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46 DEHLER DELUXE



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At 14.40m loa, the Dehler 46 is the German manufacturer's new flagship, the big sister to the 38 and 41. She's a successful hybrid of a racy exterior, sizzling performance and plush accommodation.

Dehler has a respected reputation for building performance-oriented yachts and its takeover by Hanse a few years back generated plenty of speculation. Dehler's DNA would inevitably come under the influence of Judel/Vrolijk, Hanse's long-time design team. How would this affect the racing-oriented genes?

Favourably, I'm pleased to report.

Where relatively Spartan and functional interiors were once the flipside of Dehler's speedster legacy, the new Hanse-engineered models have enjoyed a significant makeover. They present a well-balanced ratio: a happy solution to cruising comfort and swift performance.

There's no mistaking the yacht's racing intent. She's slippery. There's the smooth silhouette – clean decks; flush hatches;

Dehler's DELIGHT

Words by **Lawrence Schäffler** Photos by **Will Calver**



recessed cleats; the low-profile Quick windlass; the under-deck jib furler; the mast reaching to 21m above the waterline and its swept-back spreaders. It all adds up to a low-drag co-efficient.

If you need more clues, consider the Dehler 46's relatively light weight at 11,200kg, the 2.25m keel with its 3,500kg bulb and the near-vertical stem and stern providing a 12.9m waterline. Even her cockpit – surrounded by six Lewmar R+ series winches – caters for a decent-sized crew. The seats are fanned out aft, unlike the parallel bench seats in a conventional cockpit. The geometry creates lots of space, even with the centre cockpit table, for those on grinding duty.

There's also the full-width traveller mounted on the cockpit floor, just forward of the twin helms. Its lines terminate against the sides of the bench seats and are easily adjusted by the helmsman. The split back stay is equipped with a hydraulic tensioner to coax



“...a happy solution to cruising comfort and swift performance.”



The interior of Dehler's new range is more comfortable following the merger with Hanse. The Dehler 46 features a large owner's cabin in the bow with island berth and en suite, an expansive main saloon, galley and navigation station. The aft twin cockpits are identical and share a bathroom.



the mast into an even greater bend.

The standard rig supports a 114m² sail area of 64m² main with a 106 per cent genoa. However, the competition version of the Dehler 46 has racier options such as a taller, carbon fibre rig, more sail area, a deeper keel and a lighter displacement. The standard boat is equipped with a carbon fibre cage integrated into the hull's GRP structure. This delivers increased stiffness and allows the Dehler 46 to carry more load from the rig.

For most performance-cruiser owners, the standard boat

will do just fine. We sailed in light winds of 8 – 12 knots, and my dominant impression was how easily she turned that modest breeze into real horsepower.

In 10 knots of wind she slipped upwind at around 7.5 – 8.0 knots, sitting happily at 30 degrees apparent. In the gusts we could coax her up to 25 degrees – not too shabby for a production boat. With the mainsail's trimming combo of German mainsheet system, expansive traveller and backstay tensioner there's no excuse for an inefficiently trimmed sail.

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Similarly, the genoa tracks sit well inboard; the cars are adjustable from the cockpit. And because the chain plates are outboard on the coaming, the genoa sheets home unhindered with no chafe against the shrouds. This Dehler 46 is yet to add a gennaker, but based on her upwind performance I'd guess she'll be pretty quick downwind when she does get a kite.

I particularly like the way the B&G digital wind instruments and chartplotters are positioned at each helm. They're mounted either side on platforms integrated into the cockpit coaming – a stylish

piece of design. The instruments are easy to reach for cycling through menus and their resolution and clarity is superb.

All up, the Dehler 46 will be a serious competitor at club racing and even if you aren't drawn to the circuit, you'll take enjoyment from her ability to get you to the next anchorage quickly.

INTERIOR

The Dehler 46's interior layout is pretty standard – a master cabin in the forepeak with two identical double berth cabins aft under the

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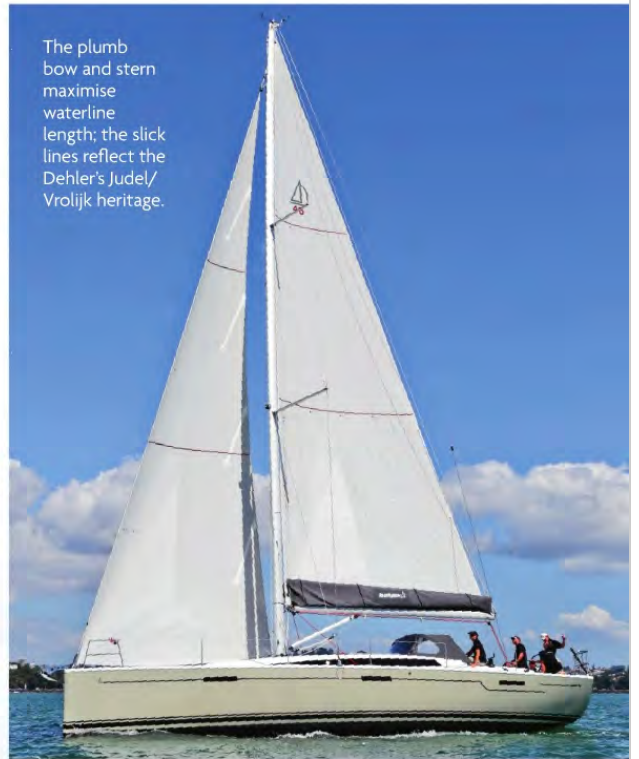
Dehler 46

Ease of sailing is an important consideration for short-handed and fully-crewed sailing. The Dehler 46 has the instruments, including chartplotter, visible from the helmstation.

cockpit, port and starboard. The forepeak cabin has good volume with an island bed and en suite bathroom in which the vanity is separated from the toilet/shower cubicle. The aft cabins feature spacious double berths and share a port bathroom, with vanity and shower/toilet also kept separate.

