

YACHTING WORLD



Dehler Concept 33 tested

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Dehler 

Dehler 33

Matthew Sheahan reports from the maiden sailing trials of the first production 33 Concept, and considers whether it really is possible to satisfy cruising and racing folk within one basic design

It's difficult to imagine what a 33ft boat and a colourful Swatch have in common. That is, until you discover Dehler's design team. Although the hulls and decks of the new 33 Concept were drawn by Judel/Vrolijk, much of the styling was by Italian designer Matteo Thun, well known for his work with companies like Swatch, AEG, Möbel and Omega.

Thun describes his main objective in the project as 'taste segmentation; a design specialisation for consumer articles'.

To the rest of us this means several products from one basic design. A single watch with multi-coloured, clip-on surrounds is a simple but apt example.

Within one hull and deck, Dehler claim to offer three distinctly different boats, the luxury cruiser, the everyday cruiser and the race boat.

Of the three models, it is perhaps the last that is the biggest surprise. It seems to have taken a long time to shake off their racing reputation and even now there are many people who still believe that Dehler's heart is really in racing boats.

The truth is that Dehler have specifically avoided this part of the market after having their fingers burnt in the Eighties, despite their considerable success at the time with the db1 and db2. Instead, they made a firm decision to channel their efforts into cruising boats

which performed well and were easy to handle.

Considering how Dehler have fought against their reputation, it is surprising how aggressively styled the new 33 is.

ON DECK

If your family or friends are wary of performance boats and you don't want her to appear too racy, it's probably best to moor this 33 stern to in the marina!

Mooring her bows-to the dock is bound to draw attention to her plumb stem, fine entry and clean lines, before anything else. (If she



In keeping with Dehler's modern tradition, just two winches control the boat in standard form

were mine, I'd have to moor her this way round. Hiding those lines would be like putting your Porsche in the garage at night).

Continuing the car analogy, Dehler seem to have adopted the Henry Ford approach: you can have any colour you like so long as it is Ferrari red for the Competition, white for the Cruising or blue for the Classic.

Of the three models, the Cruising and the Classic are perhaps the closest in layout and style; the Competition version offers the alternative layout.

Aboard all three, all control lines are led back to the cockpit where they run through clutches mounted on either side of the coachroof. At first you don't notice anything particularly strange – until you sheet the jib.

'The fewer the better' is Dehler's ethos when it comes to winches on deck and the 33 continues this tradition. There is a single pair of Harken 32ST winches mounted on the after end of the coachroof.

Because the two cruisers have been designed to use 100 per cent jibs, the jib sheet leads run along the top of the coachroof, making coachroof-mounted winches ideal for this type of arrangement.

Furthermore, the high-sided companionway entrance provides something to lean against when you have your hands full.

The cockpit itself is a simple trench-type, with bench cockpit seating either side, surrounded by deep coamings. The seat mouldings have a lip which provides a good footrest when you are sitting to weather outside the coamings.

Towards the stern, both cruising versions have a locker box abaft the rudder stock. On the Competition version this area is left open.

RIG AND SAILS

Dehler continue to use their tried and tested main-Drop system where the fully battened mainsail is raised and lowered between lazy-jacks, attached to a boom-mounted sail bag. It was no surprise that it worked perfectly during our tests.

One difference, however, is the main- ▷

On test



Matthew Sheahan

Small but secure, the cockpit layout is comfortable and allows good visibility



Matthew Sheahan

A well thought out deck layout, although more of the excellent non-slip coating could be used



On test

Sit in or sit out, she is comfortable to helm. Aboard the Competition, the after lazarette is removed

conventional shelf locker, but are much more practical aboard a small boat.

When you begin to move about, her accommodation provides enough space to be comfortable in all the main areas. Once you enter the forepeak, the very place where you would expect to feel cramped, two full length berths and reasonable sitting headroom mean that you soon forget about her hull form.

Each of the three models has a different interior finish, although layouts remain essentially the same. The Cruising joiner work is in limed cherry, whereas the Classic, as you would expect for a boat with this name, is teak. The Competition's styling is a combination of white and grey, smartly offset by the bright red upholstery and trimmings.

All three arrangements are workable and comfortable for a crew of four. Six people would be bearable, but only on the performance boat; in this instance you would certainly want to opt for the alternative after cabin arrangement which provides a single berth either side of the centreline, separated by four handy stowage boxes.

Perhaps the most unusual feature aboard the other two boats is the spare space in the starboard after quarter. Rather than simply providing a large cockpit locker, Dehler have chosen to make this space a single cabin, with access through the head unit. It is not blessed with space to move about in, but does provide a comfortable and secure single berth.

