

TEST HANSE 341

America's Cup winner
'Alinghi' has the same
bloodline as this top
cruising racer

Designed for



WINNING

WORDS + PHOTOS **BARRY TRANTER**

MARKETING the Hanse range has just become a little easier, because the designers have suddenly become very well-known indeed.

For decades Judel and Vrolijk have been the European alternative to Bruce Farr. They have continually produced fast ocean racers, which were successful under whichever class and/or rating system was dominant at the time. Prospective customers could rest easy in the knowledge that the team had never designed a slow boat.

And then came the Americas Cup, 2003. The winning Swiss boat, *Alinghi*, is a Rolf Vrolijk design and from the moment after the last race—when Rolf stepped aboard *Alinghi* for the tow from the racecourse back to Auckland—we can assume that his life will never be the same.

The Americas Cup success can only reflect well on the Hanse range. Partners Judel and Vrolijk designed the range for the German builder—five boats, the 300, 311, 341, 371 and 411, the first two numbers relating approximately to the length in feet. All are conservatively-styled cruiser racers, which sail quite fast. All have the self-tacking headsail, which is still quite rare in production boats, but which rates highly in terms of what my friends in the sales department would call a USP (Unique Selling Proposition). I reckon it is also a BGT (Bloody Good Thing).

The Hanse boats all have long-waterline hulls

and bolted through the toerail. A wide, solid fibreglass girder circles the hull from chainplate to chainplate to spread local stresses. The mast is deck-stepped, supported below by a stainless-steel kingpost.

You can also have two or three cabins and I reckon the two-cab layout shown here is the one to go for. The second cabin is on the starboard side so to port you get a huge

engine oil and coolant levels”, says Hanse importer Peter Hrones.

The trim down below seemed Italian in style, because the woodwork is machine-varnished to a fantastically high gloss, which looks classy and keeps a lot of light bouncing around down below, preventing the I’m-in-a-wood-cave feeling. Headroom in the saloon is 6ft 3in; all the Hanse boats from 31 to 41



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of medium displacement (by today’s standards) and moderate ballast/weight ratios. They carry quite a lot of sail. There are three keel options. Standard is the deep-draught iron fin; you pay more for the shallow-draught option in lead and quite a bit more for a lifting keel.

Hull and deck are fibreglassed together

lazarette, accessible (not accessed—it is not a verb) from the cockpit by lifting the seat. You can also reach it from a door in the aft end of the bathroom, adjacent to which are the engine fluid reservoirs, the fuel tank and fuel filter. “Every time you stick your head in the lazarette you can’t help checking the

