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FIRST TEST

SUN ODYSSEY 440

Jeanneau dares to
rock the boat

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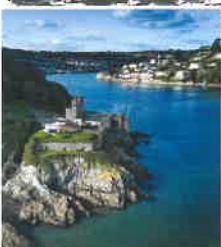
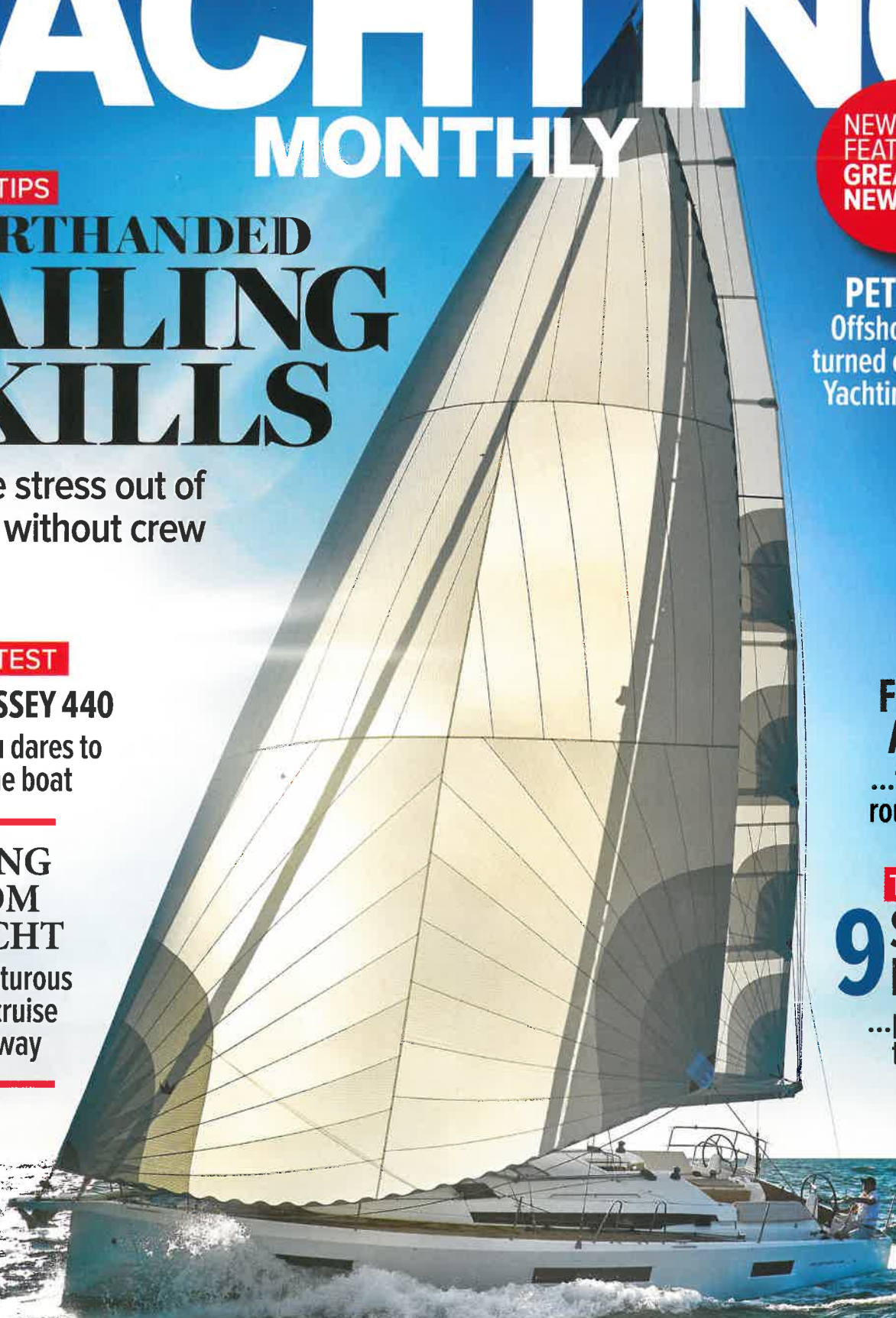
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out of the hatch'*

