

Dehler 41

This new, competitive IRC racer offers plenty in performance cruising mode as well and left **Andi Robertson** wanting more...

At a London Boat Show which was sadly bereft of interesting new performance yachts, save a couple of models, the new 2011-launched Dehler 41 proved something of a gem. It is an immediately engaging, good looking, clean and modern cruiser-racer which carries the hallmarks of a sporty racer but clearly delivers enough volume to provide a comfortable three-cabin interior.

Under Hanse's ownership come the economies of scale, enabling Dehler to realise such a boat at a competitive price in line with volume producers such as Beneteau, Jeanneau, Bavaria and Hanse themselves.

The London show boat is already delivered to a West Country owner who will race from Dartmouth in his local club races, doing Dartmouth and Torbay weeks. Speak with the Dehler sales team in the UK and you will quickly discover there is not really a typical Dehler customer, indeed if there is a defining set of characteristics it seems that they are all different.

The owner of our test boat is a successful businessman who enjoys his fast road and airborne toys, and who could have spent significantly more on his new yacht, but it was the looks and proportions which steered him unerringly to the Dehler 41.

Otherwise the new Dehler 41 is very much up against the First 40 and the Arcona 410 falling between the two in terms of price.

The London show boat was hull number 27 of the nearly 50 that have been sold, so this season we should start to get real racing performance comparisons to gauge how competitive this Judel-Vrolijk design will ultimately be. The Dutch-based boat that was over in the UK at the tail end of last season did the 50-boat North Sea Race and placed fourth on a less-than-favourable IRC rating. At 1.108 which is the rating expected by Dehler UK, she would have topped the table ahead of the three bigger boats which finished ahead of her. At the moment Andy Hind at Hamble's Inspiration Marine has a further three or four potential buyers interested but they've boats to sell before buying.

The Dutch owner and team plan to return to race at Cowes Week. Notwithstanding any immediate sales, that might be the next opportunity to see a race-ready Dehler 41 doing its thing.

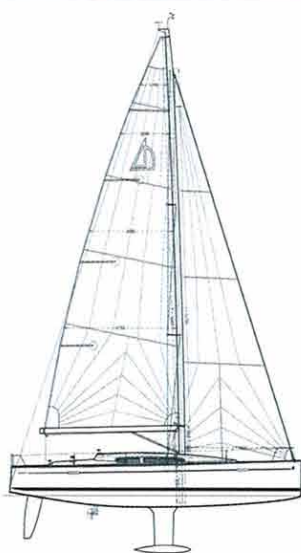
Concept and Layout

★★★★★★★★★☆☆

In terms of dockside appearance and sailing on the water it is easy to overlook the fact that this is a cruiser-racer, which offers twin double aft cabins, excellent headroom and an airy interior. Judel-Vrolijk have kept the proportions tight in each area but produce a hull with powerful, relatively full stern sections, only moderate freeboard, a

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	12.40m
LWL	11.50m
Beam	3.93m
Draught	2.15m (standard) 1.98m (cruising) 2.40m (racing)
Displacement	8,195kg (standard) 8,390kg (cruising) 8,195kg (racing)
Ballast	2,995kg (standard) 3,265kg (cruising) 2,995 kg (racing)
Engine	Volvo D2-40 (39hp)
Mast length	19.80m (above WL)
Total sail area	92.00m ²
Main sail	55.00m ²
Furling Jib	37.0m ² (105%)
Spinnaker	149m ²
Gennaker	132m ²
Design	Judel / Vrolijk
Price	£194,400 (Basic spec, delivered to Hamble, incl VAT)





1 Powerful, relatively full stern sections and a distinctive sleek coachroof
 2 Standard performance-cruiser rig features twin-spreader mast with 112% overlapping jib 3 The double-wheel set-up is just right – not so sure about the teak trim on the swimming platform...
 4 One heads as standard with the option of a second one forward 5 A microwave is a useful extra but the test boat also had a twin-burner cooker and plenty of storage space



ABOVE Good access to the engine **RIGHT** A great all-rounder cruiser-racer with a noticeably chunky bow roller for safe anchoring



distinctive sleek coachroof and a spacious, workmanlike cockpit which is not just set up for racing. The bow sections are relatively subtle with a gently rounded forefoot, plumb stem and relatively flat sided in terms of flare, in order to produce a decent sized forecabin. The hull is very much orientated towards useful form stability with a moderate waterline beam, not afraid to build power into quite wide, powerful stern sections.

