

Hanse 415



The Hanse 400 was a huge success for the German giant so her replacement, the 415, needs to be good. Chris Beeson goes to Palma with high hopes for the 415

PHOTOS: GRAHAM SNOOK



You can hoist, trim and reef from the helm, she's genuinely singlehanded

The 400 has been a golden goose for Hanse. Since her 2003 launch, over 700 units have been sold. Indeed, considering the rate at which Hanse rejuvenates its range, the very fact that its gilded neck survived the design axe for nine years speaks volumes. Its successor, the 415, ought to be a bit special.

Performance

We tested over two days in Palma. Day one brought a Force 2-3 and on a flat sea with optional NorLam sails by North, she made 5-6.5 knots close-hauled, at around 30° to the 10-12 knots of apparent wind angle, tacking through 80° True and carrying her speed well. Fetching at 60° to the apparent wind, with 8.5-10 knots across the deck, she logged 6.3-6.8 knots. Broad reaching at 120-140° with the asymmetric spinnaker flying in a meagre 4-6 knots of apparent wind, she glided along at 4.8-6.5 knots. On day two, with a gusty Force 4-5 wriggling through the town, she topped out at 8.3 knots, broad reaching under 'white sails'.



The transom drops and lifts easily and changes the cockpit ambience

At the helm

Reading the words 'Jefa Steering' on a wheel boss almost always means a happy day at the helm and the 415 is no exception. Jefa builds the 415's steering system in Denmark as a unit, even adjusting the tension, before it's shipped off to Germany and dropped into place. It feels wonderful and despite her prodigious girth and 25° of heel, there was never even a hint of losing grip. While standing, the backstay is just clear of your head and you'll have footblocks, which this one lacked, but all the sitting positions are comfortable and the views forward are perfect. You can also trim all the lines, which is a boon for shorthanded sailing.

Design & construction

She's ocean-certified, but has been designed primarily for family sailing in friendly conditions. The 1.35m (4ft 5in) freeboard presents plenty of windage in very strong winds, but there's 6ft 3in headroom below for those who can passage-plan around

gales. Prodigious beam saves on ballast in the T-keel, and combined with plumb ends this means a sporty Displacement/Length ratio, but her Sail Area/Displacement is average – identical to two close rivals, the Bavaria 40 and Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 409. There are three cabin layout options: our test boat had three cabins and one heads; there is a three-cabin, two-heads variant; but standard spec is two cabins and one heads, with a larger galley and a huge stowage space starboard aft. The fit-out is generally well finished. There are some rough edges, but you won't get a hand-built boat for less than twice the price.

Sailplan

The mast has been moved aft, reducing the aspect ratio of the self-tacking jib by giving it a longer foot. This forgives any imprecise adjustments to the 2:1 sheeting system, which means less leech-flogging. I'm not a fan of the mid-boom mainsheeting but, if you're

designing for family use, gybing is so much safer with it out of the way. The self-tacker means upwind sailing is entirely singlehanded. You can even reef from the wheel, but the price of convenience is extra friction so the electric winches are going to sweat.

