



PHOTOS KEVIN GREEN; JEANNEAU

BON VIVANT

KEVIN GREEN finds the new Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 379 exudes character while promising a rollicking time

Jeanneau's global launch of its Sun Odyssey 379 cruiser in Sydney recently, confirmed the marque's popularity in our market and follows on from the other recent debuts in this performance cruiser line of the 409 and the 439.

Talking with the boss of Jeanneau's Sailboat Development team, Erik Stromberg, at the launch, the phrase "ease of use" came up several times in the context of the Sun Odyssey range. The range goes from the 30i to the upcoming 509, so this middle sibling has a fair bit of competition within its own boatyard, not to mention the other big Euro brands. So, the question is, how will it stand out?

A good start is to just look at the overall shape of the 379. It shows designer Marc Lombard's trademark sleek lines, but with several enhancements. These include a hard chine at the stern and a very fine bow entry; all packaged in a typically voluminous hull demanded by most of us family sailors. So, you get three roomy cabins, saloon berths and a large bathroom with separate shower.

Versatility has always been a selling point with Jeanneaus and the 379 is no exception both below and above deck. In addition, Jeanneau Australia is currently working on a Regatta Pack to realise the full potential of this light displacement hull so it should cover all bases.

ONBOARD ODYSSEY

Cruising sailors and families should enjoy the functional cockpit dominated by twin steering wheels, a sturdy fibreglass table and unusual smoked glass windows aft in the coachroof. The practicalities are well taken care of, though, with traditional Perspex washboards (that slot into a designated locker space), coachroof dodger, and meaty Harken ST46 primary winches right beside the helms.

On this prototype boat, the primaries share the load of the mainsheet as well, with jammers on either side. But I found this confusing to use when short-handing, something this boat would obviously do well. So, I'd advise fitting the two additional Harkens (\$3200 in total) to control the German mainsheet, which is



housed on a Harken track, cabin mounted. All other lines neatly run aft under gutters to the cabin-top jammers and twin Harken ST35s, making for a conventional and well-proven setup overall. Tidying all lines involve fitting the optional line bags, though.

Cockpit instrumentation is via a swivelling central console holding the Simrad NSE8 plotter, with additional analogue readouts (Simrad IS20s) inbuilt into the coamings beside each helm, and also included is the AP24 autopilot as well. Laid teak is standard on the seats and coamings that proved comfortable at the helm, and there are curved locker lids on the transom, too. Locker storage is good on the Sun Odyssey 379, with twin transom spaces (including spare gas bottle slot) and underfoot liferaft locker, plus main cockpit stowage. For boarding, the teak-clad transom is lowered via a rope pulley and finishes off what is a functional cruising cockpit.

SPACE BELOW

Down below, the three-cabin layout combines good use of

VERSATILITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SELLING POINT WITH JEANNEAUS AND THE 379 IS NO EXCEPTION BOTH BELOW AND ABOVE DECK

space in the saloon that should win plenty of customers for the 379 — both the target market of cruising families and charter-boat buyers.

Despite the many boats I see, I'm often amazed at how much can be fitted into the modern cruiser in terms of storage and comfortable berths. On the Jeanneau SO 379 the lounge bench turns it into a full-sized bunk with the addition of a simple lee cloth (at the expense of a small, rear-facing navigation table) and over at the dinette a fill-cushion turns it into a bunk for two kids to nestle in, safely supported by the wings of the fold-down main table.

In the bow, the double berth is spacious, if a bit spartan, but does have a substantial wardrobe and memory foam mattress. LED spotlights supplement the rather meagre natural light here. At the stern, the two symmetrical cabins are good sized doubles and have no less than four hatches incorporating a unique sliding privacy cover on the hullside one.

The interior finish of light to medium laminates may be unremarkable but is functional, with sensible use of double handrails fore and aft and the mast compression post anchoring the table securely. Usefully, the

table opens out to the lounge as well as the wraparound dinette area, so can seat a full race crew easily.

Cooking for them should not be too much hassle thanks to a two-burner Eno stove-oven (but I'd probably opt for the additional microwave) and deep twin sinks will cope with the washing-up. The top-opening fridge is also more than adequate at 180lt, with a tiny freezer box for the ice cubes. Across the cabin on the portside is the long bathroom comprising a separate shower and vanity area with stylish stainless steel washbowl. Privacy, though, requires some improving on the Velcro cloth used to shield the cockpit-facing window.