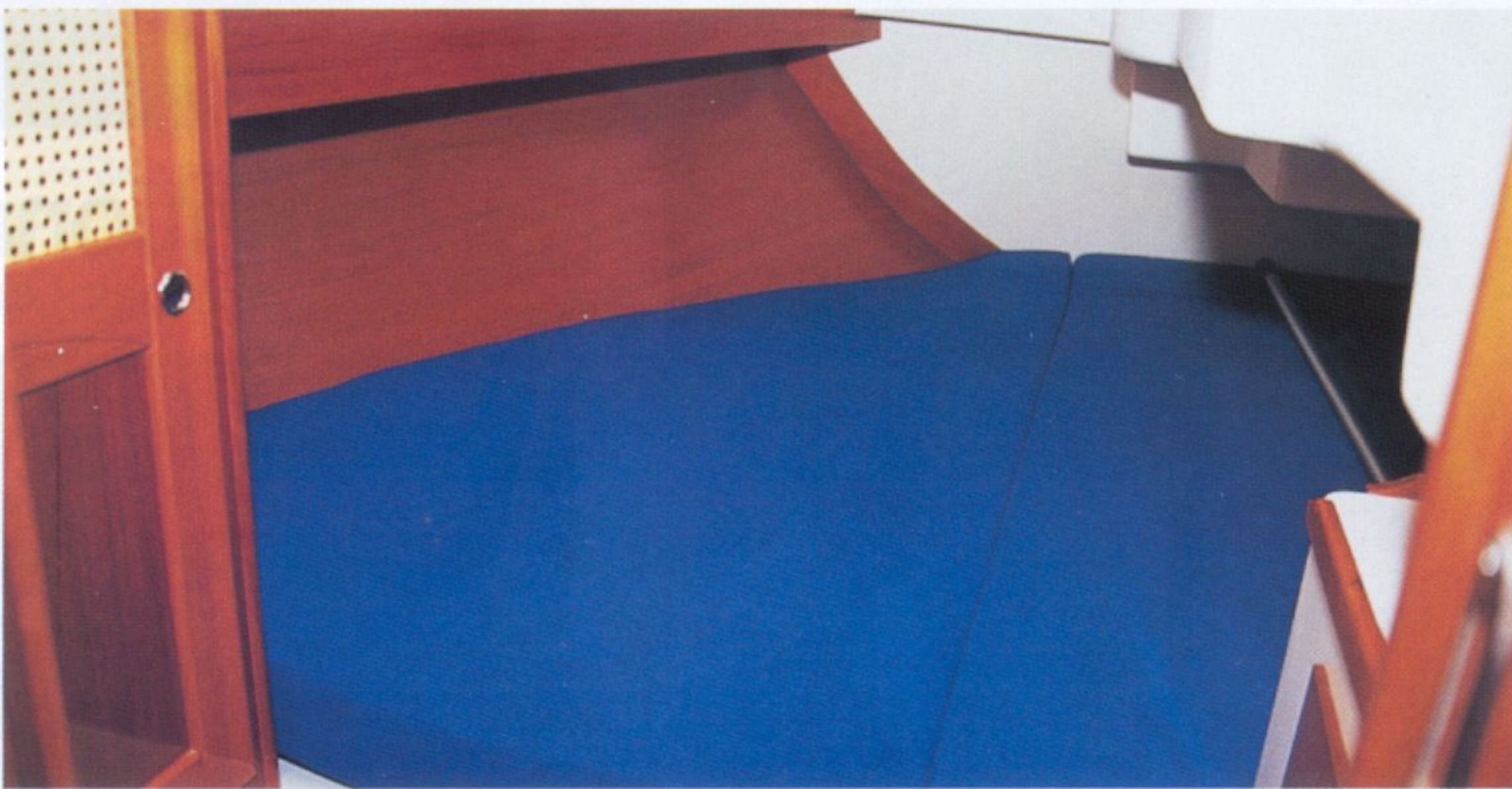
have full headroom.

There is terrific attention to detail. The wiring has plenty of unused leads to accept any additional electronics; the seacocks all have ball valves; the designers have actually thought about the placement of engine controls and instruments instead of taking the most obvious route; furniture is fibreglassed to the hull and so are the bulkheads, top and bottom; the fridge has 95lt of capacity; the gorgeous stainless steel twin sinks are deep and vertical-sided, as they should be; the bathroom has a wet hanging locker space; curtain tracks are standard; the cook would find it difficult not to get good support. The cockpit features a deep breakwater to keep water out of the interior, a feature now so rare we have forgotten its importance. Lids to the access hatches in the cabin sole have neither hinges nor latches; instead, Hanse has provided a large suction cup with which you pluck out the little door.

That most important bit of gear on any yacht, the mast is supported by two sets of



LEFT: Clever design incorporates the galley, dining, navigation and lounge areas into the main saloon without making it look or feel cluttered. Under sail and cruisin’ easy; a picture’s worth a thousand words.



there is also an angled panel on the gunwale so you can sit comfortably to windward and watch the tufts, the waves and the passing scenic parade.

The family can no longer be ignored when the father of the house goes shopping for a yacht. Even the most extreme grand prix ocean racers go Sunday cruising with a boom tent and an Esky (which my Kiwi friend Gay calls a "chilly-bun" — just thought you'd like to know).

