

# Wolf in sheep's clothing?

The latest from Hanse looks the same but **Phillip Ross** finds sometimes looks can be deceptive, in a nice way.





On the outside you look and think, yes it is a Hanse. But in a lot of ways this is quite a different beast to previous Hanse's.

From the design table of Judel/Vrolijk the hull is shaped to provide more performance. In the quiet day we took it for a spin I was indeed impressed with its light wind speeds; in only 4.5 knots of breeze we could point under 30° and still do 4.5kts.

Note, these speeds were with the standard self-tacking jib. I noted the headsail did lose a bit of its fast shape when the breeze got over ten knots, but it is still more than adequate for cruising.

It should hit theoretical hull speed of 8.5kts in 16kts of breeze at 60° true wind angle. About standard for this size.

A noted downside of a self-tacking jib can be a lack of sail power when sailing off the wind. This is probably where Judel/Vrolijk come in with a fast hull shape and the inclusion of the asymmetrical Code 0 on a Selden furler. This would seriously increase the mileage this boat would clock up. It appeared to me that this is what the designers want its cruisers to do, the bowsprit is noticeably beefed up to handle any loads. The Selden furler makes it simple and easy for non-racing hands to launch and stow.

#### Design wise

Looking at the side view of the underwater shape it is rather extraordinary to my untrained eye.

The forefoot begins its cut back rather sharply from the bow waterline before angling down gently to a deep canoe body. This appears to carry flat past the keel before angling sharply back up again to the aft sections. Above the water the bow is quite pinched in at the waterline before flaring out topside. It would agree with the ease we had in pointing high in light air, with the flared topsides probably adding buoyancy in more heavier airs.

The bow is fairly plumb but there is a bit of transom overhang. Unusual for cruising craft designs nowadays but this overhang, without a harsh chine, may reduce stern slap for those sleeping aft down below. The hull shape beams early but curves in again after half way.

An L- or T-bulb keel is standard but there are two shallower L-bulb keel options, the shallowest drawing just 1.82 metres.

The inclusion as standard of the self-tacking jib means the mast is further aft than most other designs to ensure the jib retains a good size. To reclaim good sailing performance therefore, the rig is taller ten per cent in fact, over the previous model. All realising a sail area equal with yachts two metres longer.

But then again, its displacement is quite high.

Overall you would have to say this is a yacht that sits well in the water, being large of girth

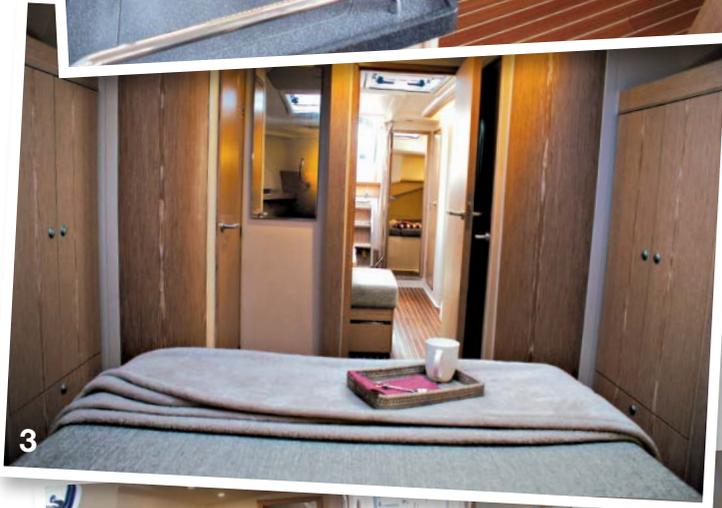
MAIN: Kate and Chris already enjoy the ease of setting the assy.



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4

1. Big saloon, lots of hatches and light timbers makes for an airy cabin.
2. A big galley with lots of storage and lighting.
3. Forepeak cabin looking aft with the port and starboard head and shower cabin doors visible.
4. Neat nav. table set up and the gently angled companionway.

and heft. But also maintains a good performance curve on all points of sail due to its large rig and slick hull design.

The Hanse 455 specifications bear this out. Its displacement:length ratio of 178 is higher than other boats in this class, meaning it is heavy for its size. Not overly so, mind you, still ranking in the light cruiser/racer range. The sail area:displacement ratio of a tick over 20 counters that high weight, putting it in the same range as ocean racers.

Certainly the combination of moving the mast aft, a deep canoe body and a high beam to length ratio means this is a substantial boat on deck and down below as well.

### Deck work

The inclusion of a self-tacking jib as standard, neatly defines the thinking Hanse Yacht Designs has for this boat.

If that is not hint enough, maybe the notion that its inclusion leads the mast to be moved further aft; this gives an extended foredeck of which Hanse has taken full advantage to provide twin day bed cushions that fit perfectly in the sloping cabin top.