MEDIA PLUGINS

Simrad electrics used throughout the test boat includes the successful Sonic Hub entertainment system, allowing plugins of all digital media, and this small unit sits near the chart table. Bulkhead space is a bit limited here for additional gear (such as widescreen plotter and radar) unless you wanted to impinge on the nearby wet locker space.

Engine access is a simple flip-up on gas struts of the

A fairly conventional deck layout (right) held no surprises going forward, where a self-tacking track (not used during testing) runs ahead of the mast and lines disappear below the cabin top (top right).



Teak-topped coamings make a comfortable perch for the helmsperson (top), a swivelling monitor (above) nearby on the cockpit table relaying information from the Simrad NSE8 plotter.



companionway exposing the 29hp Yanmar 3YM30 sufficiently for all maintenance tasks with side access for filters, too. Jeanneau has opted for Saildrive on this range — probably to accommodate its new automated docking system — and a folding propeller is fitted.

DECK WISE

A fairly conventional deck layout held no surprises going forward on the SO 379. However, the teak toerail and similar handrail on the low-slung cabin top did pleasantly break-up the acres of glaring (and hard wearing it must be acknowledged) GRP. The pulpit area again presented no surprises, just a sensible layout of fully covered, vertical Quick windlass and deep anchor locker — in fact so voluminous I wondered how much collision protection was built into this prototype — with twin rollers on the bow. A simple stainless steel ring outboard acts as the tack point for a roller-reefing Code Zero.

In terms of sailplan the Jeanneau comes with an impressive list of upgrades and the test boat had a Harken self-tacking track fitted — although, we used the standard 132 per cent genoa for our sail. The factory-fitted fully battened mainsail came with two slab reefing points and the double spreader Selden rig held up by inboard wire shrouds and twin backstays. Call me old fashioned, but this is a sensible standard sailplan for a cruising boat of 37 feet, but any bigger and in-mast furling might be considered.

