

pace with speed

SOMETIMES in this business, the ducks line up. Everything falls into place and the world seems crystal clear. With the Hanse 470 that does rather seem to be the case, writes YL racing editor Andi Robertson.

The owner who kindly lent us the use of his boat had researched others, but when he got on the Hanse 470 for the first time, the appeal was instant.

The size, space, performance, ease of sailing and finish just seemed to be almost intuitively the right combination for him.

The model was introduced around 2005 and has been updated, but it remains a steady best seller for the German marque. Our test boat, freshly delivered, was hull number 305 and there are 470's all across the globe.

The Hanse brand is increasingly popular at this size, especially among those who want good value for their money. Often they are successful business or professional people who perhaps will only have their boat as one of a portfolio of toys and properties, but they tend to want a really decent sailing performance.

At this size and price range we are very much in the realm of owner sailing with his or her partner, often with guests, but wanting a boat which will cross large stretches of water at reasonable pace.

Typically this is a good size of boat to cruise the Med one season, southern Europe to the Canaries the next season then the ARC and the Caribbean, and then who knows?

It is a good size and there



are sufficient layout options to ensure that any regular combination or profile of guests can be accommodated, such

as bunk rooms for kids, or big bedrooms for one or two other couples.

The key difference with the

Hanse, I guess, is the ease of sailing and the ability to make good miles with minimum effort. Sure, you are paying only for a good quality production line specification and boat building skills, but with the Judel Vrolijk hull design and a big, powerful but easily controlled rig, this is a boat which will perform well on all points of sail.

The most outstanding features are the self tacking headsails, the good overall cockpit layout and ergonomics which are enhanced by solid, well spec'd hardware. Hanse's publicity makes a virtue of the racing pedigree of Michael Schmidt who drives the brand, and this boat seems to be well set to deliver a good performance with the minimum of fuss.

Ours was set up with all power winches, a blessing, plus a fully battened mainsail which for me sets the tone of where these boats are pitched: performance and easy handling. The mainsail drops into the stacking bags and the jib, at all times, was child's play. The mainsail is big and powerful, but sets well on the three spreader tapered alloy mast and is relatively easy to control.

Construction of all the Hanse range now uses epoxy based vinyl ester resins as standard, but there is the option to go for full vacuum bagged foam sandwich epoxy construction at an extra cost.

This reduces weight and adds more stiffness to the hull, improving performance at a proportional cost. The 470, like other Hanse models is built over a heavy duty one piece galvanised sub and ring-frame, to which the keel bolts and chain plates are attached. The hull is



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backed by a two-year warranty.

Standard keel is a 2.35m T shaped medium draft version, but again those looking for a better performance may go for the L shaped iron and lead 2.6m draft deep keel option.

Most of all we were impressed by the looks, the feel, the space and the sheer usability of the Hanse 470. It is a good looking boat with well proportioned lines within the context of the dimensions required. There are little superyacht references which add to the appeal, such as a really neat deck line for the size and type of boat, but with plenty of flat working and lazing space.

The bow is near plumb and modern, the stern sections are powerful but they are cleanly executed. The cockpit is clean

and simple, maximising space and comfort and minimising clutter.

All of the control lines are lead aft under the deck down the cockpit coamings to ensure they really are within reach of the helm. In every respect this is a boat which the competent owner can more or less sail his or her self, with a little help from one or two others if they fancy it.

CLASSIC APRIL

Out from Kip Marina we had good conditions. Winds were around 9-13 knots from the SW, classic April on the Clyde format, still chilly, but spring had well and truly sprung.

Immediately you are impressed by how simple it is to set the sails, even given this is only the second time sailing for Funik. In two or three minutes we are on the wind and amazed at how easy it is to get the boat

balanced and tracking with little attention to the helm. Speeds are good and the control on the helm excellent. Forward visibility is excellent and the helm's position is good, standing or sitting.

Sitting down he or she can lean forward and easily make trimming adjustments. Add a good autohelm package and who needs crew at all?

Tacking was a joy, though it is not simply a case of slamming the helm over and letting the self tacking jib do the work. It's certainly worth keeping an eye on the main in the puffy conditions and making sure the jib is properly set.

Slack headsail tension or a few cms on the sheet and you can be chasing the boat's nose a little too much in the gusty conditions. The rewards for a little bit of sail trimming and proper setting are a truly sparkling, but very easy performance.

Below decks there are principally three different options: an owner's cabin forward with the big centreline double facing aft and large ensuite, an offset double cabin forward to port with the ensuite heads shower room, or twin bunk rooms forward on what



The 470 is without doubt one of the most desirable performance cruising yachts for the money, and a real step above the competition in terms of design and construction.