But stylish décor and good design lift the interior from ho-hum to hot. For me the Dehler 46's definitive piece of design is its curved joinery – best illustrated by the rounded doors on the lockers behind the saloon settees. They soften the overall feel of the interior to elegant, discreet and different. The saloon table pedestal is similarly equipped with a locker and rounded door; it's subtle yet functional.

The owner of this Dehler 46 has selected teak for the joinery; mahogany and cherry are options. It contrasts well with the crisp white of the leather upholstery, vinyl ceiling and galley bench top. It's



The plumb bow and stern maximise waterline length; the slick lines reflect the Dehler's Judel/Vrolijk heritage.





The stackpack and lazy jacks make it easy to drop the mainsail.

contemporary and the big hatches in the roof and narrow side windows provide good ventilation and natural light.

A close examination of the saloon reveals quite a few smart design features. Take the folding main table, for example. In addition to doubling its size when folded out, it also contains a pull-out, swivel section that works as a kind of side table. Furthermore, there is a bench seat mounted on the centreline catering for additional guests.

It's actually anchored to a clever hinge mechanism which sees the bench seat lifted and stepped out to port, effectively creating a better seating arrangement while remaining securely anchored. In its normal position the bench seat is tucked under the table so the passageway across the saloon to the forepeak remains unencumbered. The bench seat also contains a decent-sized locker.

Another example of good design is the nav table, just aft

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of the port settee. It has a dedicated seat, but the table is mounted on a discreet side track, allowing it to slide fore and aft. When it's not being used the table slides aft, creating more room on the port settee and increasing elbow room for dinner guests.

I also like the galley layout – particularly the pull-out drawer fridge which will make it easy to find things, with a separate, top-access freezer next to the cooker. A feature inherited from the Hanse design school is the galley island with a touch-panel for controlling the boat's lighting. Programmable, it allows you to select a pre-set configuration for just the the right ambience.

CHILL TIME

Speaking of lighting, check out the cool effect of the red LEDs

LEFT: The recessed anchor windlass and jib furler keep the foredeck uncluttered. RIGHT: Well spaced wheels and drop-down transom give easy access to the water.



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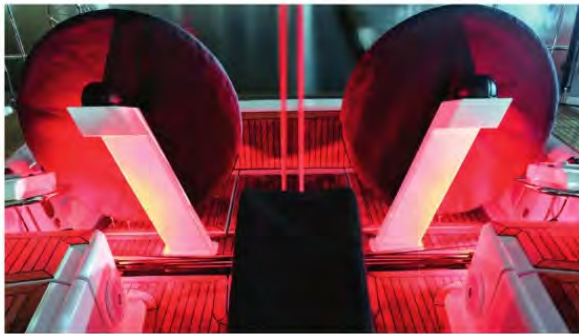
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in the cockpit; they set the tone for the boat in relax or night entertainment mode. It's a good cockpit for hosting friends. The table's drop sides provide easy access to the aft deck between the helms to the large, fold-down swim platform.

While a centred mainsheet could be a hindrance to the flow of traffic, the width of the traveller means you're able to pull the car and mainsheet to one side, well out of the way. My favourite cockpit feature, though, is the retractable LED lamp built into the



The Dehler 46 has a 53hp Volvo with a sail-drive. Red cockpit LED lights preserve vision when night-time sailing and convert to party mode at anchor.

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table. It's on a spring-loaded mechanism and emerges from its flush-top recess with a gentle push.

ANCHOR AWAY

Vertical stems are great for increasing waterline length but they tend to instil fear in those responsible for raising the pick in choppy water – a swinging anchor can inflict serious gelcoat damage. The Dehler 46, happily, has been fitted with an extended bow roller, so the anchor swings some way from the stem.

A 53hp Volvo and saildrive efficiently power the Dehler 46 to an 8-knot cruise speed. The boat's also fitted with a bow-thruster – invaluable, as we discovered, for getting her in and out of her Westhaven berth. I like the generous on-deck storage facilities: a massive lazarette and a deep anchor locker are perfect for the fenders and mooring lines.

Around \$625,000 will buy you a base Dehler 46 and, depending on your capacity for adrenalin, you can elevate that quickly if you select some of the competition features. I personally don't think they're necessary – the standard Dehler 46 has an excellent blend of speed and comfort. □

Dehler 46

- ▶ **loa** 14.40m
- ▶ **beam** 4.35m
- ▶ **draft** 2.25m/2.50m option
- ▶ **hull length** 13.95m
- ▶ **lwl** 12.90m
- ▶ **displacement** 11,200kg
- ▶ **ballast** 3,500kg
- ▶ **fresh water** 450 litres
- ▶ **fuel tank** 210 litres
- ▶ **engine** 53hp Volvo with saildrive
- ▶ **total sail area** 114.10m²
- ▶ **main sail** 64.40m²
- ▶ **rig** I 18.10m, J 5.29m, P 17.60m, E 6.25m
- ▶ **base price approx** \$625,000
- ▶ **manufactured by** Dehler
- ▶ **boat supplied by** Windcraft Yachts

