



C'EST **MAGNIFIQUE!**

PHOTOS PATRICK BOLLEN, JEANNEAU

Trade-a-Boat is in France to test Jeanneau's latest Sun Odyssey 44 Deck Saloon, a magnificent yacht underway, for socialising on deck and living down below, notes **PATRICK "TENPIN" BOLLEN**



Since 1957, when Henri Jeanneau built his first boat, the design and production team at the eponymous French yard have prided themselves on delivering a superb sailing vessel. While many will contest there is no such thing — as every owner is likely to never be totally satisfied be it sail or power — the latest offering from Jeanneau makes a pretty good fist of a sailboat, delivering just about everything from performance to comfort to ease of handling.

Late last year, I flew to Les Sables d'Olonne on the west coast of France, about 50nm north of La Rochelle to take a look at the brand-new Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 44 Deck Saloon.

Les Sables, meaning The Sands, is the homeport and start/finish point of the world famous Vendee Globe single-handed and unassisted round-the-world yacht race founded in 1989 by Phillippe Jeantot and which takes place every four years.

Linked to the sea since 1472, by the 17th century Les Sables was the largest cod-fishing port in France. On August 27, 1944 the occupying German army destroyed the port and mined the harbour.

Today, Les Sables is a thriving holiday destination, with beautiful beaches and a protected marina facility offering a safe harbour and services for local boaters and for visiting yachties from all over the world. It is also the port from which Jeanneau launches and tests its new production models.

FIRST SIGHTING

Arriving at the marina with my host Paul Blanc, Jeanneau director of sales Asia Pacific, I was introduced to Eric Stromberg, the design and operations manager for the builder's yacht division. Eric took time from



a busy schedule organising a day out on the usually notorious Bay of Biscay so I could experience this new 44-footer. In the afternoon we motored past the breakwall at Les Sables and the sea couldn't have been better.

Back in October I saw two of Jeanneau's latest models on Sydney's Pittwater belonging to members of the Royal Motor Yacht Club at Newport and was impressed with the eye-catching appeal of these new-generation yachts.

The 44 DS is due for release in Australia at the end of February.

STEM TO STERN

From bow to transom the new Sun Odyssey is a pretty hull, and being a voluminous boat, her sheer is a pleasure to behold. It is such a pretty yacht that on first appearance you feel you must investigate her further. If it looks this good on the outside, then the inside must be something again. The 44 DS's lines are clean and she looks fast, even sitting at her mooring.

The highly respected French yacht designer Phillippe Briand has enjoyed a distinguished association with Jeanneau for many years and his design has produced a yacht that not only looks good but handles and performs effortlessly.

Briand was born into a yacht-racing family. Inspired by his Olympian father, he designed his first sailboat



The volume and sense of space below is impressive, as can be seen in the saloon (opposite top). The galley (opposite middle and bottom) is huge, and the white sink is a nice change to stainless steel. Dinette table (above) revolves electrically, and also drops to make a double berth. Steering station (below) is set-up for singlehanded sailing.

at age 16. During the '80s as a skilled and talented helmsman, Philippe won several World Championships including the Half Ton and One Ton Cups. With this experience under his belt he brought his ocean-racing *savoir-faire* to the design table from which Jeanneau has benefited enormously.

