

ON THE
COVER

HANSE 320

by Richard Muscat Azzopardi

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The first time I saw this boat was while I was out testing another boat - a 43 footer. Mind you, there was a bit of a problem as we could barely keep up with it while sailing on a very close reach. I naturally preferred to believe that the Hanse 320 is an incredibly fast boat for its size rather than shoulder the blame as I was helm of the 43 footer at the time. This left me wanting to see more of the boat and I got in touch with Hanse's local agents - Yachting Partners - to get me a test sail on the boat. Since the boat was already sold we had to ask the permission of the owner, but thankfully he was more than willing to take me out for a test.

The first thing I noticed when I got on the boat was the fact that the owner had chosen a tiller rather than a wheel. This gave the cockpit the kind of room usually reserved to larger boats which added to the impression of fun the boat oozes. For the uninitiated, a tiller might seem a tad rudimentary but on a boat this size it is still very manageable and even allows for a more precise and responsive handling.

Not only can you feel whatever the boat is telling you at every movement, but your response can be far quicker and more accurate. Even though handling a tiller can be tiring when compared to a wheel, a bit of practice helps you find less tiring positions. This boat was also fitted with an autopilot to provide relief on longer trips and since the owners sailed it down from the yard themselves, I could certainly understand why they wanted it there.

Sailing the boat was a real pleasure. We first took her out for a good sail in the open sea and she handled beautifully. The self tacking mechanism really stood out in the last half hour of sailing, when we decided to play around in the harbour. Thanks to the size of the boat and the self tacking, this was akin to an arcadish version of dinghy sailing. I was sailing from one side of Marsamxett harbour to the other tacking tightly at each end. As anyone who has ever sailed under bastions must know, wind bounces off them to create mini pockets of wind coming from various directions and while this makes it much more challenging, the whole experience was very rewarding.

So the boat looks good enough to honour the Hanse badge it carries and also passes the test as a friendly cruiser but I really wanted to see the interior since this is usually Hanse's real forte. Once again I was not disappointed. Headroom was ample throughout the centre of the boat and the saloon and galley are very decently sized. Hanse chose to stick to two cabins, quite a wise choice seeing that living aboard for more than a day would not be very comfortable for more than four people. This meant that both cabins are relatively large and ample storage is afforded too. The starboard side of the cockpit, where there is no cabin, has a massive sail locker/ lazza-



rette which is also accessible from the saloon, giving owners ample storage for fenders, ropes and extra sails but also enough room for provisions on long trips.

The smallest sibling in the Hanse stable has a big reputation to live with but Hanse has made sure that it does not become a thorn in their side as there is no compromise on quality and ideas. The boat does not reinvent the wheel (in fact it leaves it out completely) but brings Hanse's big ideas and striking lines to a price range where it is not only competing with other boats but also with another product Germany is famous for - cars. Starting at €60,800, this boat costs as much as the smallest decently specced premium saloon in each of the three big manufacturers' lineups. If you want more information about the Hanse 320 or any other boat

in the Hanse range, please do not hesitate to contact Yachting Partners, the local representatives of Hanse. 📞



HANSE 320 - SPECS

LOA	9.63 m/ 31'6"
Width:	3.30 m/ 10'8"
Draught:	1.75 m/ 5'7" (Standard) 1.40 m/ 4'8" (Optional)
Displacement:	4.7 t/ 10,362 lb
Sail area:	51.35 m ² / 553 sq ft
Steering:	Pin, wheel steering optional
Design:	Judel / vroljik & co