Despite the large foredeck, however, the inclusion of capacity for a cutter inner forestay may be difficult.

Side deck space is good and the low cabin top makes it easy to move around although difficult to reach hand holds. The inclusion of a low bulwark around the gunnel counters this concern.

There are plenty of flush hatches and skylights on the deck but they are all significantly robust enough to take foot traffic.

Its sailability is designed to be easy for shorthanded sailing. All rope handling: sheets and halyards, feed back to the twin steering stations under the coamings. Hand or electric winches provide the power and, since they handle the halyards as well, they are plenty beefy. Instead of the sheet bitter ends causing consternation so close to the steering wheel well, there are sheet boxes just aft of the wheels under the helmperson's bum.

This makes for an elegantly empty topside, no trip hazards here. It also means if you needed to add solar panels or water collection for longer cruises, it could be easily retrofitted.

The winches are far enough forward of the steering station to be accessible from the cockpit.

Speaking of the steering stations, there are a few nice innovations here. Large binnacles on the steering pedestals hold all the necessary navigation instrumentation and boat functions. Aft of the steering stations, across the transom, are seats for the helm and guests.

Hidden underneath on both are useful storage spaces. These seats are forward of the split backstay so comfort is assured, but the seats also hinge back to reveal a sink/fishing table with drain under the port bench and LPG bottle plus shower controls under the starboard. Both are accessible from the drop down transom.

The swim platform takes up most of the transom area so it has enough room for swimmers to come and go between the twin steering stations. While someone can still use the shower or sink.

With the platform down, there is a cut out in the port side transom. This space holds the life raft, which I found an interesting concept. Review of the loss of yacht *Cheeki Rafiki* some years ago showed the crew had attempted to launch its liferaft off the upside down cockpit floor but could not. The hydraulic rams on the Hanse swim platform would ensure the transom would open and the life raft could then be easy to launch, even if the boat was turtled.

Such a wide space at the transom also means tender davits could be attached if desired.

I am unsure if this is standard but there were no angled foot steps for the helm when heeled.

There are large storage lazarettes under the cockpit benches and even a locker in the cockpit floor. Although they are large they are only deep enough to comfortably hold a bucket. Hanse's signature storage compartments alongside the companionway are there for smaller equipment items such as binoculars, mobile phones and sunscreen etc. These are larger than previous due to the lack of halyard winches either side of the companionway.

**“this is a yacht that sits well in the water, being large of girth and heft.”**

This is a large cockpit, the agents Windcraft, claim it is the largest for its length. The walk space around the removable cockpit table certainly helps to confirm this.

There is also a massive sail locker in the bow, aft of the chain locker, which can be accessed from the deck and offers ample space for sails, fenders and bulky items.

There are finer details added on deck as well: retracting mooring cleats, large tinted glass ports alongside the companionway for enhanced lighting down below; high coamings but not too high to restrict deck access when the bimini is raised; red mood lighting in cockpit sides for night time; a nicely angled companionway bulkhead for easy lounging and a large companionway with sloping steps set at a safe 54° angle.



#### Down below

Once down the steps you can easily see just how big this boat is.

Options are a three or four cabin interior where the for'ard cabin can be split into two, most probably to suit charter companies. With either cabin option there is a choice along the port side in the main cabin, opposite the saloon table, between a bench settee or twin swivelling captain's chairs with side table in between.

The U-saloon is quite large being able to seat seven easily and ten at a pinch. A centreline movable seat facilitates this. The table is multi-talented, being foldable into full service dinner or intimate cocktail size to suit. In its centre is a six glass holder insert with storage bin as well. The table can be dropped to add another double bunk if requested.

To starboard of the companionway is the L-shape galley, leading to the starboard aft cabin. This is a large galley for 45 feet but is secure with the companionway steps at the cook's back. There is also a little side shelf alongside the companionway for extra bracing. This largeness provides plenty bench space and cupboards. Both often-used and hardly-used storage options are well catered.

Access to the fridge is from the top and the bottom. The bottom opening interferes with opening the oven door but that is a minor nuisance.

There is a splash board behind the twin sinks to protect the saloon cushions and a strong raised hand rail on the centreline providing a full hand wrap, which I like. The rest of the stone fiddlework is quite low, easy to keep clean.

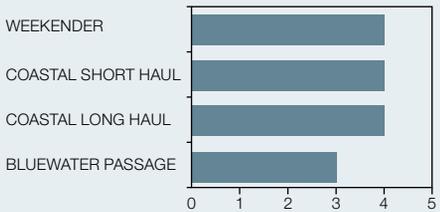
ABOVE: Looks big but is deceptively speedy in light airs.



