

Sun Fast 3600

Rupert Holmes tests this new 36-footer which offers plenty of appeal for both fully crewed and short-handed racing

The 3600 sits alongside the 3200 in Jeanneau's range, a boat that has long been a favourite among solo and doublehanded crews, with some 150 sold in the past six years. However, from the outset the new boat was never intended to simply be a larger version of its smaller sister and will also appeal for fully-crewed racing. The first prototype 3600 has already seen success racing fully crewed in France, winning the Spring Challenge series at La Trinité Sur Mer with a race to spare, narrowly beating an Archambault 35 and JPK10.80, where all three boats were campaigned by works teams.

Concept



Designer Daniel Andrieu has incorporated many of the insights gained since the launch of the 3200, drawing a hull with twin rudders and a sharp chine at the transom that runs well forward – it's just visible even close to the bow. The 3600 has proportionately less wetted surface area than the 3200, thanks to a more radiused transom profile and a little more rocker than the older design. The 3600 is therefore a more rounded boat for a variety of conditions, whereas the 3200

is more optimised for downwind sailing in a decent breeze but was comparatively slow in very light airs.

The overall beam on the 3600 is also proportionately a little less than on the 3200, but form stability is boosted by the chined hull. In addition, an increased ballast ratio of 45 per cent – a figure rarely seen on modern low centre of gravity keels – gives impressive sail carrying ability.

Hull and deck construction is of resin-infused glass with a balsa core. A GRP inner liner is glued to hull, with the join laminated for additional strength. The two prototype boats came out at 4,855 and 4,755kg, but production models are expected to be 4,700kg.

Our test boat, 'Fastrak X' is the second prototype, built in Poland (along with the production tooling) before series production started in France. She had yet to enter a race, although owner Nigel Colley (who's MD of Jeanneau UK importer Sea Ventures) opted to sail her home from La Rochelle in preference to delivery by road. The new boat replaces a string of Sun Fast 3200s he has campaigned predominately in solo and doublehanded events, including the Rolex Fastnet and Round Britain and Ireland races.

The 3600 is impressively near to race-ready right out of the box. 'Fastrak X' is predominantly fitted out to the standard specification, with just a battery/shorepower/charger pack, fridge and a longer carbon sprit (0.88m instead of 0.45m) added as factory-fitted options. The biggest modification Nigel plans to make, other than installing B&G's new H5000 electronics package, is to add turning blocks for the jib sheets just abaft the primary winches, to facilitate cross winching.

Deck and rig



'Fastrak X' is set up with twin tillers, with the traveller and coarse/fine tune mainsheet controls just forward of the helm. The forward part of the cockpit has short seats with coamings – overall it's a good compromise, with not too many levels to step over when moving around, but offering a degree of protection offshore. For fully crewed racing the boat can also be specified with twin wheels and a German mainsheet system.

