer-care, including



Some of Team Windcraft's Pittwater crew (L-R): Dave Griffin, Kurt Ottawa, Allan Bridge, Nick Jones and Ric Hawkins.

fostering Team Windcraft's extended family. He also has the unenviable job of organising boat shows and other events. Nick Jones is after-sales manager, with a shipwright background and has developed innovative systems to help customers with their servicing needs. Dave Griffin is a long-time, third-generation boatbuilder and surveyor, with international experience, specialising in pre-delivery locally as well as in Team Windcraft's interstate and overseas markets. Kurt Ottawa is the newest kid on the block and gets involved in just about everything! What's obvious with Team Windcraft is the absolute focus on the customer, from initial enquiry, through boat purchase, servicing and subsequent purchases. The crew is most proud of the fact that almost all of the company's customers over the past 11 years are still "part of Team Windcraft."

pads are already moulded in place for those who prefer a German mainsheet system to aft winches.

The slightly overlapping standard jib is sheeted well inboard, so the boat climbed willingly to windward, settling in at around 6.5 to 7kts in 12 to 20kts of gusty wind. Jib winches proved powerful enough to allow rapid sheeting after tacking.

With the main dumped through heavy puffs the Dehler 35 dropped little speed, churning along under jib power alone. Eased sheets had her flying along under two sails at 9kts-plus.

Cockpit design has focussed on ease of crew movement and line handling. There are no sharp-edged mouldings and hiking on the coaming is made as comfortable as possible by smooth outer edges and top surfaces. Bracing slots for sailing shoe heels on the cockpit benches are a nice touch. The toerail is a broad moulding, so is quite comfortable for rail sitters.

The instruments are located in a panel above the companionway, where everyone can see them. I was surprised to see no anti-slip on the coachouse roof, but its slick surface certainly makes for quick crew transfer during tacks, allowing a rapid bum-slide from one rail to the other, without any chance of anti-slip tearing the backside out of racing britches.

The Dehler 35 is deceptive, because it looks quite cruisy sitting at a mooring and is nicely appointed below decks. However, it has the potential to embarrass many 40-footers around the cans. Ⓣ

**Facts & figures**

**PERFORMANCE**

Off the rack, a Dehler 35 can provide satisfying club racing, combined with no-compromise cruising fun. Optional packages make her much more competitive or more fast-cruising oriented. But while this sound cruiser/racer is easily handled by a small crew, with a full-race package and more hands you can mix it with the 40-footers.

**PRICE AS TESTED**

**\$259,000**

**OPTIONS FITTED**

Engine upgrade, cockpit cushions, two additional AGM batteries, radio/CD player with saloon and cockpit speakers, VHF preparation, TackTick wireless instrument pack, spray dodger, anchor kit, and mooring kit

**PRICED FROM**

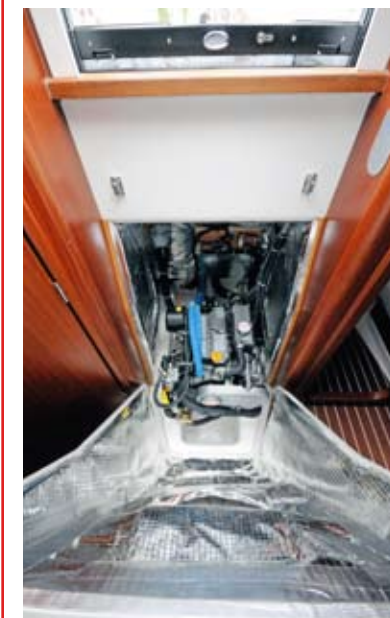
**\$249,000**

**GENERAL**

**TYPE:** Keelboat  
**MATERIAL:** Balsa-cored laminate deck and hull, laminated together  
**LENGTH OVERALL:** 10.51m  
**WATERLINE LENGTH:** 9.38m  
**BEAM:** 3.49m  
**DRAFT:** 1.95m (standard); 2.05m (optional)  
**MAST HEIGHT:** 17.82m  
**WEIGHT:** 5520kg

**CAPACITIES**

**LAYOUT:** Two double cabins, one head  
**FUEL:** 83lt  
**WATER:** 130lt



**DEHLER 35**

**SAILS**

**MAINSAIL:** 39.3m<sup>2</sup>  
**HEADSAIL:** 32.9m<sup>2</sup>  
**GENNAKER:** 91m<sup>2</sup>  
**SPINNAKER:** 106m<sup>2</sup>

**ENGINE**

**MAKE/MODEL:** Yanmar 3YM20; Volvo D2-30 (optional)  
**TYPE:** Saildrive  
**RATED KW/HP:** 16 / 20; 20 / 27 (optional)

**SUPPLIED BY**

Windcraft Australia,  
 Bayview Anchorage Marina,  
 1714 Pittwater Road,  
 Bayview, NSW, 2104  
 Phone: (02) 9979 1709  
 Fax: (02) 9979 2027  
 Email: boats@windcraft.com.au  
 Website: www.windcraft.com.au

**FINAL REPORT**

The Dehler 35 is a strongly made performance cruiser/racer that can be specified to suit individual owners' requirements. She performs well in standard trim, but can be optioned to a higher level than many of its competitors. Fit and finish is legendary, yet the price is right. And with great local backing under the Team Windcraft banner, this well-respected brand should enjoy a new lease on life in Australia.



The moulded head/shower (above), with traditional teak grate, is roomy. Unlike other yachts, the companionway and heavily insulated engine cover (left) lift off for maintenance.