HANSE455 SPECIFICATIONS

Length	13.95m
Waterline	12.2m
Beam	4.38m
Draft	2.25m
Displacement	11600kg
Ballast	3500kg
Sail draft	20.6m
E	5.95m
Sail area	103m <sup>2</sup>
Sail area:displacement	20.44
Displacement:length	178
Ballast ratio	0.3
Angle of vanishing stability	117°
GZ maximum	49°
Theoretical hull speed	8.47kts
Beam max.:LOA	52%
Beam:LOA	3.18
Transom:beam max.	84%
Base price is	\$440,000

SUITABILITY



Thanks to Windcraft and Chris and Kate.  
www.windcrafthanse.com/

To port of the companionway is the day head/shower unit for the two aft cabins and saloon. Elbow room for both sitting on the head or taking a shower is quite good, not cramped at all.

The twin aft double bunks fit two, but it is tight at only 1.4m wide. Once settled in it is fine, the tinted overhead hatch porthole, cockpit wall hatch and hull window makes them light and homely.

There is good shelf and hanging space including wet lockers, although not full length.

Aft cabin headroom is 195 centimetres.

The owner's forward cabin is equipped with its own head to port and a separate spacious shower to starboard. This allows quite generous elbow room in both cabins.

The large double island berth was a final selling point for this boat's new owners. Chris and Kate had been looking at used Hanse's in the 40 foot range, but where finally sold on the large island bed, the Windcraft service and the price. "Bilbungra feels like our home", said Kate Gardiner.

The side by side double overhead hatches in this cabin are a nice touch. They allow for plenty of air flow through the cabin and give a perfect view up the mast when resting.

Again, plenty of shelf and hanging space in this cabin but not full length for wet weather gear to drain.

In the main saloon there are four overhead hatches, four cabin top side windows and two large hull windows. This makes for an airy, light filled area.

One point I would make is that the four overhead hatches all open the same way, maybe they should reverse one pair so that no matter what sailing angle or how the yacht is moored to a pier, you could get airflow into the cabin.

The large hull window gives a panorama feel when sitting at the U-shape saloon.

Our test boat had the lounge settee to port, which can provide an extra berth, but I like the sight of those swivelling captain's chairs!

Just aft of those is the navigation station facing outboard. Its neat pull-back, leather finished, seat would also make an excellent spot to get out of wet weather gear when off watch. Everything you need is at hand at this station, but it is cleverly set behind a cupboard hatch for better weather protection. The chart table is deep but not very wide for chart stowage, sign of the times.

On first sight when you enter the cabin is the belief that it is like any other production boat on the market, but closer inspection reveals a number of extra benefits not immediately noticeable. In summary the neat tricks for the interior include the pockets alongside the companionway for easy to get to items such as a handheld radio or sunscreen or grab bag; lighting in



the shelving behind the galley and nav. station to highlight the shelf contents and even light up the bench; the pull-back navigator's chair and the sheer number of ports and hatches, 20 in all.

**Mechanics**

The standard 39 kilowatt Volvo with its 220 litre tank should provide you with 70 hours at a cruising speed of seven knots with 2100 revolutions per minute. I found the boat could easily go up to 3100rpm to bring the boat over theoretical hull speed.

Down below, with the engine at cruising speed, the decibel meter barely rated above 70dBa, equivalent to a normal conversation. So the engine is well insulated, but it is tight in the engine box; access however, to the dipstick, oil filter, etc. is via well-positioned side hatches and the raised companionway steps.

Batteries are placed under the port lounge settee and access is good but does not really have much room for adding extra. Room is also tight if you wish to add a gen set or watermaker.

Access to the water tanks, fuel tanks and through-hull fittings is excellent. Fresh water capacity is 450 litres and the grey water holds 150ls.

Construction of Hanse yachts is impressive. The hull consists of a solid polyester laminate with a vinylester outer layer to resist osmosis. A structural fiberglass grid is glassed in place to carry the boat's keel and rig loads and resist torsional forces. Glassed in bulkheads add to the stiffness. Then the deck is balsa-cored to help lower the boat's centre of gravity.

The mast is keel stepped and the boat to keel connection appears very strong with eight bolts resting on wide 10mm steel backing plates.

The rig is a Selden tapered double-spreader 9/10ths fractional to provide breathing room for the asymmetrical.

As usual all Hanse yachts can be optioned and customised, inside and out, to suit each sailing dream. Owners Chris and Kate explained how excited they are and "ready to head off on our cruising adventures."

With the intention of heading overseas they wanted a name that let everyone know they are from Australia. so *Bilbungra* was chosen. It is aboriginal for 'pelican', as Kate explained "we chose that because it was Australian, it sounded a bit different and we didn't want something that sounded weird when we were radioing!" Ch

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