Deck layout

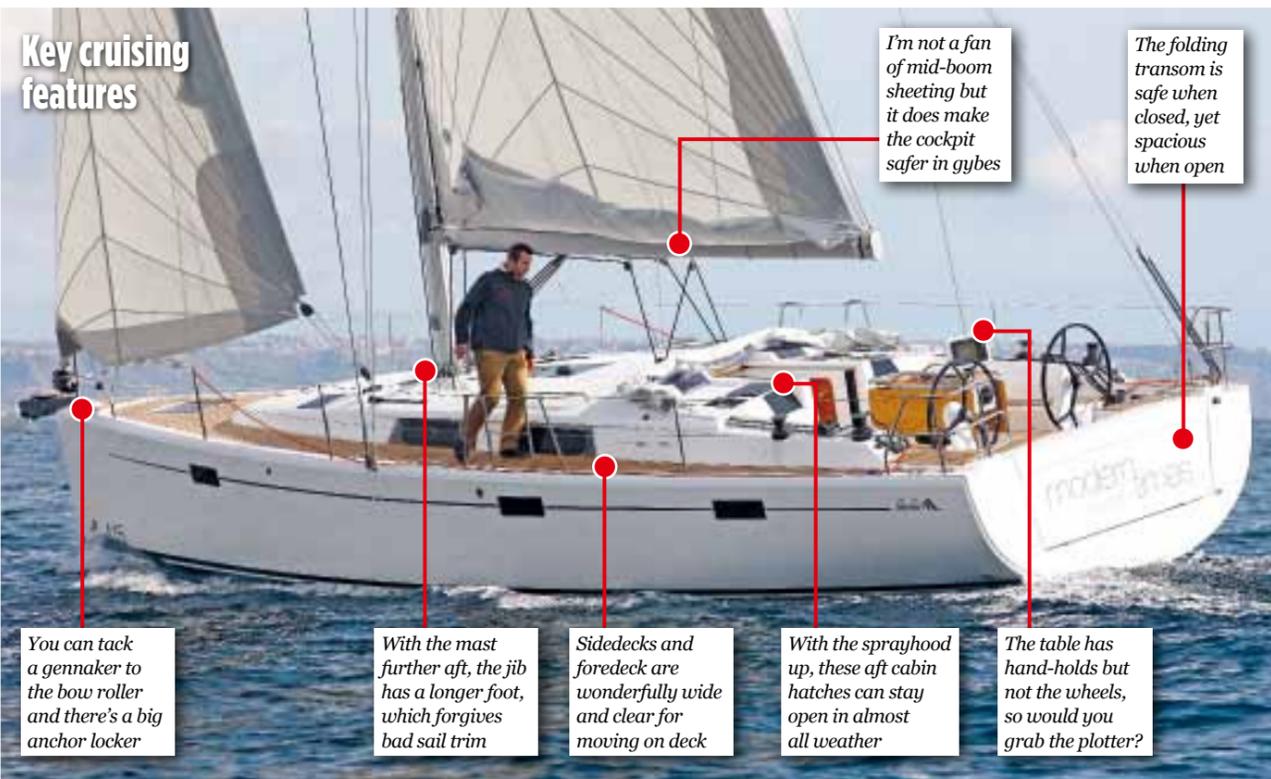
There's a bow roller and an optional windlass with remote control, the gennaker is tacked onto the bow roller and there's a good-size anchor locker. With shrouds outboard, passage along the sidedecks is easy. Coachroof handrails are short but as everything can be run from the cockpit, do they need to be longer? Below the sprayhood, there are cubbies galore for sunglasses, mugs, mobile phones and books in the space that used to have clutches and halyard winches. Bracing is excellent in the forward cockpit, sheet bins in each quarter keep the aft cockpit tidy and there's an easy walk-through to the folding bathing platform. →



Great bracing, good length benches and lots of stowage under the sprayhood

The Hanse 415 with her full sailing crew on deck. With the self-tacking jib and all lines leading to the wheel, you can sail her yourself and leave the family to relax





Key cruising features

I'm not a fan of mid-boom sheeting but it does make the cockpit safer in gybes

The folding transom is safe when closed, yet spacious when open

You can tack a gennaker to the bow roller and there's a big anchor locker

With the mast further aft, the jib has a longer foot, which forgives bad sail trim

Sidedecks and foredeck are wonderfully wide and clear for moving on deck

With the sprayhood up, these aft cabin hatches can stay open in almost all weather

The table has hand-holds but not the wheels, so would you grab the plotter?