One owner we met reckons his Hanse is the first boat he has owned that his wife will sail on, because she doesn't spill the bubbly when the yacht tacks.

The jib changes sides by itself and no hairy crewman elbows her out of the way to get at

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angled spreaders and continuous shrouds, which are tensioned by open-faced rigging screws, all of which should give the owner/tuner good control of the deck-stepped spar.

The mainsheet traveller is forward of the main hatch, on the coachroof, so the Sparcraft strut vang is more important than usual in its roll as leech tensioner.

The self-tacker track has adjustable stops to provide the perfect upwind sheeting angle. The shape of that tall ribbon jib (the leech has vertical battens so the sail will roller-furl) is controlled by the clew, which has five sheet takeoff positions. The day we sailed we had wildly-varying wind speeds, and the sheet was fastened to the topmost hole which produced an overtight leech.

We should have moved it forward to free the leech. The jib sheet runs from the traveller car, up the mast and down again before heading aft to a winch, it is a system, which keeps the foredeck clear of the sheet clutter found on most raceboat-style self-tackers.

The main lives in a stack-pack and lazyjack system. The boom cover has simple zipper closure, but there is a separate panel to enclose the mast/gooseneck region.

Tiller steering is standard, but the optional wheel setup on this boat is weighted and geared perfectly, a Whitlock



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA:	10.35m
LWL:	8.90m
BEAM:	3.40m
DRAFT:	1.75m (see text)
DISPLACEMENT:	5150kg
BALLAST:	1820kg
BALLAST/DISP RATIO:	35.3 per cent
SALOON HEADROOM:	1.92m
BERTHS:	Four (six option)
FUEL:	8lt approx
WATER:	185lt approx
MAINSAIL:	34.20sq m
SELF-TACKER:	27.30sq m
GENOA:	36sq m
SPINNAKER:	84sq m
DESIGNER:	Judel/Vrolijk
AUXILIARY:	19hp Volvo Penta MD2020 diesel with saildrive.
PRICE:	\$235,000
CONTACT:	(02) 9979 1709

- + Standard of finish
- + Saloon headroom
- + Huge lazarette
- Hard to find

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: While the berth in the bow does narrow a little it's more than big enough for two to sprawl out on. Marine toilet, vanity unit and shower recess, the Hanse 314 has all the comforts of home. Sail furler makes light work of deploying the jib.

rack and pinion system working on a very deep rudder (almost keel-depth) with plenty of bearing surface. The steering position is as comfortable as a production yacht gets — if Rolf Vrolijk designed this bit of the Hanse 341 it's no wonder he did such a good job on *Alinghi*. There are foot supports for when the boat heels, but

the winch.

The 341 has quite a high sail area/displacement ratio so she should be quick. And she is light, almost dinghy-light to steer and handle, a sensation heightened by the self-tacker. We had a crazy sea breeze rattling all the way from 5 knots to 20 and back again, so we got no serious performance readings as the boat was always accelerating or decelerating. Peter Hrones, who strikes me as an honest bloke, took the 341 in an evening drifting match of a race (less than 5 knots) using a borrowed genoa in place of the self-tacker, and beat two

Adams 10s, an 11m OD and a production 40ft cruiser/racer, but couldn't catch the Sayer 35.

I tend to believe him because the 341's numbers stack up, and because of how lively she is to sail.

Interior and trim are on the opulent side of comfortable and the performance and handling have a real edge. So Rolf Vrolijk's design is more than a middle-of-the-road cruiser/racer.

The Hanse pushes out slightly the boundaries of both the cruiser and racer aspects of her essentially middle-of-the-road nature without favouring one side at the expense of the other.

The Hanse people may be in for trouble, though. After designing the Americas Cup winner I reckon Rolf Vrolijk would be at least thinking about a fee increase.

The test boat was supplied by Windcraft, Bayview NSW. For further information telephone (02) 9979 1709.