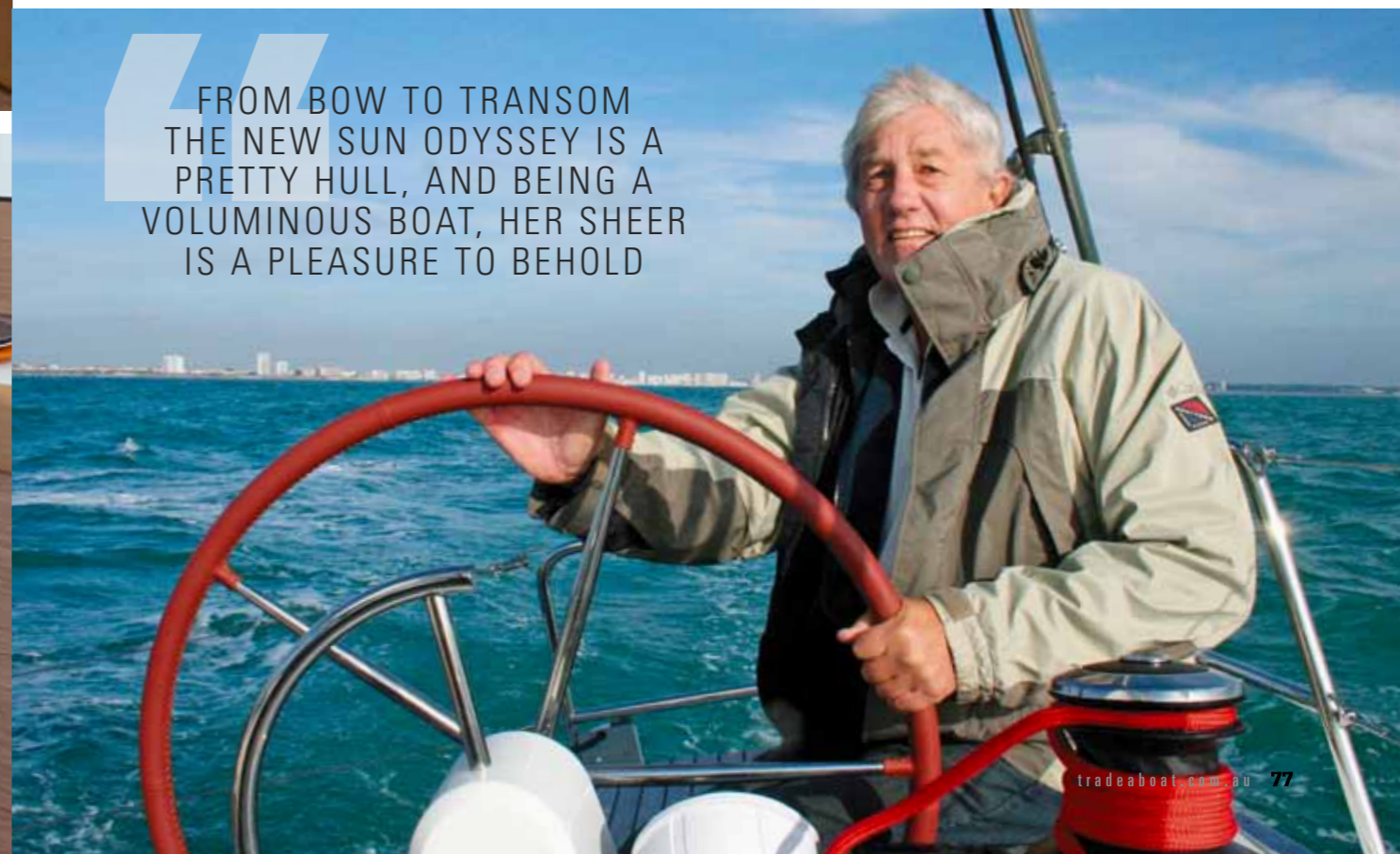
Meanwhile, the deck and interior layouts on the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 44 DS are Franck Darnet and Flahault designs.

"My life has always been about design and the sea," says Darnet. So with that in mind he has endeavoured to achieve a bright and spacious main saloon, emphasising a wide and open visual space.

BELOW DECK

Having been on the water for almost 40 years I must admit I thought I was about to witness pretty much more of the same, with just a tweak here and there. When I went below, however,

FROM BOW TO TRANSOM
THE NEW SUN ODYSSEY IS A
PRETTY HULL, AND BEING A
VOLUMINOUS BOAT, HER SHEER
IS A PLEASURE TO BEHOLD





- [HIGHS]**
- › Line and sheer
 - › Huge, comfortable, and well laid-out cockpit
 - › Stepped transom
 - › Big, bright, and open saloon
 - › Responsiveness under sail
 - › Quiet motor

- [LOWS]**
- › Omnidirectional LED reading lights over the bunks
 - › Steering binnacles' grabrails are too low — there is a chance crew or guests may take hold of the wheel by accident moving about the cockpit



TRIMMED FOR SPEED AND CLOSE HAULED, WE SET A COURSE FOR THE CARIBBEAN IN A STEADY 20-KNOT NOR'WESTERLY ON A LAZY 1M SEA



I was surprised by the volume and sense of space on the 44 DS. The first thing that grabs you is just how open and bright everything is. The gently sloping cabin top features two enormous side windows as well as two overhead hatches abaft the mast affording persons below generous views of the ocean and loads of natural light. Maximum use is made of the space from cabin sole to deck head and the bulkheads fore and aft. A choice of varnished timbers is available, too, from taupe to teak finishes. The main saloon is akin to a large living room incorporating a white leather chaise lounge opposite a U-shaped lounge around an electrically-powered revolving dining table, which folds into a coffee setting and also lowers to make a double berth. Adjacent the chaise is a functional

The *piece de resistance* is the window behind the aft cabin bedhead (top). Classy additions like the desk and chair (above) in the forward cabin (above left) also impress, and fairer companions will be pleased with the bathroom (left).

and unobtrusive navigation station housing all the state-of-the-art instrumentation by Simrad.

On the starboardside, aft of the dining area, is a fully functional galley with top-loading refrigeration, twin stainless steel sinks, four-burner gas stove and oven, and heaps of storage.

