

Living at deck level

As selling up and setting sail becomes ever more popular, **Duncan Kent** looks at two of the most recent designs available to long-term cruisers. The first of these, the innovative new Moody 45DSe, is the debut yacht from the new Hanse-owned Moody yard in Germany.

When I first saw the new Moody 45 Deck Saloon, moored at Hamble town quay, I was a little lost for words, as were many of the assembled group of journalists milling over her. The new 45DSe (e = epoxy) is the first new Moody ever built by Moody's new German owners, Hanse Yachts, and typical she is not. Despite being designed by renowned naval architect and long term Moody designer, Bill Dixon, she was to be to Hanse MD, Michael Schmidt's brief.

Although Schmidt says his concept of deck-level living is a first in a monohull, there was in fact a similar experiment undertaken by the French builder, Dufour, a few years back with its 43ft Attol design. Intended for the burgeoning Med and Caribbean charter markets, the Attol was withdrawn after limited production, proving too expensive to produce compared with other production charter boats.

The Moody 45DSe, however, is intended for the private buyer who wants a well equipped, open plan, light and airy raised saloon cruiser that can be lived on in comfort for extended periods and in a wide variety of conditions. She undoubtedly fulfils the light and airy part of the brief, with her voluminous saloon offering an almost 360° panorama of the surroundings. A large, sliding glass door opens onto her wide cockpit at the same level and these will undoubtedly be left open in warmer climes to create one large open indoor/outdoor living space. Below, a choice of sleeping accommodation layouts with some customisation possible should also keep most prospective owners thoroughly contented.



BLUEWATER BOAT TEST



Accommodation

More akin to a multihull's interior, the Moody's saloon is luxurious, bright, comfortable and thoughtfully laid out.

1 She has a well equipped galley with numerous bluewater features including top and front opening fridges, microwave, dish washer, ice maker and bags of worktop and stowage.

2 Forward of the galley is a raised navigation station from where it is possible to see clearly all around the boat and to steer her using an autohelm or joystick.

5 To starboard is an L-shaped seating area around a table that

converts from a small coffee table to full dining mode in one easy move. Although the settee cushions are thick and well

contoured for comfort, there isn't really a great deal of room around the table without the two free standing seats inboard, which provide 5-6 places for dining.

3 Below decks, a few steps down from the saloon, is reserved for sleeping and ablutions. In all layouts a master suite forward boasts a queen-size centreline island berth with an en suite loo and separate shower stall. Above, the length of the deckhead is see through Plexiglas and hatch, which,

together with other portlights around the cabin, makes it very light and

unclaustrophobic.

The cabin has two large hanging lockers, a dresser and a host of lockers, making good use of the available space.

The heads is very nearly to superyacht standards with an attractive freestanding ceramic sink, electrically flushing toilet and lockers galore. The shower stall has folding Plexiglas doors.

In the area amidships you can have one (or two) more double (or twin) cabins or one cabin and a workshop/office. In our test boat there was a double cabin to starboard complete with en suite heads/shower and a convertible

berth/office to port.

4 While the sleeping accommodation fills some of the area under the saloon, the engine and machinery room takes up the rest. Accessed via a trap in the saloon sole, the engine room has crouching headroom only, but is neatly laid out and everything is fairly easy to get at for servicing.



Deck, sails and rig

The beauty of the 45DSe is that she is a genuine deck saloon boat - ie her cockpit and saloon soles are on the same level. This allows freedom of movement between the two, just as with a catamaran and makes long term living aboard much more open and relaxed.

6 The deck layout is the first feature that hits you - her ample beam and minimal side decks give over a huge area for the yacht's raison d'être - the deck saloon.

7 Her foredeck is flush until you raise the anchor locker hatch. Preparing the anchor for use requires roller and anchor to be lifted into position by hand and a gas strut prevents it from banging down when released. I like the simplicity of this and the transom mechanism, using mechanical, rather than electrical or hydraulic

power, meaning less to go wrong.

8 She has a 9/10ths fractional rig with a tall, twin spreader mast and self-tacking 95 per cent jib as standard, along with a fully battened mainsail and lazyjacks. Her deck gear layout is well organised with all lines running aft through hidden channels to emerge by of a bank of coaming-mounted rope clutches on each side and then onto two Lewmar 52EST electric winches, beside each wheel. Having the jib and mainsheet on the same winch can be tricky on occasions, however, and calls for a bit of clutch shuffling during tacks.

9 Moving to the side decks entails walking through one or other of the helm stations, which can be awkward when you're attending to lines and fenders on the same side as the helmsman -

something that is inevitable. It's a long way around the other way when you're in a hurry to fend off.

