

Sailing the Hanse 385 Cruiser

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Duncan Kent | March 18, 2014



Hanse Yachts builds performance-oriented yachts at affordable prices, all designed by Judel and Vrolijk. Hanse's current sailboat range incorporates a great many practical innovations suggested by previous owners, and the 385 is a very different boat from its predecessor, the 375. More akin to the Hanse 445, 495 and 545, the Hanse 385 boasts twin helms and a drop-down stern platform. She also has improved sailing performance and a sleek, clutter-free deck with flush hatches and hidden control lines.

CONSTRUCTION

As with all new Hanses, the 385's hull is laid up by hand and heavily reinforced by bonding a composite sub-frame to the hull. Weight is kept down by using a balsa-cored sandwich above the waterline and epoxy-based vinylester resins throughout for strength, lightness and water-resistance.

ON DECK

The Hanse 385's broad-sterned twin-helm design carries maximum beam a long way aft, allowing for a wide cockpit, a really good drop-leaf table with a substantial foot bar, sturdy handrails and a stout chartplotter mount. It also allows plenty of separation between the business end of the cockpit and the lounging area.

I really like the simple drop-down transom platform, which is a major improvement on the open transom of the 375. Teak on the seats is standard, while a teak sole comes with the optional "cruising pack" version of

the boat.

Our test boat had the standard self-tacking jib, so there were no genoa tracks to stub your toes on. The side decks are also wide enough for a clear passage forward, where flush hatches keep everything clear. Outboard-mounted shrouds offer a useful handhold on the way to the foredeck and provide a wide shroud base for maximum lateral mast support.

The anchor/chain locker has a compartment for the windlass to keep it belowdecks, and there's enough room in the locker for a few fenders as well as a generous length of chain rode.

The raised molded fiberglass bulwarks provide a nice toe grip when heeled and allow the cleats to be mounted on top without fairleads.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Hanse 385's ample beam provides plenty of useful stowage space and lots of living space and headroom. Available in four layouts, the standard arrangement calls for two cabins; options include an additional aft cabin (at the expense of some galley space) for three cabins in all and a choice between a port-side settee or armchairs in the saloon. The forward cabin and head are the same in all four arrangements.

The overall look is bright and airy, thanks to the boat's white head linings and bulkheads, while the saloon portlights and double deck hatches all open to provide excellent all-round air circulation. Full-length handrails run along each side of the saloon, which is lit with subtle LED strips at night—an excellent safety feature that creates a nice ambiance as well. The sturdy twin-leaf table has a bottle store in its base and a removable glass holder/drinks tray in the center. There is comfortable seating for six.

The boat's navigation area is something of a "token" affair, with a small chart table that faces aft and utilizes the end of the port settee as a seat—not an unusual arrangement in this era of efficient chartplotters. The distribution panel takes up most of the console space, which assumes that most folks now prefer to mount their sailing instruments in the cockpit. Serious passage planning would need to be done on the saloon table.



The L-shaped galley is a good size— especially in the two-cabin model, which has an additional cabinet and worktop. There's a deep fridge with top and front access and the countertop is quartz-style with both sink and range covers providing additional preparation area.

Stowage is good, but there are no stops on the drawers, so they can fall out if not secured. The aft cabins have ample headroom, enough floor space to dress, and roomy berths. Two opening ports provide a through-flow of air, and a tall clothes locker has both hanging and shelf space, with a deep-fiddled shelf on top.

The forward cabin is roomy with twin hatches and two hull lights. Two generous wardrobes provide clothes stowage, and there is more stowage beneath the berth in deep bins.

UNDER SAIL

The Hanse 385's 7/8ths fractionally-rigged sailplan is primarily mainsail-driven, and the boat is well balanced under sail. The mast, with twin sweptback spreaders, is supported by cap and aft shrouds and a bifurcated backstay that can be manually adjusted.

Sail control lines are all led aft to two primary winches, where they can also be tucked out of the way in a pair of shallow rope bins by the two helms. Sadly, having the halyards, sheets, reefing lines and vang all leading to just two winches is a recipe for confusion and prohibits actions like adjusting halyard tension underway. I would therefore definitely opt for the extra pair of winches. The shallow rope bins also soon fill up with the many line tails.

On a more positive note, the boat handles beautifully, her rod steering returning just enough feedback while remaining light to the touch. We set off in 10-12 knots of true wind, which became a steady 16 knots after a short while, but we felt happy under full sail. Closehauled the boat powered through the waves effortlessly, giving us an impressive 6.2 knots of boatspeed in just 12 knots wind.

Later, when the wind picked up and became a little gusty, the log stuck firmly on 7-plus knots at a 35-

degree apparent wind angle, even as the boat retained her quietly confident motion. We tacked smartly through 78-82 degrees in the firm breeze, and the self-tacking jib made it really quick and easy.

Coming off the wind a few degrees the boat accelerated, but not dramatically. The log kept showing around 8.5 knots at an apparent wind angle of between 40-60 degrees, achieving a top speed of 8.7 knots on a close reach.

Although the Hanse 385 remained easy to handle throughout our test, the lack of a mainsheet traveler means you need to crank the vang down hard to stop the boom rising up when you ease the mainsheet in a gust. Sailing downwind, we furled the fluttering jib beyond a broad reach and still made 6 knots under main alone. This would improve with an optional genoa, cruising chute or spinnaker. This is undoubtedly the best performing Hanse I have sailed so far.

UNDER POWER

The Hanse 385's 27hp Volvo diesel provides plenty of punch for such a slippery hull and her short keel allows her to be spun in her own length. Close-quarters maneuvering is a breeze. Throttling up to 2,000 rpm gives you a cruising speed of just over 6 knots, while 7.2 knots can be achieved quietly and reasonably economically at just 2,400 rpm. Flat out the boat makes around 8.4 knots in flat water.

CONCLUSION

The 385 is a sensibly designed yacht full of practical innovations that can only have been created by someone who knows exactly what it's like to go cruising under sail. Though she's not exactly traditional in the classic sense, for a modern boat built to a price, she is surprisingly well thought through and is a sparkling performer under sail.

Specifications

**BALLAST RATIO 30% SAIL AREA-DISPLACEMENT RATIO
20 DISPLACEMENT-LENGTH RATIO 179**

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For all Hanse boat reviews, click [here](#).

[Hanse 455](#), [Hanse 575](#), [Hanse 345](#), [Hanse 445](#), [Hanse 355](#),

[Hanse VAR 37](#), [Hanse 495](#)

- **LOA** 37ft 5in
- **LWL** 34ft 1in
- **Beam** 12ft 9in
- **Draft** 6ft 6in (std); 5ft 3in (shoal)
- **Displacement** 15,873lb (std)
- **Engine** 27hp Volvo (saildrive)



- **Fuel** (GAL) 42
- **Water** (GAL) 84
- **Waste** (GAL) 5
- **Sail Area** 797ft² (main and self-tacking jib)
- **Designer** Judel/Vrolijk
- **Builder** Hanse Group, Greifswald, Germany
- **Headroom** 6ft 2in
- **Berths** 6ft 7in x 5ft (aft); 7ft 2in x 6ft 9in x 2ft (fwd)
- **Ballast** 4,850lb (std)