REAR WINDOW

The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 44 DS offers several below-deck layouts. The boat tested was a four-person version offering a monster full-beam aft cabin with king-size bed. It's bright, spacious and airy, with



THE MAIN SALOON IS AKIN TO A LARGE LIVING ROOM INCORPORATING A WHITE LEATHER CHAISE LOUNGE OPPOSITE A U-SHAPED LOUNGE AROUND AN ELECTRICALLY-POWERED REVOLVING DINING TABLE...

several hatches and ports that offer good vision outside. The *piece de resistance* is the window behind the bedhead offering views through the stepped transom bulkhead, astern to the sea. Pure magic. Imagine waking to a lapping water view each morning.

The forward cabin is luxurious too, featuring a huge double bunk, excellent light, much storage and good ventilation.

DARNET DECK

The deck on the 44 DS is big and again the work of Darnet. That is certainly the impression you get stepping into the spacious and comfortable cockpit, where a large centre table incorporates storage. Looking forward from the dual steering stations everything is well laid out, the primary winches located just forward of the helm for ease of control.

The jammers are also nicely positioned so the helmsman can

easily operate sheets and halyards without leaving the wheel. Sheets rope back to the cockpit, with storage in seat lockers in the port and starboard coamings.

The overall view of the deck from the cockpit is clear and open offering good vision both under sail and motoring. This allows the helmsman to be comfortable, able and in control when executing singlehanded sailing, racing or just cruising.

HOW DOES SHE SAIL?

A good question. Once we cleared the breakwall, head to breeze, we easily hoisted the main before easing away to unfurl the headsail.

Trimmed for speed and close hauled, we set a course for the Caribbean in a steady 20-knot nor'westerly on a lazy 1m sea. Only one problem. We hadn't provisioned for a 3500nm passage across the Atlantic and



we certainly didn't have enough beer. Oh well, the thought was there.

Back to the test. The Sun Odyssey 44 DS performed well. On the breeze she was soft in the sea, forthright, comfortable and let herself down easy over the swells. Just a dream to control and letting go the helm the yacht was extremely well balanced. The 44 DS responded to the helm immediately. She was good through the tack and with smart teamwork was quickly back to speed.

The main and headsail responded well on trim and once set-up she maintained speed and momentum.

Getting off the boat and into the dinghy to take some photographs of the boatbuilder's new pride-and-joy I was, after sailing this lovely yacht again, impressed by the way she moves through the water.

The Sun Odyssey 44 DS looks at home on the sea and as I said before, is an eye-catching craft. Pity I had to fly home as I was tempted to relieve the factory of one their new babies and set sail for St Thomas. Hell, did I really need to get back to Sydney? Then I remembered, it was winter in Europe and summer Down Under.

Motoring back to Les Sables along the breakwall I could hardly hear the 54hp Yanmar. The engine compartment is simple, tidy and well laid-out. Any diligent owner would be happy to keep this important area clean at all costs. You know what they say — look after your boat and it will look after you.

After bidding farewell to Paul Blanc, who had to fly to Hong Kong the next day, Eric Stromberg and I headed to one of the quaint bars along the waterfront for a couple of cold beers and to talk some more about the Jeanneau brand and the boat we'd just sailed.

Stromberg is from Annapolis, Maryland, USA. He spent most of his young life sailing and racing on Chesapeake Bay. During our conversation, we, as seems to be the case so often in the yachting world, discovered many friends in common. It's a small world after all.

He is passionate about his job and even more so about the Jeanneau product and brand.

"We are a committed team," says Stromberg. "It is a wonderful company to work for and we all work hard together to deliver a magnificent sailing yacht that customers the world over enjoy so much. And, we have a terrific back-up and service operation through an extensive world-wide agency operation." ⚓

Facts & figures

JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 44 DECK SALOON

AT THE WHEEL

The Jeanneau SO 44 DS is, to say the least, a delightful yacht to sail. Test day was perfect in fact, but I would've liked to have the boat go through some heavier conditions to really see how she held her own. To see what water she takes over the deck, to see how she sits in a seaway and to feel her under nature's pressure.

PRICED FROM

\$311,963

GENERAL

MATERIAL: GRP

TYPE: Keelboat

LENGTH OVERALL: 13.34m

WATERLINE LENGTH: 12.99m

BEAM: 4.24m

DRAFT: 2.2m (standard keel)

WEIGHT: 9750kg (dry w/ deep-draft keel)

CAPACITIES

CABINS: 2/3

PEOPLE (NIGHT): 4/6 + 2

FUEL: 200lt

WATER: 330lt

HOLDING TANK: 80lt

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL: Yanmar 4JH5-CE

TYPE: Diesel saildrive

RATED HP: 54

SAILS

SAIL AREA: 77.6m² (standard)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jeanneau Australia

Website: www.jeanneauaustralia.com

tradeboat SAYS...

The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 44 DS is a yacht for every discerning yachtsman, and the manufacturer can tailor her to specific needs — be it racing, cruising or a combination of both.

LAYOUT

