



Roomy and ready to go!



This roomy, keenly priced and extremely well equipped cruiser from Germany's second largest boat builder is proving to be popular with newcomers and old hands alike.

Duncan Kent finds out why.

The Hanse boat yard in Greifswald was little heard of until the 1990s when the reunification of Germany enabled it to break into the European boat market.

Rapid evolution over the past decade has turned Hanse into a thoroughly modern boat builder, producing stylish, high quality performance cruisers including the 320, 350, 370, 400, 430, 470e, 540e and 630e. The 'e' signifies an epoxy hull.

The Judel & Vrolijk-designed 320 is a contemporary boat with many common options included in the 'sailaway' package, making her an ideal starter boat or one for those trading down once the kids have flown the nest. She is easily capable of long, shorthanded passages, thanks to sensibly placed deck gear and a self-tacking jib. She also has the comfort level required for a week or more on board – nearly all in the price.

Her hull is hand laid using solid laminate underwater, reinforced at the keel and full length foam stringers for stiffness. This changes to a balsa sandwich above the waterline for lightness and bulkheads are laminated to hull and deck. Isophthalic resins provide high osmosis prevention and inner surfaces are gelcoated.

Her cast iron fin keel features a torpedo bulb and a high aspect, semi-balanced rudder gives maximum bite on the water.

The UK boat includes shore power, two batteries, 20A charger, hot water, 2-ring cooker/oven, shower, holding tank, fridge, teak cockpit, fully battened, main, lazyjacks, self-tacking jib, genoa winches and tracks, rigid kicker, backstay adjuster and deck shower. Options include wheel steering (£1,085), cherry interior (£1,898) and shoal keel (£850).

NEW BOAT TEST



Accommodation

1 Main Saloon

Modern emphasis on free space often means decent lockers above the settees are compromised. Here there are some, but they're very shallow and the shelf's fiddle bar won't retain small items.

She does have generous seating around her oddly shaped table, though, which has a bottle store.

Thanks to long windows and light wood (this boat had the cherry option) she is bright and cheerful, but the small inset ports don't provide much ventilation. Headroom is good at 1.87m (6ft 2in), dropping to 1.80m (5ft 11in) forward.

2 Chart Table

The chart table seems to be becoming redundant – not discouraged by builders making them so small. Many boat owners are now forced to use the saloon table for passage planning, feeding the resulting waypoints into chart plotters, commonly mounted at the helm. While there's nothing particularly wrong with this, it's nice to have somewhere to plot a fix along the way. Here we have the barest minimum in the form of a strangely shaped, aft facing table, but there is some room for instruments on the bulkhead and beside it is a useful locker.

3 Heads

The heads is a good size with 1.80m (5ft 11in) headroom. A moulded sink

makes it a little stark, but easy to clean. Locker space is good and there's even a wet locker behind the toilet. A small portlight keeps it fresh in good weather, but a vent would have been even better.

4 Galley

This attractive, Corian covered, L-shaped galley is very good for a 32ft boat and has all you'll need for week long stretches of living aboard. Stowage is well organised, the fridge is roomy, she has H&C pressurised water and a sink with a half size drainer. A sink cover increases preparation space.