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SPRINGER NATURE



FIRST TEST JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 440

It's not often a mainstream builder will step out of its comfort zone, but Jeanneau's new Sun Odyssey 440 is like no other boat the company has launched, as Graham Snook discovers



Words & pictures Graham Snook

SUN ODYSSEY 440



SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE / MODEL
Jeanneau
Sun Odyssey 440

PRICE FROM
£206,073 inc VAT

DESIGNER Philippe
Briand/Piaton Bonet
Yacht Design

BUILDER
Jeanneau Yachts

Launching a new design is always risky, so it's understandable that many manufacturers err on the side of caution; not rocking the design boat or pushing it too far out in one go. So it's a tad surprising that a company like Jeanneau has introduced so many new concepts, all on two new boats, the Sun Odyssey 490 and this boat, the Sun Odyssey 440. The 440 and 490 are like no other boats Jeanneau has produced before. Many features are unique, not only in this size of boat but on production boats in general. Interestingly, it's not all hand-me-down technology from racing yachts either.

The main radical departure from tradition is the walkway outboard of the cockpit coaming. It sweeps from the cockpit sole at the helm up to deck level with a step-free gradual incline, but that's not all...





PERFORMANCE

There wasn't a great deal of wind for our test, only 6-12 knots of true wind. At the lighter end, she was making respectable progress between 4-5 knots but as the breeze increased, she became much more involving on the helm. When that difference in wind speed happened quickly, she too was swift to respond, though remember of course that she had empty tanks and no gear.

This boat had the shoal draft keel (1.6m), which might have affected her pointing ability by a few degrees. Even so, she was most comfortable close hauled at around 34° off the apparent wind, and was tacking through 96°.

As the day progressed, so did the breeze, but only up to 12 knots – not enough to really test her, but enough for her to show she was comfortable and easily sailed.

Under power she cruised at 5.3 knots at 2,000rpm, the three-bladed propeller providing plenty of grip. While maneuvering, there's no thrust over the twin rudders so she's wholly reliant on prop walk and water passing over the rudders to steer her in tight spaces – unless one opts for the retractable bow thruster.

A great new idea: the walk-through from the helm position gives step-free access to the side decks

thickness of the cushion backs it's a stretch to lean back against the coaming – unless you're over 6ft.

Genoa sheets and mainsheet are controlled by two Harken ST46 winches – one in front of each wheel. It is possible for the helm to tend these but as they would usually be sitting outboard, they would have to go right around the wheel to use the winch.

The winches are only slightly higher than the cockpit seating and aren't that comfortable to use standing up because of this, though they can be used from sitting. I found it easier to crouch and brace myself against the central cockpit table. Even so, with two hands on the winch handle, it was possible to clatter my knuckles on the GRP wheel binnacle if I wasn't careful. The clearance isn't quite enough for two hands on one handle.

All deck stowage on board was very good. While the walkway has removed the outboard space from the two cockpit lockers on each side, there's liferaft stowage (accessed via the electric fold-down transom or from the top) and a lazarette locker between the helm seats. Gas bottle stowage is under the port helm seat and a hull-depth locker is under the starboard helm seat. There's also a deep forward locker, complete with a ladder to aid access.

The gunwale is bevelled so if mooring lines go straight down, like at the bow when attached to a mooring, they may wear the gelcoat. She has only one bow roller, which already houses the anchor, in the moulded bowsprit.

DECK LAYOUT

Usually when leaving the cockpit to go on deck, one has to step on the cockpit seats, and either on to or over the cockpit coaming. While it's still easy to do this, the 440 sports a deck walkway. The bulwark starts at knee height and reduces up to the moulded toerail, making going forward as simple as putting one foot in front of the other, and a boon if you suffer from dodgy hips, knees or a back injury. It's great, as long as the gennaker sheets aren't crossing from the pushpit-mounted turning block.

This boat had the optional fold-out coamings, which split apart to cover the walkway creating a 1.46m x 1.25m (4ft 10in x 4ft 1in) sunpad. The latch is outboard, so there is little risk of it happening by accident. The seat bases are 57cm (1ft 10in) wide so without the

AT THE HELM

The twin 82cm diameter wheels feel quite high; I found them a comfy height to use while standing, and there are plenty of options for sitting around the wheel. There's an excellent handrail that removes the temptation to grab the wheel to steady yourself. With the aft quarter walkway, it's possible to sit fully outboard, face forward and helm comfortably. It does feel a little bit exposed with nothing in front of you but in the right weather conditions, it would be wonderful.