This cabin could be used instead as a large hanging locker, which would work particularly well with additional on-deck access – an option available from the factory.

The galley and navigation station are situated either side of the companionway and both are easy to work. The outboard-facing navigation station is particularly good, with a dedicated seat on a hinging arm.

Although the chart table is a bit on the small side, working here under sail is comfortable as it is easy to brace yourself on either tack.

CONSTRUCTION

Hand-laminated throughout, all three boats have balsa-cored hulls to just below the waterline. Below this, the hull is a solid laminate. The

deck is also a balsa sandwich construction. Galvanised steel members are built into the floor to take the major loads, over which lies an inner ▷



The most plumb bow we have ever seen aboard a cruising boat...



Photos this page: Christel Clear

sheet which runs abaft the rudder stock. Siting the mainsheet track here ensures a good mechanical purchase on the boom and avoids the cockpit being divided. It also means that the helmsman can always reach the mainsheet.

Her headsail is a 100 per cent, furling jib, although for our tests the furler had not been fitted and we used a conventionally hanked jib.

All three boats have fractional rigs. Aboard the Cruising and Classic models the dimensions are identical and both rely on two sets of aft-swept spreaders and a single topmast backstay for their fore and aft support.

The Competition version has a taller topmast and hence larger mainsail, although the foretriangle height remains the same. Running backstays and the option for checkstays are also included in this package.

Talking of sails, Dehler ran two trial CHS certificates for this boat. The rating for Kevlar sails came out at 1.042 and for white sails 1.028. It is also worth noting that the Cruising version came out at 0.985 with white sails.

ACCOMMODATION

Designing a modern-looking boat is all very well until you come to the accommodation.

A fine entry in the bow and a narrow waterline beam keep the volume inside the boat down to a minimum. Designing boats like this must be a headache for designers, especially when the cruising version will undoubtedly be compared with bulkier cruising yachts with only a fraction of her capability under sail, but acres of space below.

There is no getting away from it, the Dehler is narrow in her forward sections. Her saloon seating seems to emphasise this, too, as the seats converge towards the forward end.

Bold green striped upholstery helps to distract you from the narrowness of the boat and once seated at the saloon table, which is permanently mounted on the centreline around



Don't leave her on the pontoon bows-to if the family told you not to buy a racing boat!

the mast, you soon forget about the size.

As we worked our way through the boat, it was clear to see that Dehler and their designers have fought hard for every available piece of space. Instead of building silly little lockers just because the space was there, they have thought about how best to use the space as a whole. There may be fewer lockers compared with some boats, but those that are there are immensely practical.

It has to be said that her personal stowage factor, of 21.7 per cent (a more typical figure would be 12 per cent), seems to reflect the restrictions imposed by her shape. In the 33's defence, though, this figure does not take account of the excellent fabric pockets in the forepeak. These not only stow more than a

On test

The Yanmar saildrive installation is very quiet, with minimal vibration. Far right, like many modern designs, the 33 heels quickly to the breeze initially and then stays there



moulding for the accommodation. Overall she appears to be well built for a production boat, in keeping with others in the range.

All three boats come standard with a two-cylinder, 18hp Yanmar diesel saildrive unit. The installation is compact and sited under the companionway steps which need to be removed to access the engine.

At face value, the installation looks much like any other, although the complete unit has been installed in reverse with the saildrive forwardmost in the boat. The significance of this unit does not become apparent until you get underway.

UNDER POWER AND SAIL

Not only is the 33 delightfully nimble under power, turning about her keel even at slow speeds, but she is extremely quiet with a minimum of vibration. But even if you don't notice this, you cannot ignore her performance.



Unlike most boats that run out of steam at high revs, the clean underwater shape and her long waterline length mean that this boat shows a respectable increase in speed throughout her rev range (see graph, revs v speed).

Under sail she slips along with similar ease. Reaching under main and jib at 7.9 knots in a 13-knot breeze is good going for any 33-footer. Upwind she gets into the groove easily, with typical speeds of 6 knots albeit in flat water conditions, and was well balanced on the helm.

All in all, she's a delightfully simple boat to sail and ideally suited for two, although the cockpit is roomy enough for four to cruise. Her small headsail makes tacking easy for the crew, who can stand within the security of the companionway throughout the manoeuvre.

Her single-line reefing system means you can shorten sail quickly from here, too. Easy and rewarding to sail she might be, but she is typical of many of the new breed of cruisers and heels quickly to the breeze owing to her narrow waterline beam. Once heeled, she stays there and her deck layout design means that you always feel secure.