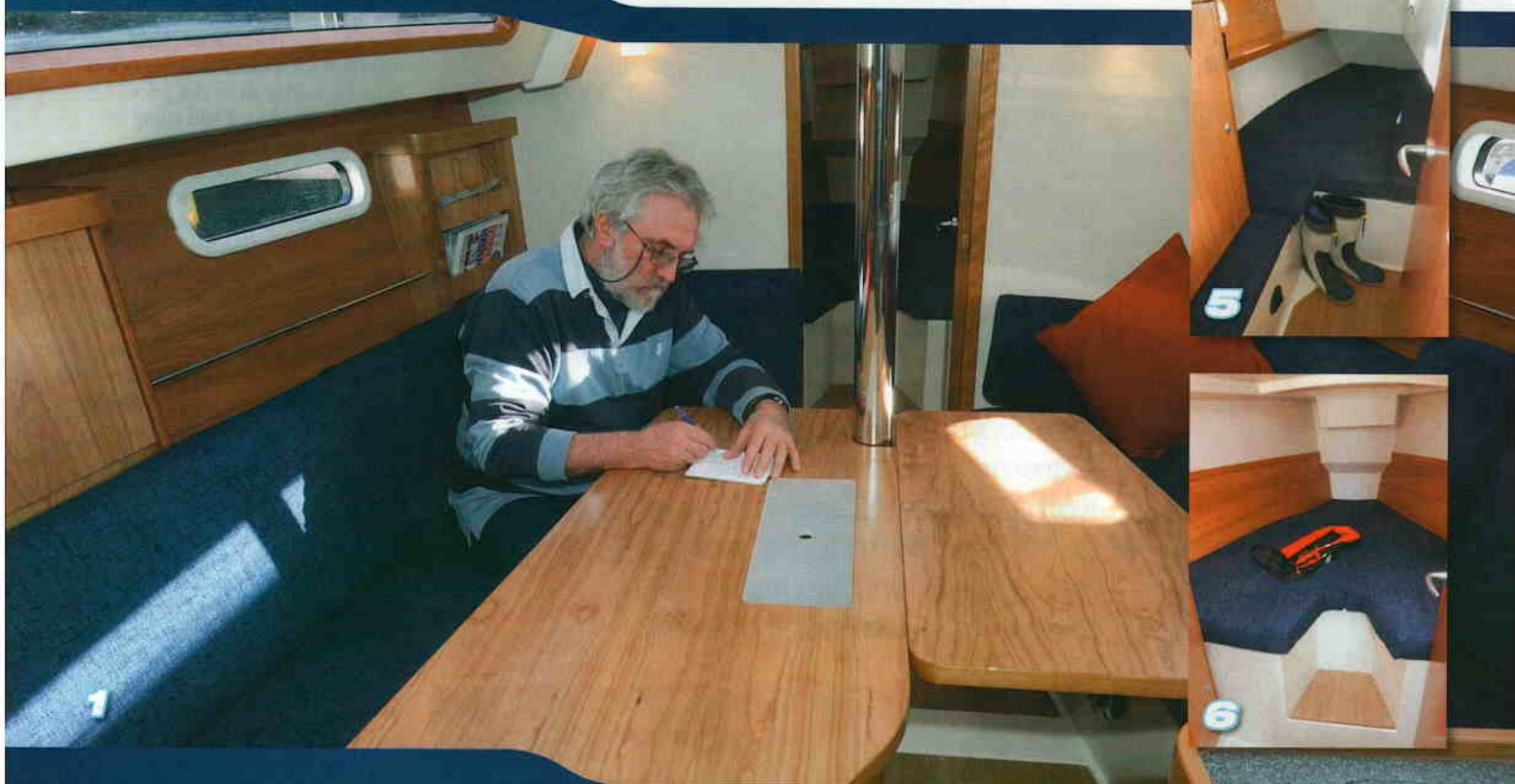
5 After Cabin

The after end of the boat has been split 60:40, the larger portion to starboard given to the double cabin, the remainder used for a deep cockpit locker. This provides a comfortable cabin with a 1.98m

L x 1.36m W (6ft 6in x 4ft 5in) double berth, a capacious clothes locker, useable dressing area with ample headroom and twin opening portlights.

6 Forecabin

Carrying her coachroof height forward has given good headroom in the dressing area of the forecabin and once again there is good stowage for clothes. I would miss shelves above the berth, though. The berths are 1.93m L x 0.64m W (6ft 4in x 2ft) and there's just room (0.40m/1ft 4in) at the pointy-end for two pairs of feet. Wooden side panels take some of the starkness off the bright white GRP and the large forehatch lets in plenty of light and air – although once again a weatherproof vent would be nice to keep her sweet in all weathers or when under way.





Deck, sails and rig

7 Cockpit

Simplicity is the key today for small family cruisers, so almost all have a two-reef mainsail with single line controls back to the cockpit, as does the Hanse 320, where the lines are neatly recessed and fed through a channel beneath the sprayhood. She has a well organised cockpit with everything to hand. As standard her mainsheet is on a single eye on the sole, but a track option allows better trimming. She has a self-tacking jib and a single sheet that terminates at one of the powerful Lewmar 40ST coachroof winches. Not so good for the singlehander who has to climb over the seats to trim it. However, the optional overlapping genoa is sheeted to winches right beside the helm.

Her transom has a walkway to

a narrow step, folding boarding ladder and deck shower. The transom can be left open for day sailing as it frees up more space for the helmsman, but no doubt most cruising yachtsmen will opt to have the helm seat.