The hull is made using vacuum-infusion sandwich construction around a foam core using vinylester resins with solid floor beams laminated to the hull to accept the rig and keel loads. The deck is hand laid-up GRP, balsa-cored sandwich. The three hullside portlights are very subtly styled, disguised neatly even in the light-coloured hulls but we rather liked

approximately £35k to the price of the boat and approximately 10 points to the rating, but the widespread consensus is that both financial and rating costs are well worthwhile.

On Deck

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

The cockpit is well proportioned with ample space for the helm and a tactician to samba round each other; a good helming position, good foot braces and good working area forward for the mainsheet trimmer. The main sheet is a single-line German A-style which is recessed below the sidedeck, running to a pair of Harken 40.2 Radial winches, which are positioned so the helm can trim when short-handed.

Teak trim in the cockpit and on the coachroof is a nice extra but not sure I'd be

raceboat layout with the twin-wheel position and set-up – there are no compromises with excellent GRP/foam pedestals. Main instrumentation mounting is either over the companionway or the chartplotter on the back of the cockpit table, but most race set-ups will go for mast-mounted repeaters and helm's repeaters on the coaming, which is not ideal, or on the wheel pods.

On the water

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

Overall there is ample space in the cockpit, good, effective coamings and the working areas are discrete and safe. The pit has enough swinging room, the trimmers have good, powerful pullers on the jib cars.

Our standard sail inventory was set up more for performance cruising, the standard 112% overlap headsail set on a flush, recessed Furlex TD 300 furler while we flew an easily handled cruising chute with ease. A 48:1 cascade backstay system gives ample control of the rig. Less appreciated is the lump of metal on the stem which is the anchor roller.

Abiding impressions remain of a boat that it was very easy to get a lot out of. Ergonomics are generally good with an excellent helming position that afforded forward vision of the sails from different standing and seated positions. Working side-by-side with the mainsheet trimmer there is no excuse for poor communication, but equally the boat can be easily sailed by the family or short-handed crew in safety and at speed.

The level of hardware cannot be faulted. The short carbon sprit is simple to set with the downhaul permanently set.

“It is too easy to focus just on racing when this is the true dual-purpose boat...”

the dark-coloured hull of our test boat for that fact alone.

There are a couple of keel options but the cast-iron deep fin-lead bulb extra low VCG race T-keel at 2.4m draft would be the preferred option in most circumstances.

The standard 9/10th rig is alloy mast and boom with twin spreaders and dyform standing rigging, but again those looking to race seriously may choose the carbon mast and boom from Southern Spars with rod rigging. This adds

splashing the £10k for the full teak deck. The deckline and coachroof have such gentle curves that I feel the teak instantly ages the design, and that is before you add the extra weight.

The broad transom comes with a drop-down bathing platform, which is rather cute. The integrated fold-up helm seat is really a gimmick for when you are parked or motoring. I'd lose the teak trim on the back patio set-up entirely as it ruins the look of the cockpit completely. Experience the grand-prix



Under Sail

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

A nasty sea mist did not really put a dampener on things but effectively made us sail in two sessions, morning and later afternoon as we tried – and failed – to catch a few images that were relatively clear of fog. Interestingly the boat felt significantly better in the second session when the breeze was a little stronger. I am still not sure what we changed, sailing with a little more halyard tensions I suspect, but the 41 was much more of a revelation in the 9-12kts of breeze than when it was only simply 'good' in the slightly lighter stuff.