Only when I pointed her bows squarely into the 2-3ft wash of a passing motorboat did we manage to get any water on board, and even then it was minimal and went to leeward and drained out of the cockpit drain.

Around the back of the seat, there's no rail or coaming to stop pocket contents falling overboard, and there's also a large gap between the fold-down transom and the aft end of the cockpit.



The helm was quite heavy, but the steering was smooth and the yacht responsive. With the optional carbon wheel, she might have felt a little lighter to handle.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

The 440's exterior was designed by Philippe Briand, while the interior was designed by the new-to-Jeanneau pairing of Jean-Marc Piaton and Rafaël Bonet. The hull has a full-length chine which takes the hull to its widest point low down so the whole of the interior benefits. She has full bows, and the chine forward helps deflect water, keeping it off the deck and increasing forward buoyancy. Standard draught is 2.20m (7ft 2in) with a ballast/displacement ratio 26.6. This boat, however, had the 1.6m (5ft 2in) keel and a ballast/displacement ratio of 31.2.

Because her beam is also taken well aft, twin rudders (with Jefa self-aligning bearings) are used to maintain control when heeled.

Her hand-laid hull is single skin (coreless) and has a GRP inner liner. The deck is injection moulded and has a balsa core.

RIG & SAILPLAN

She has a double-spreader discontinuous cathedral rig (a pair of upper diagonals on each side – one lower than the other – above the top spreaders to support the mast). This keeps the top section of the mast thinner and therefore lighter. The spreaders are swept back and she has twin backstays – non-adjustable except for a bottle screw in each.

There's no mainsheet traveller but instead, there is a two-piece Dyneema bridle forward of the sprayhood. The gooseneck is low,

around waist height, which not only increases sail area but also lowers the folded sail to aid putting on covers and connecting the mainsail halyard. The performance version has a taller rig and increases sail area by more than 10%.

ACCOMMODATION

There are no decent handholds to use coming down the shallow-sloped steps to the open space at the base companionway; the only grab handles are low down in the companionway entrance. Her interior is light and has plenty of nice curved corners with the Alpi veneer flowing around them, although without solid corner pieces, only the thickness of the veneer is left to absorb knocks and scuffs. The deep fiddles by the galley have a good sculpted shape providing great handholds. This is just as well, as there are no handrails overhead or at deck level, only one vertical leather-covered grab handle to starboard before the saloon.

The G-shaped galley is in the middle of the boat, outboard, to reduce motion while underway



GOING FORWARD IS AS SIMPLE AS ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER





The central G-shaped galley offers bracing at sea and additional stowage

The forward and outboard areas of the galley are fabric covered. Be careful when cooking or washing up crockery and pots from chilli, curry or colourful foods; the fabric is white and not wipe clean. Given the amount of fat given off when cooking, I'd question whether a wipe-clean material would have been a better choice



The large chart table would be excellent were it not for the chunky hinges inside



All the berths on board are large, comfy and rectangular. The space taken from the aft cabin for the deck walkway is barely noticeable

The bow locker pushes the accommodation aft, making the forward cabin wide, with a 2.0m x 1.6m berth. The hull windows are large with neat sliding blinds. There is an option for two cabins forward instead



The adjustable reading lights can obstruct the access to large, useful outboard lockers