8 Stowage

To port, the cockpit has a very deep locker containing the fuel tank and a handy shelf. She also has two quarter lockers – one of which is a two-bottle gas locker.

9 Decks

Her side decks are easy to reach from the cockpit and are free from most obstructions. The headsail reefing line comes back to the cockpit via stanchion blocks, but there's no clutch or jammer for locking a reefed sail should you need to. Headsail

tracks on the side decks are standard, which saves drilling holes to upgrade, but you'll need to buy the matching travellers if you want to use a genoa.

10 Foredeck

She's well set up for cruising, with a good size of self-draining anchor locker, which hides the anchor's shank when stowed. An optional electric windlass fits beneath the locker lid, leaving the foredeck uncluttered. Cleats are stout and there are open fairleads in the alloy toerails.

11 Sails and Rig

Her 9/10ths fractional rig is pretty straightforward and her two-spreader, tapered, deck-stepped mast is well supported by cap shrouds and lowers to single outboard chainplates. These are in turn firmly attached to hull fillets to spread the rigging loads through the hull. She has a backstay adjuster and rigid kicker for maximum sail control and the two mainsail reefs are on a single line controlled from the cockpit.



NEW BOAT TEST

SPECIFICATIONS - Hanse 320

LOA	9.63m	31ft 7in
LOD	9.55m	31ft 4in
LWL	8.72m	28ft 7in
Beam	3.30m	10ft 10in
Draught (shoal/deep)	1.40m/1.75m	4ft 7in/5ft 9in
Displacement	4,700kg	10,340lb
Ballast	1,480kg	3,256lb
Sail Area	51.35m ²	553ft ²
Fuel	110ltr	24gal
Water	260ltr	57gal
Berths	4-6	
Engine	21hp (15.3kW) Yanmar 3YM20	
Transmission	Saildrive, 2-blade fixed prop	
RCD category	A (Ocean)	
STIX No. (shoal/deep)	32.1/37.1	
AVS (shoal/deep)	129°/140°	
Designer	Judel & Vrolijk/Design Unlimited	
Builder	Hanse Yachts, Germany www.hanseyachts.com	
Test boat supplier	Liberty Yachts 01752 227911 www.libertyyachts.co.uk	
Price	£63,990 (Inc UK delivery and commissioning)	



Verdict

The Hanse 320 should prove to be a sprightly, but easily managed cruiser that is well mannered and easy to handle under sail by a light crew, making her an ideal starter boat or downsizer. Her spacious accommodation is fantastic for a 32ft yacht and the build quality and equipment level is above average for a production boat. In comparison with others in her class she represents very good value for money when her comprehensive, sailaway inventory is taken into consideration.

For

Well mannered and easy to sail with minimum crew
Good inventory with many normal 'extras' as standard
Comfortable, spacious and well planned interior

Against

Needs a genoa for serious reaching
Jib sheet not within reach of the helmsman



Performance

12 Under Power

She handles like a dream at close quarters, spinning around her keel in less than a boat length and reverses accurately once she's gained a knot or so of way. Her 21hp diesel/Saildrive unit is quiet and efficient, taking her to a quiet and economical cruising speed of 6kn at just 2,200rpm. Flat out was 7.4kn in flat water with her engine somewhat noisier at 3,400rpm, although easily tolerable in short bursts.

13 Under Sail

We set out for our test sail on a gentle spring day with a flukey F2-3 easterly blowing – a little disappointing, because we had no genoa, only the self-tacking jib. Thanks to her near vertical ends she boasts an LWL of just 8cm (3in) less than her LOD, offering maximum boat speed for minimum marina charges.

Her sails took seconds, rather than minutes, to hoist and we were soon picking up speed across Plymouth Sound.

14 Closehaunched

Closehaunched she was well balanced and light on the helm, slicing gently through the water at between 3.0-3.5kn in the 5-6kn breeze, with the jib sheeted well inboard. Coming a little off the wind sped her up to 4.0-4.5kn in 7-9kn wind, culminating at 5.4kn boat speed in our briskest blow of the day – 10.2kn true on a close reach. Beyond that reaching is impaired by the sheeting angle of the jib, so you'd either want to feed a second sheet through the sidedeck tracks for reaching or use a genoa on long passages.