As far as handling is concerned, her mainsheet system takes a little getting used to and could perhaps benefit from a coarse/fine tune system to reduce the amount of sheet required to pull in the main.

Its siting at the back of the boat does allow the helmsman to be in control at all times, even from the weather rail.

By contrast, the mainsheet traveller controls were awkward to operate which was a shame considering she has an excellent long track to use, but this could be easily rectified.

CONCLUSIONS

Dehler have never been a company to stand still and their continued and determined efforts to bring together performance and cruising attributes must be praised.

In attempting to do this, though, their biggest problem will be luring potential buyers away from some of the cavernous cruisers currently available. It really doesn't matter how

plush or spacious your car is: if it doesn't go round corners or is a pig to handle, then the overall appeal will be lost.

If you don't agree with this, then perhaps this style of cruiser is not for you.

In practical terms, all three boats are well built, secure and easy to handle, at the same time providing a leap in performance rarely seen aboard cruisers.

In our opinion, the boats are good value for money, especially the Cruising model which will no doubt prove to be the biggest seller of the three. □



Interior styles: Top, Cruising. Centre, Competition. Bottom, Classic. The basic layout is the same

Stowage space and worktop area have been well thought out in the galley, which has a common basic layout, although details vary. Right, Cruising version

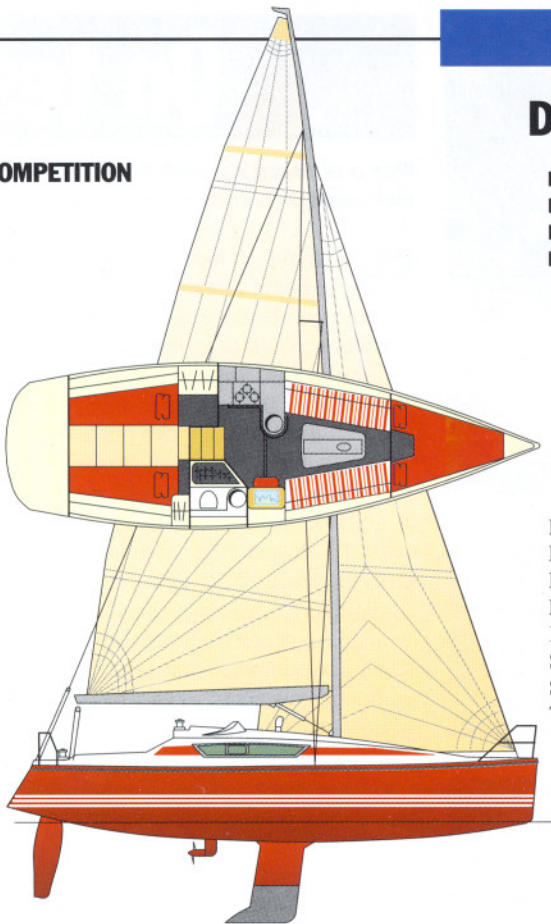


The Classic version (above) uses teak and incorporates a sink cover and chopping board. Left, the Competition version has the same layout, but has canvas pockets instead of lockers

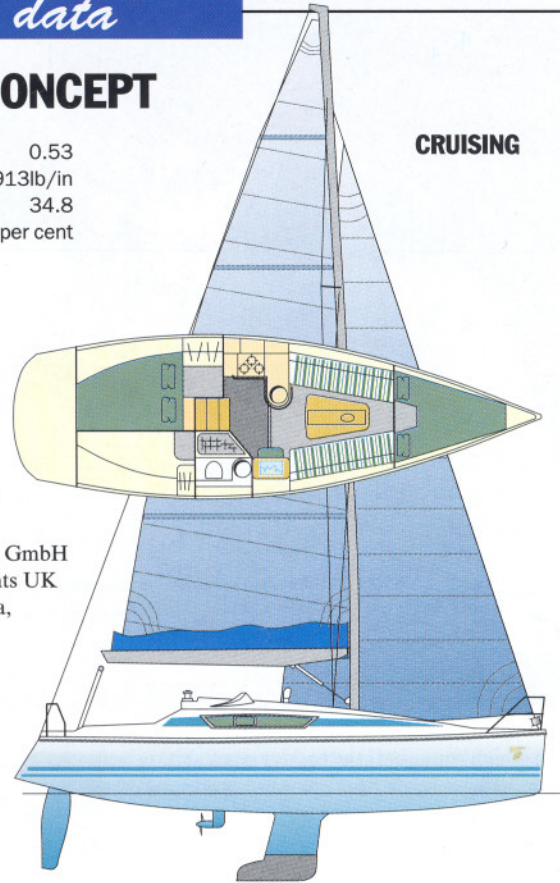
Technical data

DEHLER 33 CONCEPT

COMPETITION



CRUISING



Prismatic coefficient 0.53
Immersion 163kg/cm (913lb/in)
Ballast ratio 34.8
Personal stowage 21.7 per cent

Designed by: Judel/Vrolijk
Interior by: Matteo Thun
Built by: Dehler Yachtbau GmbH
Marketed by: Dehler Yachts UK
 Ltd, Hamble Point Marina,
 School Lane, Hamble,
 Southampton SO31 4JD.
 Tel: (01703) 458260.