She has quite tall bulwarks all round, which provide a 'feel safe' factor, and each side has a gate with drop down steps for easy pontoon access. It does make jumping on and off another boat an awkward operation though.

10 She has twin wheels, raised up on plinths to enable the helmsman to see over the tall coachroof when standing. These function well and leave a clear run aft for access to the transom,

where she sports a manually-lowered boarding platform and a lazarette tender 'garage' said to be able to house a fully inflated, 3m dinghy or RIB. She also has a removable canvas bimini that slides forward to allow a view of the mainsail or to let the sun shine in.

Her cockpit table is on the small side and much of the moulding is occupied by an instrument pod at the after end, but it has two good grabrails and a few cup holders.



MOODY 45DSe

BLUEWATER BOAT TEST

SPECIFICATIONS - Moody 45DSe

LOA	13.72m	45ft 0in
LWL	12.93m	42ft 5in
Beam	4.57m	15ft 0in
Draught (shoal/deep)	1.99m	3ft 0in/6ft 3in
Displacement	13,600kg	29,982lb
Ballast	4,300kg	9,479lb
Sail Area	104m ²	1,118ft ²
Fuel	600ltr	132gal
Water	800ltr	176gal
Berths	4-6	
Engine	75hp, f/w cooled Yanmar 4JH4-TE	
Transmission	Shaft driven, fixed 3-blade prop	
RCD category	A (Ocean)	
Design	Bill Dixon	
Interior	Design Unlimited	
Builder	Hanse Yachts, Germany www.moodyboats.com	
UK main agent	Premier Yacht Sales 01489 884075 www.premieryachtsales.co.uk	
Price	From £331,273 including delivery to Hamble and commissioning.	



Verdict

An undeniably comfortable boat for long term cruising, especially for warm climates. She is responsive to her helm and exhibits a remarkably powerful sailing performance while remaining a very steady, practical, sea kindly and well mannered cruising yacht. She should prove popular amongst the bluewater cruising fraternity – once they have accepted her more unusual styling that is.

For

Spacious, panoramic, one-level saloon
Sprightly sailing performance
Lavish sleeping accommodation

Against

Restricted visibility forward from cockpit level
Small cockpit table with shallow container
No passage to side decks except via the helm stations



Performance

11 Being so wide at her stern, the Moody 45DSe has twin rudders to keep a bite on the water. This then necessitates the fitting of a retractable bow thruster as standard, but we also had the optional (+£8,000) stern thruster to make life considerably easier, along with the electronic throttle option, whereby the engine can be controlled from either helm or the saloon.

12 Her engine was the 110hp option, rather than the standard 75hp Yanmar, so she had plenty of grunt to part the waves. She cruised at around 7.0kn at 1,800rpm with her 3-blade Gori folding prop and maxed out at 8.1kn doing 2,400rpm, but still relatively quietly. The absence of a seal on the engine hatch made her a little noisy inside, but this is another item on the fix list.

With her high topsides and tall superstructure she has a lot of windage, but it proved easy enough to negotiate a marina berth with the aid of both thrusters and her engine is quiet

enough for long periods of motoring not to disturb those off watch below.

13 On the day of our test sail we had a northwest F5 wind, which, being offshore, kept the sea conditions reasonable, but it was quite blustery with frequent gusts hitting 20kn+.

Nevertheless, we set out with full sail hoisted just to see how she would handle it. Much to my surprise, as we put her through the usual test routine I became increasingly confident in her sailing capabilities. Looking at her from the pontoon I had mistakenly assumed she'd been designed as a luxury motorsailer that would need her first reef at no more than 12kn true. While many might indeed reef at this point, so as not to spill the G&T, we thoroughly thrashed her around the Solent and even, at one point, had her considerable bulwarks under water.

When we finally put a single reef in her mainsail to sail her more as one would normally treat



a liveaboard cruising boat, she showed little evidence of slowing down. Closehailed at around 35° off the apparent wind she lost a mere half knot from her previous 7.2kn and on a beam reach she was still achieving a healthy 7.7kn from the 8.5kn we had managed under full sail.

She tacked doggedly through 78-80° and pointed up to a surprisingly close 33° to the apparent wind before her mainsail started to gently luff up. Her rudders felt slightly out of trim, however, but this is an area that Dixon is reworking to improve her balance all round.

Even off the wind she

managed a respectable 7.3kn broad reaching, despite her small jib, but she needed a little more attention to the helm at this point – possibly due to the incorrect rudder trim. Her small, self-tacking jib kept a good shape and seemed to provide all the power and balance we needed when sailing upwind. It made short tacking a doddle and I experienced no problems sailing her singlehanded.

However, she would lack power off the wind in light airs without the use of either a gennaker or cruising chute, which, I feel, would prove to be a must-have option for long passages.