

BY SVEN DONALDSON



# Hanse 400

Bold styling, a plethora of options and plenty of zip

**A**s the larger of Hanse's two mid-sized cruising yachts, the 400 definitely qualifies as a bread-and-butter model for Germany's fastest growing boatbuilder. Back ordered since its 2005 debut, the first boat sold in B.C. did not arrive until late in the 2006 season. Indeed, by the time this report appears, the most recently completed examples of this 40-footer will already be sporting a mid-run model refreshment. However, the anticipated changes will be minor and largely cosmetic: a more streamlined helm pedestal, parquet-style cabin sole and a flush-mounted fore hatch treatment that appears to take its cue from the dramatic "light strip" styling seen in Hanse's latest models from 43' up.

Fundamentally, the Hanse 400 is similar to its junior sibling, the 370 (see *Pacific Yachting*, April 2006). However, an extra three feet of length and one foot of beam results in substantially more stowage and elbow room, particularly in the sleeping cabins forward and aft. In practical terms, the 400 represents about the minimum size in a light-displacement performance cruiser that can still provide sufficient carrying capacity for extended, offshore

voyages. Moreover, the 40-footer's extra volume makes it feasible to offer a more extensive array of mix-and-match interior options.

**Design/Construction** With imposing freeboard, an almost vertical stem and only marginally more slope to the broad, flat transom, the Hanse 400 comes across as brawny, purposeful and conspicuously masculine.

Like everything else in Hanse's current line, the 400 was drafted by Judel/Vrolijk, a firm associated with high-level racing achievement up to and including back-to-back America's Cup wins by the Swiss Alinghi syndicate. The hull has all the earmarks of a contemporary race boat, including a composite cast iron/lead keel and a high-aspect spade rudder. The underbody profile indicates that the longitudinal centre of buoyancy is fairly far aft, but the fine,

low buoyancy bow sections fill out quickly above the waterline, helping to forestall excessive weather helm at higher heel angles.

Hanse yachts, from 43' up, all get high-tech epoxy hulls, but in the case of the mid-sized 400 (and 370), buyers can elect to save about \$12,000 by choosing conventional polyester construction, as used for the 32 and 35' models in the line. However, in my opinion, the epoxy option is a very good bargain. In the case of the 400, the optional "e" (epoxy) hull weighs in at 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds) lighter than its polyester counterpart. This weight savings triggers a positive ripple effect

resulting in enhanced righting moment, superior high-angle stability and an increased safe maximum load capacity, not to mention extra speed and sea kindness. Moreover, the oven-cured





epoxy laminate delivers a superior cosmetic finish, less prone to shrinkage and possible print-through issues developing over time. Blistering resistance is another benefit often credited to epoxy construction, and although osmosis problems are now quite rare among late model polyester boats, epoxy still offers long-term peace of mind (and all else being equal, a higher resale price).

Hanse now produces its epoxy hulls in a separate, purpose-built factory using a vacuum consolidation technique and specialized laminating materials supplied by SP Systems—a world leader in the field. Epoxy hulls get Corecell foam in the hull topsides instead of the end-grain balsa used for the polyester ones. Even the keel floors and bulkhead tabbing in epoxy boats are vacuum-consolidated, and after poking around some of the less accessible areas in

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the (epoxy) test boat, I was impressed by the exceptional laminating workmanship and detailing.

All Hanse 400s get polyester/balsa sandwich decks; secured to an inward hull flange using a combination of mechanical fasteners and polysulfide adhesive sealant. Hanse's unique alloy toe rail has a sleek, in-turned profile that's made to allow the matching aluminum stanchion bases to “latch” securely into place—a nifty example of good industrial design. Another detail worthy of comment is the below-decks chain plate tie rods—not grossly oversized in an effort to suggest massive rig strength but simply large enough to transfer shroud loads with a sensible safety margin. Here, as elsewhere in the boat, efficient engineering appears to take priority over pure marketing considerations.

**Systems** The Hanse 400 is fitted with the Yanmar 3JH4 three-cylinder diesel sail drive—an inherently quiet powerplant that benefits further from a tidy soundproofing effort. Moseying along at 6.5 knots (2,200 rpm), I measured 74 dBA in the centre of the main cabin. Full throttle delivers

8 knots (3,200 rpm), but only a very modest increase on the decibel meter to 77 dBA. Only a single 110-amp hour house battery is supplied as factory standard, but nearly all owners will wish to augment this to offset the draw of the generously sized, 130-litre front and top-loading fridge (also standard).

The 400 offers the usual amenities now *de rigour* for a contemporary cruiser: pressurized hot/cold water, high fashion interior lighting, built-in bar locker and expansive head(s) with separate shower stall. Also

worth noting, however, are the holding tanks—stainless steel for maximum reliability and mounted above the waterline to permit gravity discharge where permissible.

**Topsides** The 9/10th fractional rig features two pairs of slightly raked spreaders and an aluminum mast section husky enough to alleviate any need for running backstays. As in other Hanse models, the 400's deck incorporates a concave, self-tacking jib track. Jib furling, a solid vang, cascade tackle adjustor ▶

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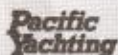
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for the backstay and “Maindrop” system with lazy jacks are also standard issue. As is normal for modern boats, all mast base controls lead to lock-offs at the aft edge of the cockpit. However, the Hanse’s coachroof is completely bare thanks to flush-mounted fibreglass panels that hide the array of control lines. Also unusual (and rather clever) are the molded recesses on the rear lip of the coachroof that allow the halyards and other controls to be lead downward and aft to the primary winches—a very useful capability in some situations.