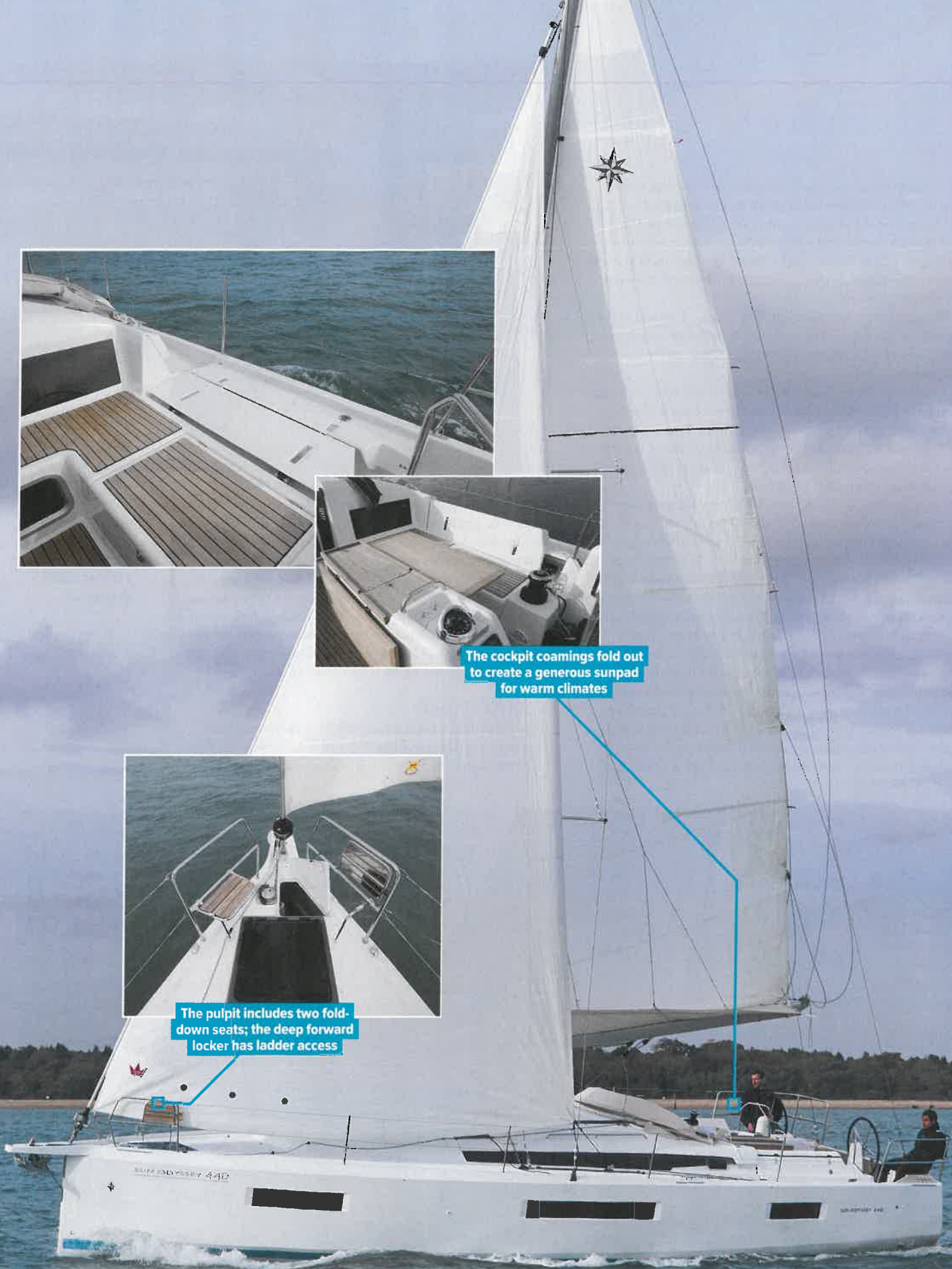
The forward cabin en suite is a good size and has a separate shower compartment



The cockpit coamings fold out to create a generous sunpad for warm climates



The pulpit includes two fold-down seats; the deep forward locker has ladder access



POINT OF SAIL	AWA*	AWS**	SPEED
Close hauled	33-35°	10-12 knots	5.1-5.3 knots
Fetch	60°	7.2-13 knots	5.7-7.4 knots
Beam reach	90°	6.0-11 knots	4.8-6.9 knots
Broad reach	120°	8.0-8.8 knots	5.0-5.3 knots
Run	180°	6.4-6.8knots	5.2-5.8 knots

*APPARENT WING ANGLE **APPARENT WIND SPEED

The C-shaped seating around the saloon table is comfortable, with the 48cm-high seat backs giving good supports – the 33cm seat backs, fore and aft, less so. Aft of the seating is a neat bottle rack for seven bottles and outboard there are 20cm (8in)-deep bin lockers behind the seat backs. There's stowage under the seats except where the water pump and accumulator tank (forward) and the calorifier (aft) are.

