



Moody DS 45 Magic

The Bill Dixon-designed pilothouse cruiser combines elegant indoor-outdoor living with fine sailing and cruising capabilities

We sailed the Moody DS 45 in Newport, RI on one of those clear, warm fall days that make me realize how lucky I am to go sailing as part of my job. I was out with my old friend Alan Baines, who is the dealer for Moody in the Northeast and an accomplished sailor in his own right.

The Moody was lying to a mooring off the Jamestown Boat Yard, so we hitched a ride from a boatyard hand—the launch service had ended for the season—and climbed aboard just as the breeze began to build. There was still a little warmth in the sunlight, and across Narragansett Bay several classic 12 meters under charter were tacking easily seaward.

From your first look at the Moody DS 45, you know you are not dealing with a Moody from the old days. Hanse Yachts purchased the Moody brand some years ago and immediately set out in a completely new direction. And the new deck saloon design is certainly something different.

We opened up the boat, got the engine going and dropped the mooring so we could motor away from the mooring field before rolling out the main. The 45 has in-mast furling on the main and roller furling on the 100 percent self-tacking jib. I have to say that pilothouse designs make me think of motorsailers, which in turn dampens any expectation that the boat will sail nimbly or quickly. But the 45 is different. Designed by Bill Dixon, the boat is a sailboat first

and a deck saloon cruiser second.

We rolled out the mainsail and jib, then fell off onto a close reach to get the boat going. And go she did. The long waterline, big mainsail and jib got to work, and soon we were sailing upwind at 5, then 6 knots in 10 knots of true breeze. And because the headsail sheets at a very close angle, the 45 was able to sail very close to the wind, higher in fact than the 12 meters with the big overlapping genoas ahead of us on the bay.

The cockpit layout makes it a little tricky to see forward while sailing. If you are steering from the leeward side, you can look down the decks to keep the jib's telltales in sight and you can see through the saloon windows as you look forward. From the windward side you have to stand up to see forward clearly.

Alan had to take a phone call, so I put the 45 through a series of tacks—with a turn of the wheel—and then eased sheets to reach off. The boat slipped through the water very sweetly and maintained good



momentum through the tacks. Off the wind, the long waterline provided a good turn of speed.

I have to say, I was surprised by the 45's sailing characteristics, ease of handling and speed, not to mention the proper sailing feel of the helm. This is indeed a sailboat first.

ON DECK

The brief that Hanse handed Dixon when the project began must have simply said, "And now for something completely different," because that is exactly what they got. Once upon a time there was a deck saloon charter boat called the Jeanneau Atoll that was sort of like the Moody...but not really. And back in 2001, Dixon created a custom 44-foot deck saloon design called *Silver Phantom* that may have had a tad of influence on the 45. But the new design goes much farther in its innovations. The more recent Nor'east 400 and Bruckmann 50 by Mark Ellis are examples of traditional visions of the pilothouse motorsailer, but the DS 45 is a more modern iteration.

The hull has high slab sides, a plumb bow, and a square stern with

the hint of a chine in the quarters. The stern folds down to make a swim platform and an in-hull dinghy dock for a small inflatable.

The cockpit and saloon are on one level, so when you have the large sliding doors to the saloon open, the two spaces merge into one indoor-outdoor living room. Over the cockpit, there is a hard bimini top with a retracting center panel that opens to the sky so you can have as much sun or rain protection as you desire. There are twin wheels and large comfortable seats behind each. The sailing instruments are mounted in pods on the after end of the bimini top.

Going forward, the decks are surrounded by quite high bulwarks that keep water off the deck and provide a real sense of security for those going forward—almost like on a large powerboat. Instead of lifelines, there are solid stainless steel rails on top of the bulwarks from bow to stern.

The anchor locker and anchoring system are truly innovative. The foredeck and bow are clear and uncluttered with the anchoring system, until you open the anchor locker's lid. Beneath it, you will find

the anchor upside down on its roller, the windlass and chain locker. With a flick of the wrist, you can deploy the whole anchor roller and anchor so it is securely in position over the bow and ready to drop. Then, with the push of a button, the anchor and chain run out with the anchor well away from the gelcoat on the bow.

The 45's decks are clean and well laid out, with all halyards and control lines led aft to the cockpit winches via conduits in the cabintop and cockpit seat backs. The main-sheet runs from a fixed point on the cabin top—no traveler, thank you—up the boom to the mast and then aft. The leach of the sail is controlled with the vang, which can also be adjusted from the cockpit.

The whole feel of the 45 on deck is of space well used, of comfort carefully planned for, and of sailing made fun, convenient and effortless.

YACHT STYLE LIVING

I don't use the word "yacht" very often in reviews. It evokes, in my mind, large and expensive vessels with crew and too much of everything that a couple or family doesn't



Moody DS 45

LOA	45'00"
LWL	42'42"
Beam	14'12"
Draft	6'34"
Displacement	30,864
Ballast	9,479
Engine	106 hp.
Fresh water	200 gals.
Fuel tank	150 gals.
Mast height	78'
Sail area	1,300 sq; ft.
Design Dixon Yacht Design	

www.moodyboats.com

need, or even want. But yacht style is a definite quality that you find in certain traditional brands such as Hinckley and Morris, or in high-end luxury custom boats from the likes of Lyman Morse and others. You know it when you see it.

And you definitely see it in the Moody DS 45. The cockpit offers it first, with the inlaid teak of the helm seats, the fine teak decking, and the handsome cockpit table between bench seats that are softened with proper cushions, backs and bolsters.

The sliding saloon doors are of the bulletproof variety for seagoing integrity, but they look stylish and modern with bright stainless steel trim and hardware. The boat I sailed had a varnished mahogany and white interior that is the old Herreshoff signature that became classic American yacht style. A lighter-colored maple finish is also available.

The deck saloon on the 45 is not large, but manages to offer a dinette to starboard that will seat six, a full galley with all of the normal appliances, and a forward-facing pilot and nav station where you can sit and run the boat. I like sitting in this seat, autopilot in hand, as the rain pelts down on the cabintop.

As in large yachts, the sleeping and head compartments are completely separate from the open living spaces and down three steps going forward. The master stateroom with a centerline double berth, vanity or desk, and storage lockers lies all the

way forward. There is a large deck hatch over the bunk for ventilation and light. The master head, with a separate shower, is just aft and to port. The guest or day head is across from the master head and accessible from the corridor.

In the standard layout, two guest cabins lie aft on both sides of the corridor. The starboard cabin has twin singles with a nice leg space between them and ample storage. The port cabin has a double berth that you mount from the forward end; this can be awkward for large or older people, so it may make sense to offer twins in this cabin as well. The port cabin can be redesigned as an office with a large desk for those who want to mix business and cruising.

The concept of creating truly separate living and private spaces in a boat of this size mirrors what can be achieved in cruising catamarans,

plus in the 45 you get the same 360° view. It is, in a way, a "monomaran" that seems like a hybrid of the two types of boats. And it is a concept that others are gradually imitating.

The Moody DS 45 is an altogether innovative cruising boat for a couple or a family. Being able to sail or motor from the warmth and comfort of the deck saloon is a huge benefit. Also, indoor-outdoor living on one level in the saloon and the large cockpit is just what most cruising folks are looking for. Having the private spaces be truly private will appeal to most of the family members and guests you bring aboard, while the huge master suite will feel like the best home away from home you can imagine in a 45-footer.

This is a boat that has a whole lot going for it, all wrapped up in a very stylish package that will set it apart as a design for real cruising folk. 