The standard deck layout uses quality equipment from Harken, Spinlock and



SPECIFICATIONS

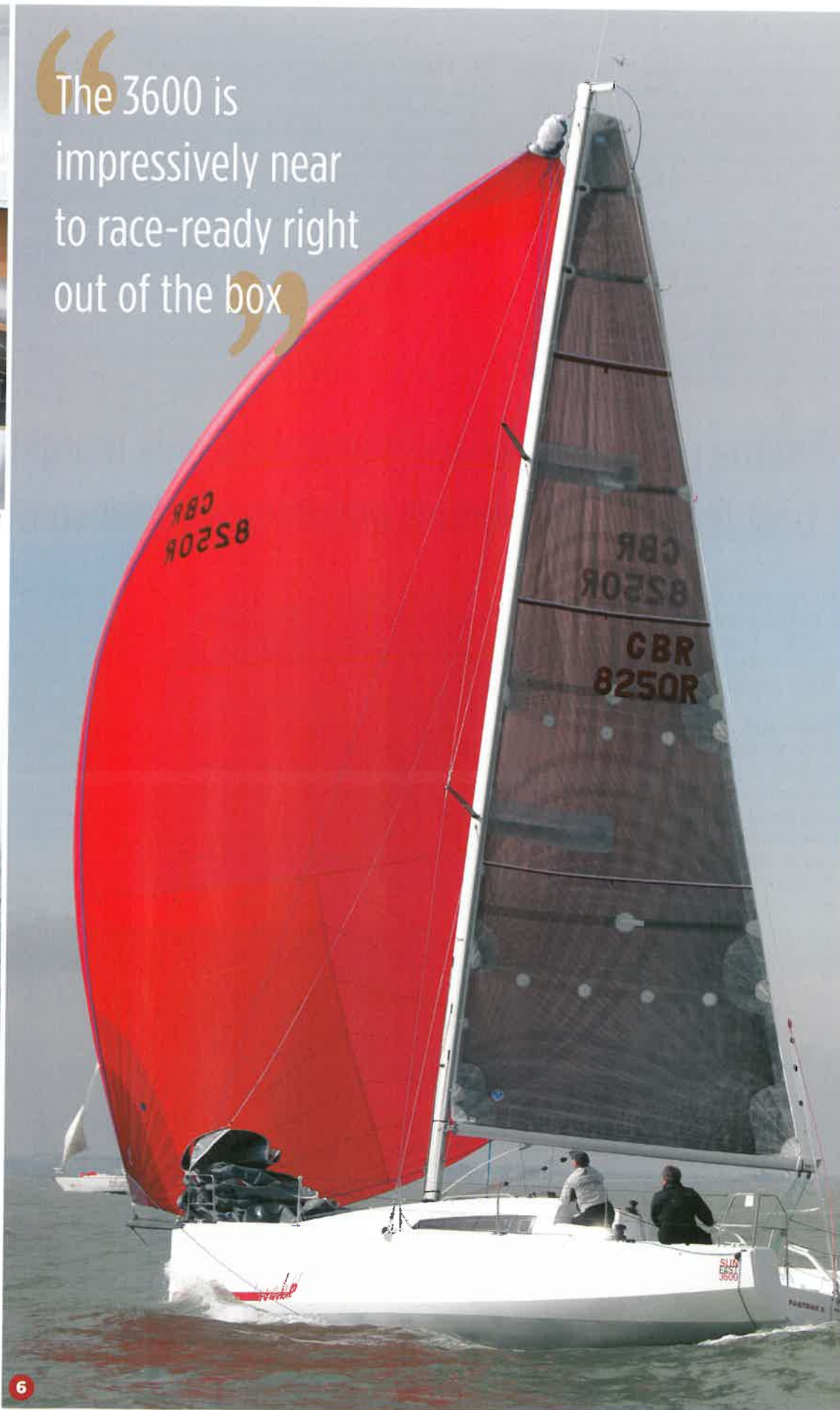
LOA:	10.8m
LWL:	9.5m
Beam:	3.55m
Displacement:	4,700kg
Draught:	2.13m
Sail Area Upwind:	69.8sq m
Spinnaker:	100-121sq m



“The 3600 is impressively near to race-ready right out of the box”



- 1 The interior is fully fitted if not luxurious
- 2 Neat stanchion-foot blocks
- 3 Fabric hanging lockers for interior storage
- 4 Impressive purchase systems on the vang and backstay adjusters
- 5 We maintained a touch over 7 knots upwind on our test sail
- 6 The sharp chine at the transom is visible well forward



ewmar, including towable genoa cars, jib sheet in haulers, plus powerful purchase systems for the vang, backstay and mainsheet fine tune. Clearly a lot of thought and knowledge has gone into the design of the layout, including impressive details such as the neat rollers/fairleads built into the bottom of the pulpit legs for the asymmetric tack line, as well as the wheels for skirting the genoa built into the top of the stanchions.

As standard, the boat is fitted with an aluminium deck-stepped double-spreader 19/20th rig – a carbon rig is offered as an option. 'Fastrak X' has a suit of North 3DI and 3DL sails – for our test we used a hank-on No.2 jib, which is designed to be reefed to a No.3 or, for reaching in heavier airs, a jib

short tiller extensions to facilitate this.

For our test we had fairly consistent 13-17 knots of breeze and two or three people on board. In the puffs, with the full main and J2, we were towards the upper end of the wind range for this combination in short-handed mode. Nevertheless, as with many other twin rudder boats, the helm was light, but with plenty of feel and minimal weather helm.

One aspect that's really impressive about the 3600 is that the high stability means that a short-handed crew doesn't need to respond to every change in wind strength to keep the boat on its feet. Although we didn't experience any big gusts, in the puffs the heel angle increased only very marginally, with the boat feeling very planted, and little need for

sailed short-handed.

Hoisting the A2 spinnaker, the speed jumped above 8 knots with occasional spurts close to 10 knots and it was clear that very little more breeze would have been needed to break away into full planing mode. The helm remained light at all times, even when deliberately well powered up reaching with the A2, with plenty of reserve power – the boat happily bore away sharply when well powered up, without easing the sheets.

