



## Hanse 400e: Sailors Wanted Onboard

Like a sprightly Volkswagen Jetta, this sporty sloop is another fine example of exemplary German engineering.

BY HERB MCCORMICK

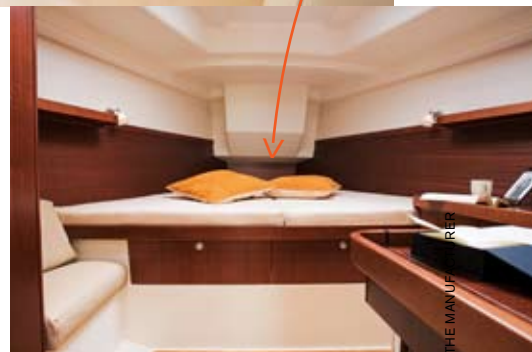
IT WAS A PUFFY AFTERNOON OFF Annapolis on the day we took the new Hanse 400e for a test drive, with a teasing northerly breeze of just 6 or 8 knots pulsing down the confines of the Severn River before building to a more respectable 10 to 12 a bit southward in the open Chesapeake Bay. In other words, it was just about ideal for gauging a boat's potential in somewhat light to pleasantly moderate conditions, the sort of weather in which most people actually sail. I'd been hoping for at least a bit of wind because, even dockside, the Hanse is a boat that looks fairly quick and able, and I was eager to see if the long, low profile, combined with its generous double-spreader rig, translated to noteworthy performance under sail.

The 400 is available with many options. There are several cabin layouts, with either a single or twin double cabin aft and you can choose from an island-style berth or a beam-width conventional double in the forward owner's stateroom; regular nonskid



or teak decks (though the teak cockpit and seats are standard); twin wheels or a single helm; a torpedo-shaped deep keel or shallow-draft bulb; and, in the vessel's construction, the choice of either a traditional fiberglass/foam core lay-up or a tough, lighter, vacuum-bagged composite/epoxy sandwich (hence the "e" in the name) that saves 900 pounds of displacement.

Our test boat was optimized for the Chesapeake with the shallower keel, the dual helm stations, and the epoxy hull. While I'm sure there are benefits to the other configurations, it was difficult to quibble with the combination at hand. The view forward from either of the wheels is expansive and uncluttered, thanks largely to the stream-



lined coach roof, the recessed headsail furling drum, and the absence of visible running rigging, which is stashed neatly beneath easily removed deck plates and led aft to twin banks of Spinlock clutches and a pair of Lewmar self-tailing winches to either side



LOA	39'7"	(12.07 m.)
LWL	35'5"	(10.80 m.)
Beam	13'3"	(4.04 m.)
Draft (deep)	6'8"	(2.03 m.)
(shallow)	5'5"	(1.65 m.)
Sail Area	1,137 sq. ft.	(106 sq. m.)
Ballast	5,907 lb.	(2,685 kg.)
Displacement (standard)	18,519 lb.	(8,400 kg.)
(epoxy)	17,417 lb.	(7,900 kg.)
Ballast/D (standard/epoxy)	.32/.34	
D/L (standard/epoxy)	186/175	
SA/D (standard/epoxy)	26/27	
Water	88 gal.	(333 l.)
Fuel	40 gal.	(151 l.)
Mast Height	64 ft.	(19.53 m.)
Engine	40-hp. diesel	
Designer	Judel/Vrolijk	
Price	\$288,000	

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## DOWN TO THE DETAILS

**1** Twin wheels are just one of the many options available to owners. Teak in the cockpit is standard, though.

**2** Armchairs flank a multipurpose piece of furniture that can serve as nav station, cocktail table, or end table in the saloon. Throughout the boat, rich wood tones are offset by light fabric, which gives the boat an airy interior.

**3** The full-width V-berth offers an owner plenty of room to lounge, but leaves enough space in the forward cabin for a seat and plenty of room to dress for dinner.

Visit [cruisingworld.com/0903hanse](http://cruisingworld.com/0903hanse) to see more photos of the 400e.

of the companionway (the starboard halyard winch on the test boat was electric). The Simrad chart plotter is mounted just aft of the centralized cockpit table and, in keeping with the overall theme, is clearly visible.

Under way, the plotter provided a steady record of our speed, and the numbers were impressive. With a full-hoist main and the standard 95-percent self-tacking jib, we scooted along at 5.6 to 6.3 knots in less than 8 knots of true wind while close- and beam-reaching in the confines of the river. Once outside, in 10 to 12 knots true, we managed a solid 6.5 to 6.7 hard on the breeze, and watched the figures slide up to the 7-knot range just slightly cracked off. With the breeze up to 12, we fell off to a beam reach and soared along at about a half-knot faster. The helm, throughout the exercise, was light and extremely responsive.

Once the sails were stashed—the boat is equipped with an excellent lazy-jack system for corralling the main—we conducted trials under power and saw speeds of 7.5 knots at 2,500 rpm and about 8 knots when ramped up to 3,000 rpm. The boat backed down with authority and without vibration.

Were there things I'd like to change? Well, sure (it's a boat!). I'm not a fan of coach-roof-mounted mainsheets—the driver should be able to dump the main if things get squirrely, but Hanse is hardly the lone offender in this. Our test boat did not have a traveler, which seems like an oversight on a performance cruiser (though you can order one as part of a performance package, and an overlapping genoa, too), and the running-rigging arrangement for the self-tacking jib, which is initially led skyward well up the spar before winding its way aft to a cockpit winch, seemed odd to me. Finally, the split, offset backstay, controlled by a nifty block-and-tackle set-up, terminates outboard to port and starboard of the open transom, which is uncomfortable for the helmsman when sitting on the coaming aft of the respective wheels. Hanse does offer optional helmsman seats for the standard crossbar at the stern, which would likely address the matter. But these are nitpicks on a boat that sails very, very well.

Moreover, I had few if any reservations about the clever and handsome mahogany interior layout (cherry is also available), and in fact was bowled over by the lockers and storage throughout the boat. Yes, the styling is ultra-contemporary and may not be everyone's cup of tea, but the execution

throughout is very well done, and the optimization of space is impressive. Our test boat had the twin doubles aft, with the port cabin lacking a bit of headroom to accommodate a top-sides cockpit locker. A spacious head with big shower stall lies to port, the roomy L-shaped galley to starboard. The better-than-average engine access is via the hinged companionway steps and side panels in the aft cabins.

The main cabin is portioned off with a large U-shaped settee to starboard, a central dining table, and on our test boat, a desk/nav station/end table to port flanked by two comfy armchairs, which makes for a dual-purpose work/social area and maximizes the spot's usefulness both underway or at anchor (you can also have a straight settee and aft-facing nav table). The owner's cabin is forward, with oodles of hanging-locker stowage, drawers, and lockers situated all over the place. A handy vanity with a stowaway seat is a cute little touch. A second head forward is an option.

Overall, the Hanse 400 shares a lot in common with several 2009 Volkswagens, another product of German engineering. In other words, it's cool, quick, and modern, at a very respectable price.

Herb McCormick is a CW editor at large.