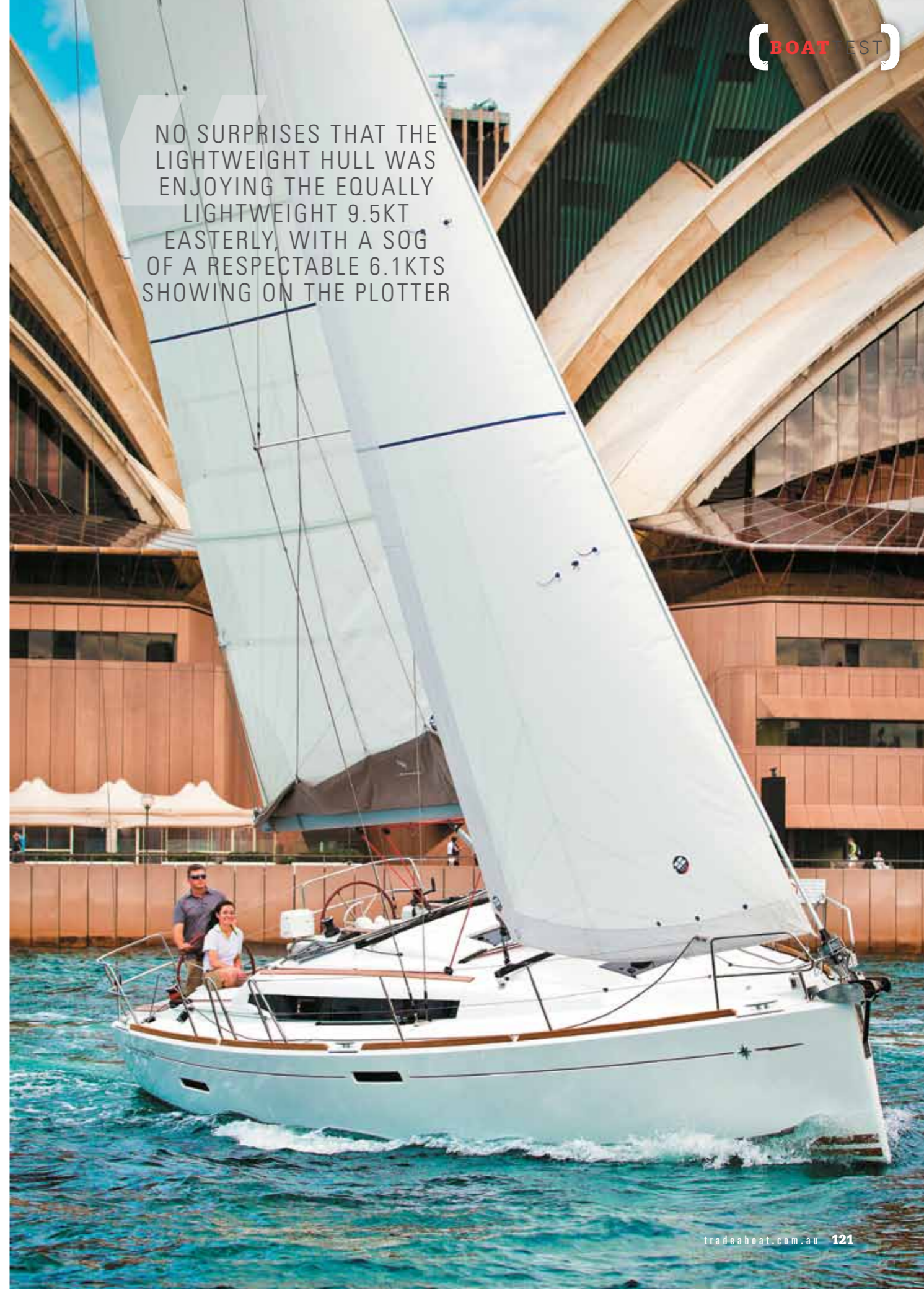
SLIPPERY HULL

In penning this latest hull, designer Marc Lombard has gone with the fashionable hard chine running along the waterline heeling angle, minimum flare on the topsides and a fairly narrow bow to reduce friction, while beam is carried well back. A plumb bow combined with deep after-sections translates to a long waterline, intended for fast passagemaking.

Keel options are interesting, especially if you're a shoal-water

There's good use of space in the saloon (left middle), where the galley (top left) has a two-burner stove-oven, top-opening fridge and storage to feed a race crew. A nice feature is the dinette's starboard lounge that converts to a double berth with an infill (left).

NO SURPRISES THAT THE LIGHTWEIGHT HULL WAS ENJOYING THE EQUALLY LIGHTWEIGHT 9.5KT EASTERLY, WITH A SOG OF A RESPECTABLE 6.1KTS SHOWING ON THE PLOTTER





THE JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 379 IS A COMPETITIVELY PRICED BOAT IN A SIZE CATEGORY IDEAL FOR SMALL FAMILIES

sailor, as it includes an external lifting keel apart from the shoal-draft wing and conventional fin (as fitted to our test SO 379). The fin keel is attached to the hull by bolts threading into the cast iron fin (rather than external nuts) and hull construction is solid GRP, with a glassed-in fibreglass grid for major fixings and to aid hull integrity.

The lightweight nature of the build was borne out in the sail area to displacement ratio, which showed 20.07 (standard sailplan) according to my calculations, making the Jeanneau SO 379 live up to the performance aims of her designer.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Motoring out of our pen at Pittwater, the 29hp Yanmar with folding prop pushed the boat along at a nippy 8kts and 2900rpm showing on the counter. But with a nice breeze flowing, it wasn't long before I pointed the Jeanneau into the wind so that distributor Lee Condell from Performance Boating could hoist the mainsail.

The double-ended mainsheet runs to both sides of the cockpit via gutters and can be held in jammers beside each primary winch. So, once I'd got used to sharing the primaries with it, then locking the jammer off when tacking, the system worked. Unwinding the big genoa went without drama and the oversized Harken 46ST easily winched it on as I hardened up on the wind. Perched comfortably out on the teak-clad coaming, leather covered wheel in hand, it was a pleasant spot, although I could only see one of the two genoa telltales clearly. No surprises that the lightweight

The forward cabin (top left) is spartan but the wardrobe substantial and the berth is a double. Across from the galley is the long bathroom (middle left), featuring separate shower and vanity. The test SO 379 had two aft cabins (left).