Upwind the 41 appeared pleasingly stiff. With only three of us, and at times two, the boat always felt direct and driven rather than feeling like it needed to be coaxed. The helm

was a little more positive than we expected to start with, but that translates to good grip and feel when the apparent wind built. And when it was lighter there was never the feeling that you were dragging a lot of stern around, the water release was very even with minimal wake. At 10-11kts true wind speed we were making high 6kts without any real effort and with a little more weight on the rail would surely have been a steady 7. The T-keel is relatively narrow so likes speed before being leaned on, but that said it was relatively easy to keep to a decent groove. Certainly the 41 responds to the trimming subtleties, does not like to be starved of power, over-strapped and lets you know when everything is just right, delivering an easy balance and regular speed.

Off the breeze under the reaching cruising chute we bubbled along very happily in the light to moderate breeze, beam reaching at a hairsbreadth under double figures in the same weight of breeze, with the speed dropping away as you opened up the downwind angle. But again here we were with two people, easy sailing at speeds which would eat miles upwind, reaching or broad reaching with very minimum effort. It is too easy to focus just on racing when this is the true dual-purpose boat, which would, for example serve you well doing Cork Week, then cruising the west coast of Ireland with minimal adjustment.

Down below

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

The interior space is excellent without ever stepping definitively into either racer or cruiser domain. Standard finish is satin mahogany, which gives a nice, warm appearance; or there is an option to go for a teak finish. Down below functionality does take precedence over luxury or ambience but not in an obvious way. The finish is neat but commensurate with the price point.

There is very generous U-shaped saloon seating to starboard around a full length drop-leaf table that is on the centreline. An insert makes this a good-sized double, while to port there is a deep, wide full-length settee. The nav station is commendable with a large, deep fiddled table. It feels like a working space with ample space for extra instruments. Similarly the galley scrimps on nothing in terms of space and stowage, with a good forward-opening fridge, cool box, twin sinks and a twin-burner cooker with grill and oven. And there are three deep, excellent drawers. Our test boat had a microwave set into the eye-level lockers which is a useful addition.

Up front there is an option to have an en suite heads-shower in the forward cabin, losing one large hanging locker to starboard. Regardless this is a very worthwhile sized cabin where the steep, relatively flat sides to the bow maximise space and the small hull portlights add a little extra natural light and reduce any feeling of claustrophobia just as they do in the double aft cabins.

Verdict

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

Dehler has hit the target with this 41-footer with an all-round performance which does seem to match up to her very sweet lines. Certainly in the UK the agents seem confident that she can win off her IRC rating, but in a competitive market place what they need is to have boats out on the racecourses showing what the 41 can do.

Under our test conditions we could find little to fault, and it definitely falls into the 'want more' category, a boat we were sorry to get off and would look forward to going racing on. Nearest rival is the First 40, but personally I think this is a better-looking boat, which should at least match the Beneteau on the water. Time will tell and we look forwards to seeing how the Dehler 41 fares. ■

COMPARISONS



Beneteau First 40

Commendable production racer-cruiser with growing list of regatta honours, good bang not too many bucks.

LOA 12.24m
LWL 10.67m
Beam 3.89m
Draught 2.45m/1.95m
Displacement 7,536kg



Arcona 410

Premium price delivers a refined performer with a sumptuous, traditional interior. Surprisingly quick but yet to be raced seriously in UK waters.

LOA 12.20m
LWL 11.20m
Beam 3.90m
Draught 2m/2.2m/2.5m
Displacement 7,800kg

ANSWER BACK

From Andy Hind, Inspiration Marine

Many thanks to Andi for persevering with the test on cold, foggy day but happily ferries were dodged and there was enough breeze to get a good impression of the speed potential the Dehler 41 has. The report has said it all really – she is typically Dehler with her distinctive styling that sets her apart from other similar boats. Configure her to race then go off for a cruise or vice versa, wherever she goes she will turn heads and the truth is we all love to own something that is drop-dead gorgeous, don't we...?

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