15 Light Airs

She handles well in light airs, although she is better balanced in winds above 8kn, allowing you to leave the helm untended. Her displacement:length ratio is moderate, meaning that she rides the waves well without slamming and this is helped by her submersed forefoot and fine bow section. Sail area:displacement



is conservative, which is hardly surprising with her small, 95 per cent jib, so she won't be the quickest 32-footer around unless you add the overlapping

genoa, which boosts her SA:D ratio to a more impressive 23.23 and should increase her speed considerably, especially if you have the deep bulbed keel.

Legend 31

With excellent accommodation in two large double cabins, the Legend 31 must be one of the roomiest 31ft cruisers around. She has a very well equipped galley, a roomy heads and a comfortable, bright saloon. Stowage has been minimised in return for open space and her chart table is small, but overall she makes a good family boat.

On deck she is well organised with all sail controls leading back to her spacious cockpit. Her decks are clear and she has a chain locker designed to house an electric windlass below deck level.

She has the well-proven B&R backstay-less rig with a large mainsail and furling headsail for easy handling.

She can be ordered with a fin or bilge keels.



Beneteau Oceanis 31

The second of Beneteau's new Oceanis series, the Oceanis 31 was first launched in the UK at ExCeL 2008. With her elegant profile and sleek coachroof she builds on the innovative features introduced by her big sister, the Oceanis 37, including the patented companionway hatch and dedicated liferaft locker.

The 31 is offered in a two-cabin/one heads version, although an Exclusive version, which offers greater comfort, is also available. She has a large galley with two sinks arranged lengthwise to provide the maximum work surface area with their covers in place and a comfortable saloon where the emphasis is on space and light with two topside and coachroof ports.



Bavaria 31

The smallest in its range, the new Bavaria 31 supersedes the Bavaria 30 and is priced very competitively as a starter boat. An innovative and spacious deck layout incorporates completely new hull and deck mouldings. There are two large hatches over the saloon and six opening ports to give a bright and airy feel to the accommodation, which now has larger berths and heads with a wet locker.

The Bavaria 31 comes with a generous inventory including a mainsheet track, six winches, teak cockpit sole, anchor and chain, pressurised hot water and battery charger.

The transom gate from the Vision series, which lowers electrically, has also been incorporated.



Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 32i

The Philippe Briand designed 32 was given a new deck and keel and renamed the 32i in 2006 – the 'i' denoting Jeanneau's Prisma injection deck moulding process. Prisma shaves around 20 per cent off the deck weight and increases headroom below.

She sports a semi-battened laminated mainsail and furling genoa with optional in-mast mainsail reefing. She also has a deeper keel, a taller, keel-stepped mast, Dyform standing rigging, Dyneema running rigging and a mainsheet track.

A lifting keel option is available that enables her draught to be reduced to just 0.80m (2ft 8in) when fully raised and allows her to take the ground safely.



SPECIFICATIONS

	Legend 31	Beneteau Oceanis 31	Bavaria 31	Jeanneau S/O 32i
LOA	9.42m/30ft 10in	9.66m/31ft 8in	9.76m/32ft 0in	9.60m/31ft 5in
Beam	3.27m/10ft 9in	3.39m/11ft 2in	3.38m/10ft 10in	3.30m/10ft 9in
Draught (Shoal)	1.19m/3ft 10in	1.30m/4ft 3in	N/A	1.50m/4ft 10in
Draught (Deep)	1.68m/5ft 6in	1.80m/5ft 11in	1.87m/6ft 2in	2.00m/6ft 6in
Draught (Twin)	1.19m/3ft 10in	N/A	N/A	N/A
Draught (Lifting)	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.86-1.83m/2ft 10in-6ft 0in
Displacement	4,805kg/10,571lb	4,052kg/8,914lb	4,700kg/10,340lb	4,300kg/9,480lb
Sail Area	39.14m ² /420ft ²	47.40m ² /510ft ²	50.10m ² /538ft ²	50.30m ² /540.7ft ²
Engine power	21hp	20hp	18hp	21hp
Transmission	Saildrive	Saildrive	Saildrive	Saildrive
Berths	4-5	4-6	4-6	4-6
RCD	A-Ocean	B-Offshore	A-Ocean	B-Offshore
Price (from)	£64,950	£58,524	£49,950	£64,586
Dealer contact	www.opalmarine.com	www.beneteau.com	www.clippermarine.org	www.jeanneau.com