[HIGHS]

- › Functional overall design
- › Generous accommodation
- › Performance potential

[LOWS]

- › Mainsheet shares primary winches
- › Bathroom privacy

[JEANNEAU'S NEW DIRECTION: AN INTERVIEW WITH ERIK STROMBERG]

Erik Stromberg, director of Sailboat Product Development at Jeanneau came to the 2011 Sydney International Boat Show for the global launch of the Sun Odyssey 379. Stromberg, along with colleague Jean-Paul Chapeleau, executive director of Jeanneau also came for the Sydney party hosted by local dealer Performance Boating to celebrate 30 years of the French brand's involvement in the Australian market. As we sat onboard the new 379, Erik talked about the evolving yachting market and several new initiatives that the company's R&D arm were planning for what he described as the "boat of tomorrow".

Tab: Welcome Erik, and I can see that your company has made a major gesture by launching this new boat a long way from your home markets in Europe?

Stromberg: Yes, but in some ways it's not surprising. Our new SO range has been very successful in Australia, with both the 409 and 439 selling strongly, so that's why we've taken our first prototype 379, hull #1, here. This boat has never been seen in Europe, never gone to any show before; so this is pretty unusual for a European company to take. Normally, it's Cannes, La Rochelle, Southampton and then maybe six months later it comes to Australia.

Tab: Jeanneau's branding has several model ranges within it. Why has it been changing recently?

Stromberg: The Sun Odyssey is our all-round cruiser-racer boat, so they can have lots of cabins and be stripped back for charter or even have gear on them for club racing. Then we have our DS (Deck Saloon) range; often built on the same hulls as the SO but has more volume, with large aft owner's cabin, bigger cockpits, raised flooring, wraparound windows, which all go to give a distinctive look. It's aimed at a very different customer. Finally, we have our Sunfast 3200, an offshore single and double-

handed boat.

Tab: Your flagship boat, the Jeanneau 57, recently began yet another model range for the company?

Stromberg: Yes, even though we are a production builder we have to be open to the needs of these more specialist owners. The Jeanneau 53 and 57 range offers a lot more customisation and is orientated towards offshore cruising. We've built about 300 of these so far and none of them has been the same — different cabin configurations, sail plans. They're aimed at customers who really know what they want because they spend a lot of time on these boats.

Tab: What major developments are happening at Jeanneau right now?

Stromberg: We are redeveloping the entire Sun Odyssey range to include hull chines, all sheets back to the helm, restyling the decks with the 409, 439 and 379, and now the new 509 for the European Autumn shows.

Tab: Looking towards the future of Jeanneau's yacht development, what do you foresee?

Stromberg: People talk about the boat of tomorrow but there's no one boat. There is a continued demand for the traditional boat like the Sun Odyssey, but there will also be more boats built around comfort, entertaining onboard, (and) spending time aboard generally — for people who like being on the water but aren't necessarily sailing. So, there is a movement back to sail all over the world from motorboats. But to cater for these people, we have to provide a sailing experience much more like the motoryacht. We have to work on that and of course they are not the traditional sailor.

Tab: In terms of new equipment for boats, what do you see as significant?

Stromberg: Well, our self-docking system — 360 Docking by joystick — is a major technological breakthrough for sailboats even though it's



Jeanneau's Erik Stromberg sees the trend towards ease of sailing as a major market for the French builder to cater for in the future.

been in the motorboat industry for 10 to 15 years. It's part of a trend towards ease of use and integration — there are many dumb systems onboard like electric winches and other types of sail-handling systems. The future will be to link them together so we have an automatic sailing system.

Tab: Land-based electronics are now creeping aboard steadily with smart phones and so on?

Stromberg: Yes, people now come aboard with their electronic navigation on their iPad, so that has to be accommodated on the sailboat as well. This is happening right now and we've been designing smaller and smaller chart tables for the last five years to reflect this. There's a reduction in the number of standalone systems in favour of a single screen for everything — navigation, engine, data entertainment, tankage and so on.

Tab: Talking more about comfort, what about improvements in onboard entertainment?