Living below decks

The forecabin has four opening hatches and two hull ports, the aft cabins have a hull port and two opening hatches, one all-weather that opens below the sprayhood. Forecabin and saloon stowage is phenomenal but you lose the space below the saloon seating if you opt for the extra water tankage, though surely the 320-litre tank under the forward berth is enough? Family-friendly touches are the tidies at the head of the berth, for mobiles, watches, keys, change, and the

tricky fold-out sink and vanity cabinet in the forecabin (there is a two-heads version). We also liked the fold-up sofa, Oceanair blinds on all hatches, and iPad locker in the port aft cabin to keep kids entertained. The optional microwave further reduces the galley's limited stowage – you'll be venturing into the saloon for supplies. There are two lights overhead – LEDs like all the others – but I'd like a light above the hull port to illuminate the stove. The double sink has a good splashback and a useful bin for plugs, cloths and scourers,

and there's top and side access to the fridge. The heads is an unusual arrangement, with an angled sink top, but it works well. There's a shower section forward with an acrylic door, but putting the towel hook in the shower section seems a bit daft. There's an opening hatch, and if you slide back the forward mirror, light from the hull port bursts in. Stowage is quite limited but there's a big shower sump with manual empty switch.

Navigation

For the sort of sailing this yacht is likely to do, the stowaway chart table is more than adequate, and I feel increasingly prehistoric by moaning about their imminent extinction but I still feel it's the nerve centre and this treatment trivialises it. Putting my personal prejudices to one side, though, I must admit Hanse has done well to produce something that works as a chart table, but also lowers neatly to add an extra seat for dining or a second saloon berth.

Maintenance

Access to the engine and saildrive is good, beneath the companionway steps and through panels in both aft cabins. Seacocks, batteries and transducers are also easy to reach. The calorifier is under the port aft berth, the fuel tank under the starboard aft berth and the water tank under the forward berth. It's not the kind of access you would get with a dedicated 'technical room', but it's pretty good.



The chart table drops on gas struts to create a second settee for dining eight



Good LED lighting, deckhead hand-holds, light and ventilation



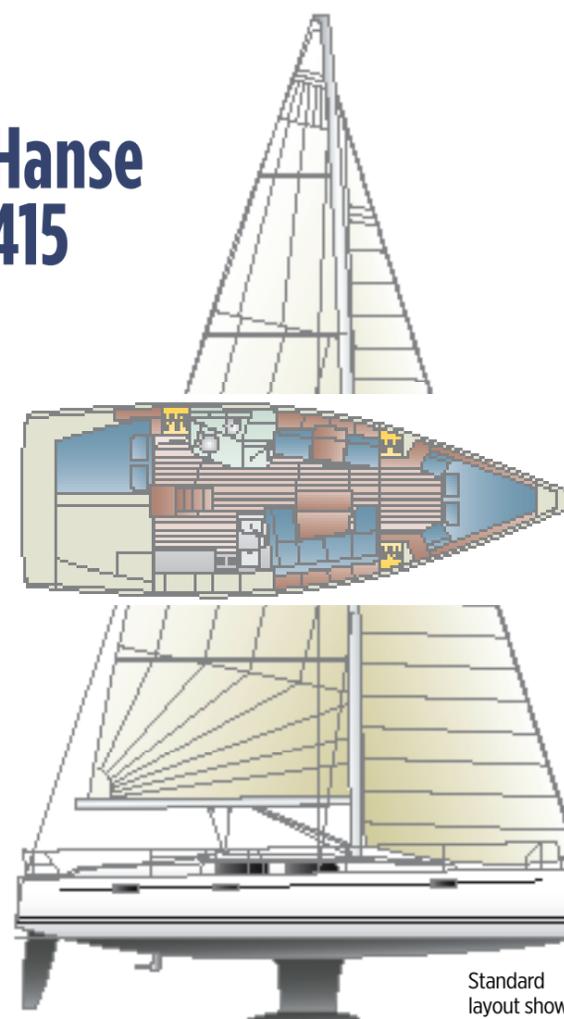
Four opening hatches in the forecabin



The forecabin has a drop-down vanity unit

MORE ONLINE Visit the *Yachting Monthly* website to take a 360° virtual tour of this boat and view a gallery of extra pictures. Go to yachtingmonthly.com/hanse415