Stowage factor: 3ft³ per person for stowage of personal effects. Factor is shown as a percentage of total volume.
Pounds/inch (kg/cm) immersion: How much weight it takes to sink the boat parallel to DWL.
Prismatic coefficient: The ratio of volume to displacement to a volume of

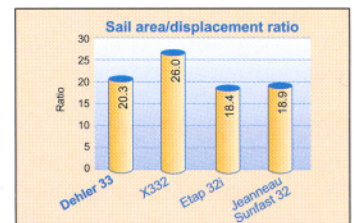
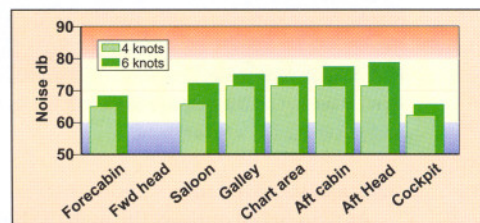
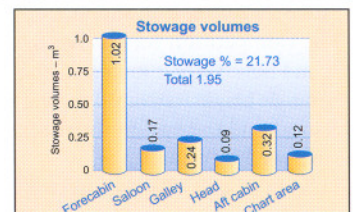
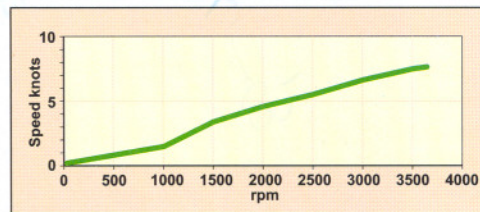
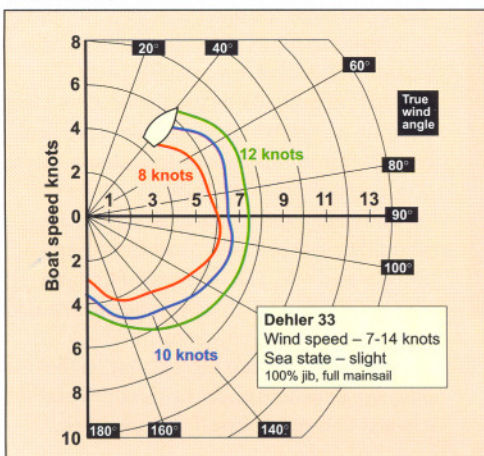
LWL and the maximum cross sectional area below the load waterplane. An indication of hull fineness or fullness
Polar diagram: Shows the optimum close-hauled angle to the true wind. Also shows speed attained on all courses. Important – consider in conjunction with

the true wind speed during the test.
Sail area: displacement ratio: This ratio gives some indication of power available. Higher numbers = greater performance.

$$\frac{SA(ft^2)}{(Disp(lb) \div 64)^{0.666}}$$

Ballast ratio: A comparison between displacement and the weight of the ballast.

Displacement:waterline length: Performance indicator. Low numbers = higher performance. $(Disp(lb) \div 2240) \div (0.01 \times LWL(ft))^3$



COMPARABLE BOATS

	DEHLER 33 CRUISING	X332	ETAP 32I	JEANNEAU SUN FAST 32
LOA	9.99m	10.29m	9.75m	9.50m
LWL	9.00m	8.79m	8.0m	8.05m
Beam (max)	2.99m	3.28m	3.43m	3.35m
Draught	1.65m	1.78m	1.40m	1.96m
Disp (lightship)	4,000kg	4,350kg	3,974kg	3,601kg
Ballast	1,390kg	1,800kg	1,300kg	1,080kg
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	50.30m ²	68.19m ²	45.43m ²	43.66m ²
Berths	5	6	4-6	4-6
Engine	Yanmar 2GM20	Yanmar 2GM20	Penta MD2020	Yanmar 2GM20
Power	13kW	18hp	13kW	18hp
Water	90lt	118lt	132lt	29gal
Fuel	60lt	13gal	50lt	159lt
Sail area:disp	20.3	26.0	18.4	18.9
Disp:LWL	153	179	216	192
Price (ex VAT)	£54,691	£65,950	£59,785	£53,389