The Hanse 400 has a spacious bow locker, but an electric windlass is optional despite the boat’s size. Serious cruisers may also wish to upgrade the anchor roller assembly and perhaps install some cladding to shield the nearly vertical bow from ground tackle damage.

**Below Decks** Flat surfaces, straight lines and sharply angled corners distinguish the current generation of Hanse interiors from the classic flowing curves of their competition. However, like it or not, this adventuresome builder deserves credit for breaking away from the mainstream and devising a unique new approach to production boat interiors.

A buyer-selected, mix-and-match system

**All 400s come standard with a 130-litre top and front loading fridge (below left).**

**Hanse offers five options for the area forward of the main bulkhead (below right).**



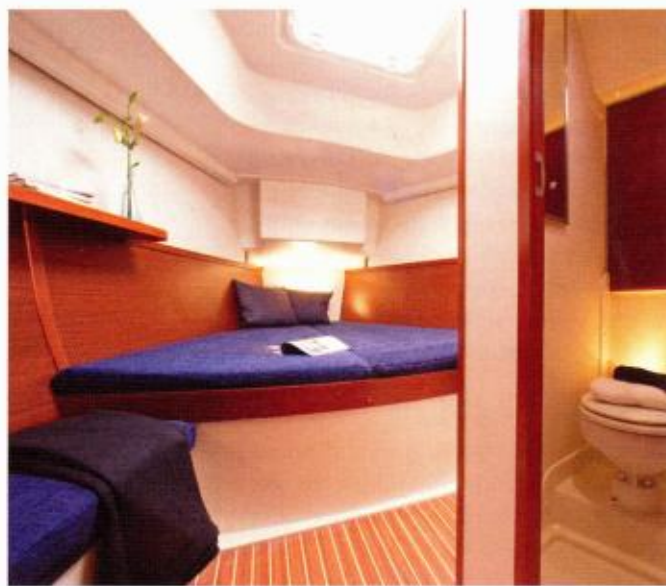
The six-seat convertible dinette and L-shaped galley feature distinct straight lines and sharp-angled corners.

allows for 40 possible variations on the 400 layout, although admittedly some of the differences are minor. The central living area—similar in all versions of the Hanse 400—features a convertible dinette that seats six in comfort, an L-shaped aft galley to starboard and a very large head compartment opposite to port. What’s not included is a conventional, dedicated nav station; instead, one option for the area opposite the dinette consists of a pair of seats with a multi-purpose table between. A simple settee is the other option for this area, and in this era of waterproof chart displays and laptop navigation it’s certainly a viable one.

Buyers can choose between a single aft

cabin and a spacious “storage room” beneath the cockpit, or dual aft cabins and much smaller cockpit lockers. There’s an option for devoting more space to the galley or, alternatively, to other purposes. And for the zone ahead of the main bulkhead, buyers can select from no fewer than five distinct layouts: two include a second head and three do not.

As for interior woodwork, the Hanse 400 comes in either a rich mahogany or a much paler “cherry” finish. Extensive areas





including the major bulkheads are finished in off-white melamine; some, like me, will prefer the sharp contrast provided by the dark mahogany, while others will like the brighter look of the cherry.


**Under Way** As the sailing photo (pg. 76) might suggest, the wind was less than cooperative on the day I trialed the Hanse 400e, though there was a spotty breeze that vacillated from just a couple knots to a maximum of seven to eight. But these conditions were ideal for confirming (yet again) that ample sail area trumps headsail overlap when it comes to light air performance. The test boat accelerated briskly with every little puff, at times reaching six knots, despite the feeble conditions.

Tacking, of course, is simply a matter of spinning the wheel because the self-tacking gear takes care of everything else. And the oversized, leather-covered wheel was a pleasure in itself, largely thanks to a superb, nearly friction-free steering system produced by Jefa in Denmark.

Also worth noting is Hanse's decision to

buck the current trend to dual wheels in 40-footers, opting instead for the easiest, most precise steering possible. No question, the 400e is a real sailor's boat and a genuine pleasure to drive.

**Closing Remarks** Not all sailors favour Hanse's brash, purposeful exteriors and ultra-modern interior treatments. Those who prefer a classic "yachty" look will likely gravitate to other brands, but any knowledgeable sailor can still admire the 400e's strong yet lightweight construction, exceptional performance and extraordinarily easy handling. As a club racer, the 400e has obvious potential, and the test boat's current PHRF rating of 57 seems entirely reasonable.

At \$260,000, a fairly well-equipped 400 can be had with polyester hull and basic sails, but an epoxy boat with popular options will typically add \$20,000 to \$30,000. There are less expensive European brands, but Hanse's brimming order books suggest their distinctive approach is winning plenty of fans. 

## Hanse 400

<b>LOA</b>	12.23 m	40' 1"
<b>LWL</b>	10.80 m	35' 5"
<b>Beam</b>	4.04 m	13' 3"
<b>Std. Draft</b>	1.98 m	6' 6"
<b>Shoal Draft</b>	1.65 m	5' 5"
<b>Ballast</b>	2,920 kg	6,426 lb
<b>Displ.</b>	7,917 kg	17,417 lb
<b>SA (50% IJPE)</b>	85 sq-m	917 sq-ft
<b>SA/D</b>	21.8	
<b>D/L</b>	175	
<b>Fuel</b>	140 L	31 Imp. gal
<b>Water</b>	300 L	66 Imp. gal
<b>Power</b>	40-hp Yanmar sail drive	

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Hanse Yachts, Germany  
[www.hanseyachts.com](http://www.hanseyachts.com)

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