The forecabin is accessed via double doors, which add to the open feel in the saloon. The starboard door can be held closed by a couple of small, fiddly slide bolts at the top and bottom whenever required.

The forward berth is rectangular and, like all berths on board, at 1.60m x 2.0m (5ft 3in x 6ft 7in) is a generous size. There's a nice leather-covered shelf with good fiddles at the forward end of the bed on each side. LED under-deck strip lighting is good and it's nice to be able to lie in bed looking out of hull windows that are over 1m long and 12cm high.

There are two cupboards to starboard, one hanging, the other with shelves, and two drawers under the berth which are 70cm wide, but only 33cm long on the base. The rest of the under-berth space is taken up by the forward water tank. To port is the en suite heads. The sink is forward in the shower compartment, but with a lean, it can be accessed when standing in the toilet compartment, so no need for everyone to get wet feet after a morning shower.

Both aft cabins have good headroom: due to the offset companionway, the starboard aft cabin has slightly more space and benefits from en suite access to the heads next to the companionway. They have excellent rectangular berths with plenty of clearance above them and have good lockers outboard too. These are bottom hinged, but these can be fouled by the reading lights – moving the lights up 15cm/6in would rectify this. The walkways takes little noticeable space from each aft cabin and



include opening hatches which was not the easiest to get to but do provide ventilation to the aft end of the cabin. The forward-end windows look out into the cockpit, and hatches outboard in the coachroof have a window over the top of them to allow drip-free ventilation. It would be good to have this on the aft portlights of the walkway too. There is a layout option to lose the port aft cabin and replace it with a workshop/technical area.

The aft heads also have a separate shower compartment, again with the sink in it. The heads are a decent size, although there weren't any handholds if you needed the toilet at sea.

Hull windows and double doors all serve to create a sense of space; a proper-sized chart table

CHART TABLE

The chart table is over a metre wide, but the inboard and outboard 12cm are raised by 1cm and were the only 'fiddles'. Only the central 76cm-wide leather-covered lid is good for chart

HER INTERIOR IS LIGHT AND HAS PLENTY OF FLOWING CORNERS





work, but little thought was given to the inside of it, in particular the hinges. It could have been a good chart table, were it not ruined by the large European hinges that have reduced the usable volume.

There are lots of handy spaces outboard for the paraphernalia found around a seasoned navigator. The switch panel is labelled with images, as is the wiring behind it. It was nice to see circuit breakers replacing fuses at the rear of the switch panel. I wasn't sure about the positioning of the midships cleat, bolted through the hull deck joint with circuits directly beneath it – any leaks in the future could have interesting consequences.

GALLEY

The G-shaped galley is outboard from the keel to reduce the motion for those cooking. Forward are the twin brushed stainless-steel sinks set into the Corian worktop. Outboard of the sink are two good hinged top-opening pantry lockers.

A chainplate tie runs down through the work surface and gives a great handhold but there are no others, except for the deep fiddles outboard and the stout crash bar around the twin-burner cooker – the forward end has a sharp corner. The return of the G provides good bracing when cooking at sea.

Like most of the cupboards on board, the doors are secured with push-down latches which work well. In the galley, however, there is less finger room to use these latches.

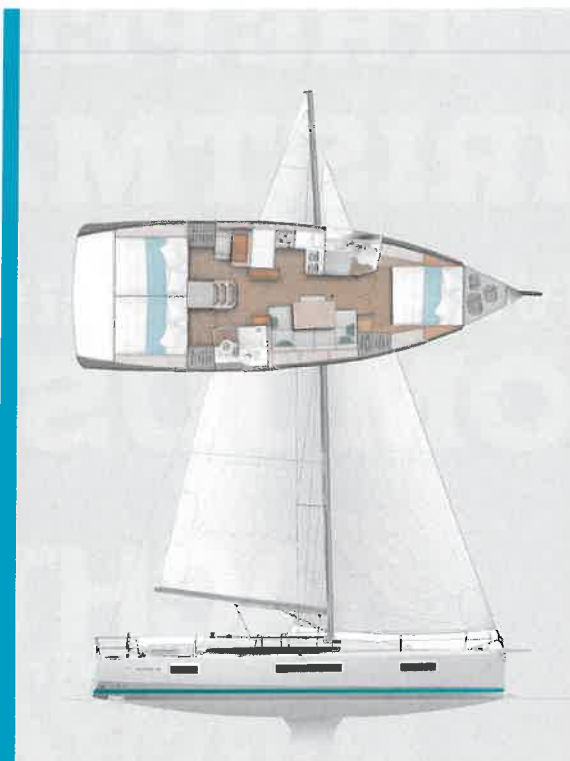
There are two cabinet lockers, either side of the walkthrough to the saloon and the leather-topped locker to starboard is wide enough for plates while the other has pull-out two-level drawers in a central unit with a third separate drawer suitable for cutlery.