Stromberg: Apart from things like the Sonic Hub, LED flatscreens and smartphones, we also did some testing the other day with electronic filters, which is a 2mm screen that goes on a bulkhead so you can project media onto it.



Facts & figures

JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 379

AT THE HELM
The SO 379 has a simple sail plan, practical cockpit and nice steering position for cruisers and performance sailors alike. Nimble under standard sailplan, the Jeanneau is also enhanced by an impressive list of performance options, including a bigger rig that should transform the slippery hull into an able twilight racer.

PRICE AS TESTED
\$228,711

OPTIONS FITTED
The test boat was highly specified and included the Premier Pack (LED nav lights, battery charger, screen shades, second anchor roller, and more). It had the Preference Pack, too, with Simrad Sonic Hub, cockpit table, hot shower, and more. Other factory options fitted included the Simrad Navigation Pack, windlass, and luxury saloon table

GENERAL
MATERIAL: GRP
TYPE: Keelboat
LENGTH OVERALL: 11.34m (37ft2in)
WATERLINE LENGTH: 10.4m
BEAM: 3.76m
DRAFT: 1.95m (fin); 1.5m (wing keel); 1.10m to 2.25m (swing keel)
WEIGHT: 6700kg

CAPACITIES
FUEL: 130lt
WATER: 200lt
CABINS: 3

LAYOUT
The Jeanneau SO 379 has a three-cabin layout, the owner's double berth up front and two symmetrical doubles in the stern with an option to change the portside cabin into a work space.

ENGINE
MAKE/MODEL: Yanmar 3YM30 saildrive
RATED HP: 29

SAILS
TOTAL AREA: 70m² (standard)

SUPPLIED BY
Performance Boating Sales,
Gibson Marina,
1710 Pittwater Road,
Bayview, NSW, 2104
Phone: (02) 9979 9755
Website: www.jeanneauaustralia.com

tradeboat SAYS...
The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 379 is a competitively priced boat in a size category ideal for small families, and has a functional and spacious interior to match.

THE SO 379 HAS A SIMPLE SAIL PLAN, PRACTICAL COCKPIT AND NICE STEERING POSITION FOR CRUISERS AND PERFORMANCE SAILORS ALIKE

For boarding, the teak-clad swimplatform (above) lowers via a rope pulley and finishes off what is a functional cruising cockpit.

[GO-FAST GOODIES]

Similar to parent company Beneteau, Jeanneau has its own pod-driven berthing system called 360 Docking, managing the swivelling Saildrive and bowthruster in a simple joystick unit. It took me a mere 10 minutes to master one of these on a 50-footer, but it's debatable if you'd need one on a 37-foot boat. Other useful options with the SO 379 include a self-tacking headsail and in-mast furling. Moving up a notch in speed would involve fitting the Regatta Pack, including: mainsheet winches, larger rig with 15 per cent more sail area, cockpit floor-mounted mainsheet traveller, deeper keel with high-profile rudder, low toerail and Dyform rigging. Apart from the Code Zero and asymmetricals, conventional symmetrical spinnakers can also be fitted, so literally, all angles are covered. Also, reflecting the brand's tidal home waters, twin rudders with lifting keel are also available along with a shoal-draft winged keel version.

hull was enjoying the equally lightweight 9.5kt easterly, with a SOG of a respectable 6.1kts showing on the Simrad plotter. As we beat our way down Pittwater my tacking angles gradually reduced, reflecting the slippery abilities of this boat, abilities that should see it enjoy some club racing, if you fit the upcoming Regatta Pack.

Occasionally, a bullet of higher pressure heeled us over but only as far as the chine, which did its job by digging in to help our tracking, meanwhile at the helm I detected some weather helm — never a bad thing. Turning away from the light breeze for a series of slow gybes equally went without dramas thanks to all sheets running smoothly — even the big genoa cleared the mast without

Surprise, surprise... you'll find the engine hiding under the companionway (top) as per just about every production keelboat built these days. The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 379 (above) should be a competitive club racer, if her nimble performance under only a standard sailplan on test day is a guide.

assistance as we reset it. At the time, I scribbled into my notebook, "well mannered and with lots of potential" and upon reflection that does sum up this performance-cruiser. A boat satisfying both sides of that equation. And with this world first test, we are the first to say as much. ⚓