Hanse 415



Standard layout shown

FACTS AND FIGURES

- Price around £195,000 (sailaway price, to good spec)
- LOA 12.4m (40ft 8in)
- LWL 11.4m (37ft 5in)
- Beam 4.2m (13ft 8in)
- Draught 2.1m (6ft 9in)
- Displacement 8,900kg (19,620 lb)
- Ballast 2,900kg (6,390 lb)
- Sail area 87m² (936sq ft)
- Engine 40hp
- Diesel 160 lit (35.2 gal)
- Water 320 lit (70.4 gal)
- D/L ratio 130.1
- SA/D ratio 20.6
- Ballast ratio (%) 32.6
- RCD Category A
- STIX 33.2 (MLDC – loaded)
- Designer Judel/Vrolijk
- Builder Hanse Yachts
- Tel 02380 457008
- Web www.hanseyachts.co.uk



It's a decent galley with a big fridge but stowage is limited

OUR VERDICT ON THE BOAT

What's she like to sail?

It's difficult to explain just how easy it is to sail a boat with all the lines led aft to electric winches at the wheels and a self-tacking jib forward of the mast. Life just couldn't be easier, which gives you plenty of time to relax and enjoy the uninterrupted views all around from your comfy perch in the cockpit.

If you can rouse yourself from your solo-sailing reverie, you'll find she feels great at the wheel: tight, beautifully balanced and very responsive. When overpressed with the rail all but under, she held her track and never rounded up. How a boat of this beam manages that, I don't know, but she behaved impeccably. When I wondered out loud what effect 320 litres of fresh water under the forecabin berth would have on performance, it was pointed out to me that all Hanses have their main tank there and it hasn't caused any performance problems yet. Fair point.

Performance is quite lively, making very respectable passage speeds of 5-8 knots in winds of Force 2-5. The self-tacker's usual bugbear, a misbehaving leech offwind, was mitigated almost entirely by the vertical leech battens. An occasional stroll forward to tweak the leech line was all that was required. In family sailing conditions, she's a fabulous boat to sail.

What's she like in port and at anchor?

Unless you're moored stern-to, you might need a step to board because of her slab sides – we moored next to a 1990s centre-cockpit Bénéteau 50 with the same freeboard. Once aboard, she's a cinch to move around because of her wide, clear sidedecks. There are no lines in the forward cockpit and the lines aft clear into sheet bins at the wheels, so there's no 'pit of wet snakes' to avoid. Her mid-boom sheeting means the cockpit is entirely clear.

The cockpit table is safe and secure, providing bracing, grabrails, cup holders and stowage, and you can link your iPod to the Simrad NSS plotter to play music or video. The drop-down transom, practically and aesthetically, is a master stroke, and the boarding ladder fits easily. Deck stowage on the three-cabin version is a bit limited. The two-cabin layout has a vast, cabin-sized cavern in the starboard quarter, which could serve as a 'technical room'.

Down below, she has ample headroom everywhere, plenty of natural light and ventilation, and some very atmospheric LED mood lighting after dark. Without the extra water tanks below the saloon seating, stowage is great – except in the galley, though even that's probably adequate. The cabins are very comfortable and there are some really great family-orientated design touches built in.

Would she suit you and your crew?

If you're a storm chaser looking for a high Arctic cruiser, or a mudlark who loves drying anchorages, the 415 isn't for you. If you're a performance enthusiast looking for lines to tweak in search of those elusive fractions of a knot, again, she's the wrong boat. If, however, you have a young family and you're hoping to build their enthusiasm for sailing to match your own, she ticks every box and delivers great value while doing so. She's unbelievably easy to sail and – if you choose the SMS (safe mooring system) joystick control – to moor as well. She feels great at the wheel, zips along nicely and does a fair imitation of a penthouse apartment below, albeit a budget one. She'll make a great weekend base in the UK, Baltic or in the Med, and solve the summer holiday puzzle, too.

Would she suit your style of sailing?

CREEK CRAWLING
★☆☆☆☆

COASTAL PORT-HOPPING
★★★★★

OFFSHORE PASSAGE-MAKING
★★★★☆

TRADE WIND VOYAGING
★★★★★

HIGH-LATITUDE ADVENTURE
★☆☆☆☆