Interior

★★★★★☆☆☆

There's a decent amount of space below decks, although to save weight it's not fitted out in the luxurious manner of Jeanneau's

In the puffs the heel angle increased only marginally, with the boat feeling very planted, and little need for constant trimming

top. Nigel has opted for a semi fat-head main in preference to a pin-head sail. We also had a 121sq m A2 spinnaker, and a Dacron No.4 jib, which Nigel expects to get a lot of use when punching upwind in heavy airs.

Under sail

★★★★★☆☆☆

The helm positions are also well configured, with big foot chocks to keep you in place when heeled and backstay, traveller and both mainsheet fine and course controls falling easily to hand. Taller sailors can easily reach the primary winches from the helm and it would be easy for smaller skippers to add

constant trimming.

A corollary of this is that weight on the rail is not required for stability and power in the way that is the case for many yachts, which makes it ideal for short-handed sailing. On the other hand, a full crew will still find they gain an advantage through constant and accurate trimming.

'Fastrak X' was not yet fitted with instruments at the time of our test, pending delivery of her new system, but speeds from a hand-held GPS, corrected to allow for tidal stream, showed that upwind we were able to maintain a touch over 7 knots, an impressive figure for a boat of this size, especially when

mainstream cruising yachts. Having said that, there are two large and comfortable quarter cabins, while the saloon is bright and well laid out, with settees each side and a large fixed central table. Unlike the 3200 the deckhead here has a fibreglass lining, giving a neater finish. There's good stowage on deep shelves/bins above the settees, plus fabric hanging lockers and enclosed shelves in the aft cabins.

The galley on the starboard side is basic, but adequate, and there's a good nav station to port. A neat touch is the two seats on each

BELOW The beam is proportionally slightly less than the 3200, but the chines make for greater form stability





side of the boat just inside the companionway designed to help short-handed sailors to grab short naps whenever an opportunity arises. In the forepeak there's a large heads/shower compartment, with room for sail stowage, plus a full collision bulkhead at the bow.

Verdict



With the 3600 Jeanneau has created another very appealing short-handed race boat, but unlike the 3200, one with equal potential as a fully-crewed racer. It would also make a good fast and fun cruiser for those who place more importance on enjoying sailing on a high-

stability boat with an efficient deck layout, than on being cosseted by every conceivable creature comfort when in harbour.

On the downside it's a more physical boat than the 3200 – the additional size, plus greater stability, means loads are significantly higher. However, this also arguably makes it a better choice for racing longer distances – this year Nigel plans to fit in as many two-handed JOG offshore races as possible, plus Solo Offshore Racing Club events and a couple of UK-based RORC offshores towards the end of the season. He will then sail down to Lanzarote for the RORC Transat race in preparation for the Caribbean 600, before bringing the boat back

ABOVE The 3600 is set to cross the Atlantic later this year and have a shot at the Caribbean 600 next spring

to the UK for the 2015 season.

With an IRC rating of around 1.044, this looks to be a competitive boat for both styles of racing. Fully kitted out with North Sails and decent electronics the 3600 can be on the water and ready to go for £180,000-200,000 (including VAT). Given Jeanneau's need for large volumes to make a new model worthwhile, the company is convinced there's a strong market for a boat of this style and size and we can be sure of seeing plenty of them on the water before long. **□**

COMPARISONS



JPK10.80

A more expensive option, though a similar size, the new JPK10.80 builds on the knowledge gained from the company's hugely successful JPK10.10.

LOA	10.80m
Beam	3.65m
Draught	2.20m
Displacement	4,750kg
Mainsail	40sq m
Genoa	33sq m
Asymmetric	120sq m
Symmetric	105sq m



Archambault A35

This popular 35-footer has won plenty of trophies in fully crewed and short-handed races on both sides of the Channel. Recently revamped, the latest version is sure to be equally successful.

LOA	10.59m
Beam	3.55m
Draught	2.1m
Displacement	4,450kg
Mainsail	38sq m
Genoa	29.5sq m
Spinnaker	95sq m

ANSWER BACK

From: Nigel Colley, Sea Ventures

After a series of four Sun Fast 3200s I had been asking Jeanneau for a larger sistership for the Sun Fast stable for a while, and they delivered me the 3600! This is a great boat to sail, as Rupert experienced for himself, perfectly adapting to the needs of the increasingly popular shorthanded scene as it does to fully crewed around the cans. Initial orders in the UK confirm its shorthanded appeal and I am really looking forward to sailing 'Fastrak X' in both solo and doublehanded events this season in the UK, Normandy, Ireland and then onwards across the Atlantic at the end of the year.

Contact: www.sea-ventures.co.uk