Inboard of this unit is a large 133-litre aft-opening fridge. Further outboard, what looks like the lid for a top-opening fridge is an optional pop-up microwave.

Lighting over the sink is good and the rest of the galley lighting is provided by strip lighting. I would have liked the galley lighting to be separate from the LED strip lights behind the saloon seating. This would allow the owner to choose whether they want to light the saloon, the galley or both.

MAINTENANCE

Access to the engine is good, and it was refreshing to see a remote fuel filter and lift pump situated well forward in the engine compartment for easy access. There are also side access panels but they don't have stops on the bottom to prevent them sliding through the gap when refitting them. The sea cock for the seawater inlet was also at the front and easily accessed by opening the companionway steps – they only lift to horizontal, but the hinges are high and it's supported by gas struts. Access to the UHMWPE lines for the steering, which are spliced on to the chain for the wheel gear, is via removable panels in the aft cabins.



JEANNEAU 440

THE TEST VERDICT

With this boat, Jeanneau has introduced a new style and new features that may have redefined what we'll expect from cruising yachts in years to come. Why should we leap over coamings, wedge ourselves into odd-shaped berths or scale the mast to reach the head of the stack pack? We don't. Jeanneau aimed to make sailing more pleasant, and it has succeeded. She's comfortable and easy to sail – in fact, she sails well. My three main criticisms are the chart table hinges which are so wrong, but could be replaced with a piano hinge; the lack of handholds on top of the coachroof by the companionway, heads and around the chart table – these could be added by an owner; and finally the location of the primary winches – opting for electric primary winches would solve this and make sailing her less of a backache.

She has three layouts available and only one has reduced berth shapes and sizes to those normally found on yachts – the two double forward-cabin layout. The other layouts have large rectangular berths, giving the 440 a feeling of space not normally found on yachts this size.

On deck, she's got plenty of storage for sails and cruising clobber and moving around deck is a doddle. She could be easily handled by a couple, or with family and friends.

Down below, she's light, spacious and well laid out. Who could want more from this style of boat?

WOULD SHE SUIT YOU AND YOUR CREW?

If you enjoy coastal cruising and a few longer passages thrown in, there are many features on the 440 that you won't find on other yachts in her class: the full-length volume-giving chine, fold-down coamings, central galley, the rectangular berths and the walkway from the helm to the deck. Even without these, the 440 still has a lot to offer.

It's a nice feeling to be able to walk up the deck when you need to go forward. It also feels surprisingly natural and comfortable to be outboard, face forward and helm while looking where you're going.

It's not until one tries something different that it reminds us of the compromises we all make when going sailing. Should we have to make them? Jeanneau thinks not.

PROS

Excellent deck stowage

Innovative deck walkway

Large berth sizes on board

CONS

Lack of handholds below

Not neatly finished in places

Reduced chart table space

FACTS AND FIGURES

Price as tested
£301,856

LOA 13.39m (43ft 11in)

Hull length
12.64m (41ft 5in)

LWL 12.00m (39ft 4in)

Beam 4.29m (14ft)

Draught 1.6m
(5ft 2in)
(Shoal version)

Displacement
8,561kg (18,874lb)

Ballast 2,670kg
(5,886 lb)

Ballast ratio 31.2%

Displacement / length
137.8

Sail area
90.30m² (972² ft²)

SA/Disp ratio 22

Diesel
200 litres (44 gal)

Water
330 litres (73 gal)

Engine 57hp

Transmission Shaft

RCD category A

Designer Philippe Briand/Piaton Bonet Yacht design

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