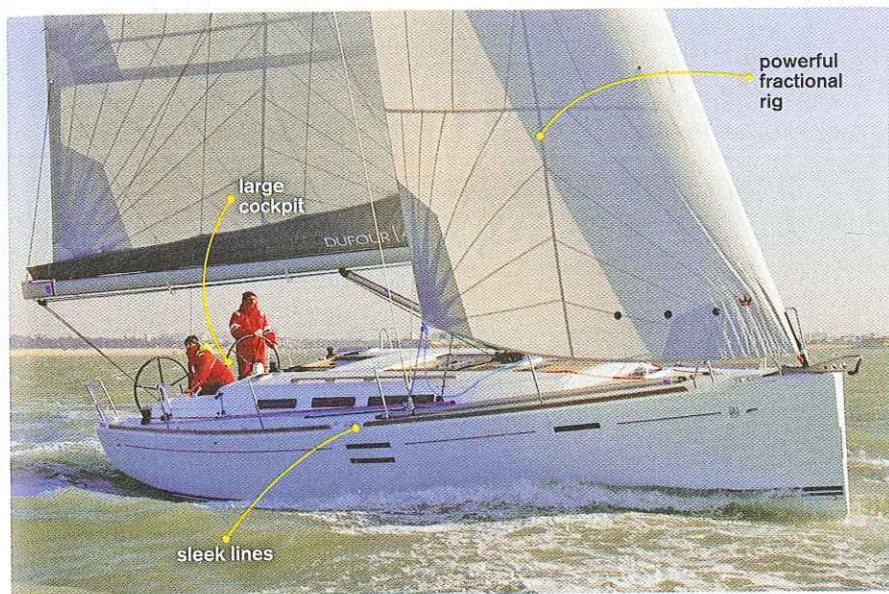


DUFOUR 40E **NEW BOATS**

Dufour 40E

An exciting racer-cruiser | BY PETER NIELSEN

It was one of those days a boat reviewer lives for: a solid 20 knots of wind, occasionally gusting toward 30; a cloudless blue sky; and a sharp performance cruiser with a couple of pro sailors aboard, all dialed up and ready to go. This example of Dufour's new 40E had not been in the water long, and I happily seized the chance to put it through its paces during a visit last March to the factory in La Rochelle, France.

The 40E's cruising sister, the 40S Grand'large, debuted last year to general acclaim from press and public alike. The two boats share the same designer, Italian Umberto Felci, and have the same general dimensions, but the hulls are far from identical. The 40E is slimmer, lighter, finer forward and has a sleeker profile, with lower topsides and a lower cabintop. It also carries more ballast to counteract a bigger sailplan.

Don't think all of this takes away from the 40E's cruising credentials. If you were led belowdecks blindfolded you'd think you were on a fully fitted-out cruising boat; there's a generous galley, plenty of stowage, reasonable headroom, and a choice of three layouts with two or three staterooms and one or two head/shower compartments. The interior is well lit despite the smallish portlights; there are plenty of deck hatches and the letterbox-style hull ports in the saloon and forecabin offer both illumination and an interesting view out.

The boat's performance pedigree is most evident on deck, where the long, wide cockpit is well set up for either a cruising or racing crew. The long, straight bench seats are set a trifle too far apart for easy bracing, but a cleat running along the centerline provides an essential footrest. The primary and mainsheet winches are situated within reach of the helmsman, and the German mainsheet leads to a full-width traveler just ahead of the twin wheels.

All deck gear, including the belowdecks furler, is by Harken. Lines lead aft from the mast in a pair of covered galleries that, combined with flush-fitting hatches and teak trim, add to the clean look of the deck and house.

As soon as I'd made a precarious leap aboard the 40E from a bouncing RIB, the crew cranked in the sheets and put us hard on the wind. Rail down, mainsail feathered as the gusts hit, the boat felt light on the helm and remained responsive right up until—whoops—a particularly vicious gust heeled us enough for the rudder to lose its grip.

A reef in the mainsail soon restored order and honor, and we bashed to windward through the short, sharp chop at a good 7.5 knots. A couple of quick tacks revealed that the winch placement was just right, allowing the trimmer to stay well inboard and play both winches at once. Moving between the twin wheels was a little precarious at

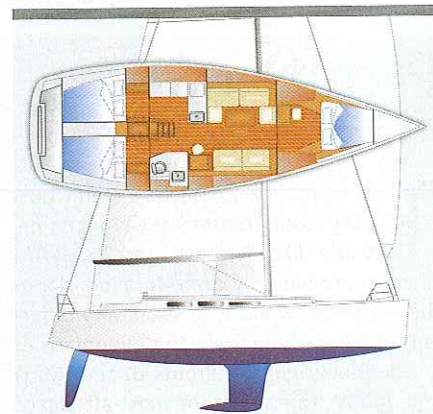
steep angles of heel, and another foot cleat or two would be appreciated. The steering remained light and responsive throughout, and as we bore away onto a beam reach the boat sat up and went faster, nudging double digits. By now it was blowing close to 30 knots and I was relieved that there was no spinnaker on board, though I heard the French crew lamenting its absence. I enjoyed the sense of controllable power throughout our all too brief sail.

A foray belowdecks revealed good handhold placement and a pair of fine passage berths on the saloon settees. Equipped with such amenities as hot water, a large fridge, a windlass and plenty of stowage for a family cruise, this boat is more than just a sharp performer. *AL*



More Online:

For a photo tour of the Dufour factory visit sailmagazine.com/news/boat-news/



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA 40ft 6in // **LWL** 35ft 3in

BEAM 12ft 9in

DRAFT 6ft 10in (std), 5ft 9in

DISPLACEMENT 17,257lbs

BALLAST 5,260lbs

SAIL AREA 847 ft² (100% FT)

ENGINE 40hp Volvo diesel

BUILDER Dufour Yachts, La Rochelle, France. Dufour USA, 352-871-0362

PRICE \$281,000 FOB Annapolis, MD

CONSTRUCTION

Solid fiberglass laminate below the waterline, PVC core above, vacuum-bagged, NPG gelcoat for resistance to blistering. Inner tray molding provides rigidity and bases for chainplates and furniture.

PERFORMANCE

RACER CRUISER