

On test

DEHLER 37CWS



Dehler's reputation has been built on performance, ease of handling and innovation. Matthew Sheahan went to find out if the latest model from this German builder carries on the tradition





For several years, the German car industry has been promoting the image of solid, no-nonsense build quality, often at the expense of design innovation. The ploy has been so successful that today many people think that all German products are like this. But does this apply to boats as well?

Like BMW and Volkswagen, Dehler are one of Germany's success stories in the marine trade with over 20 per cent of their boats being exported, the UK being their biggest overseas customer.

Their reputation in the UK was built on their highly successful DB range of racer/cruisers which dominated race results for several years. The company no longer produce

production racers, preferring instead to build performance cruisers. But Dehler's reputation is built on innovation.

So where does this leave them when it comes to the image created by the motor industry? We went to the South Coast to sail the latest design from their stable, the 37cws (central winch system), to find out.

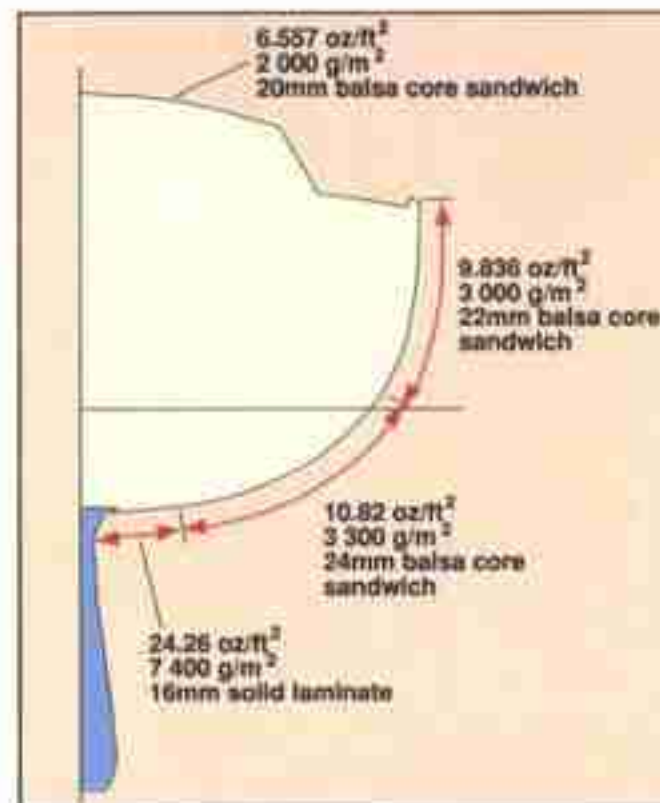
ON DECK

Continuing their long-standing association with Dehler, Van de Stadt produced the lines for the new 37cws which replaces Dehler's 36cws. The new model uses the same hull, but the deck is completely new, although it encompasses many of the features of her one-year-old stablemate, the Dehler 35cws.

Well equipped and well balanced, the 37cws is a pleasure to sail short-handed. She performs well, too.

Technical data

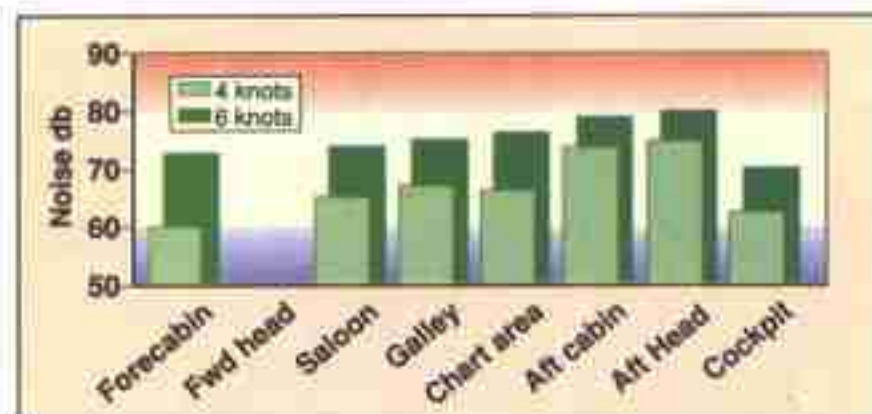
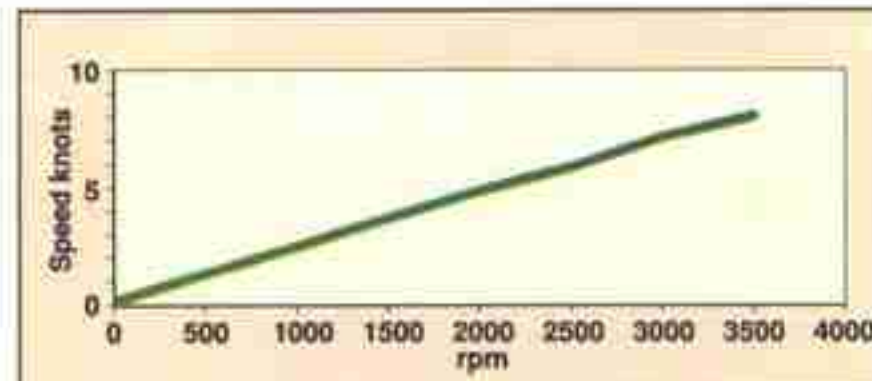
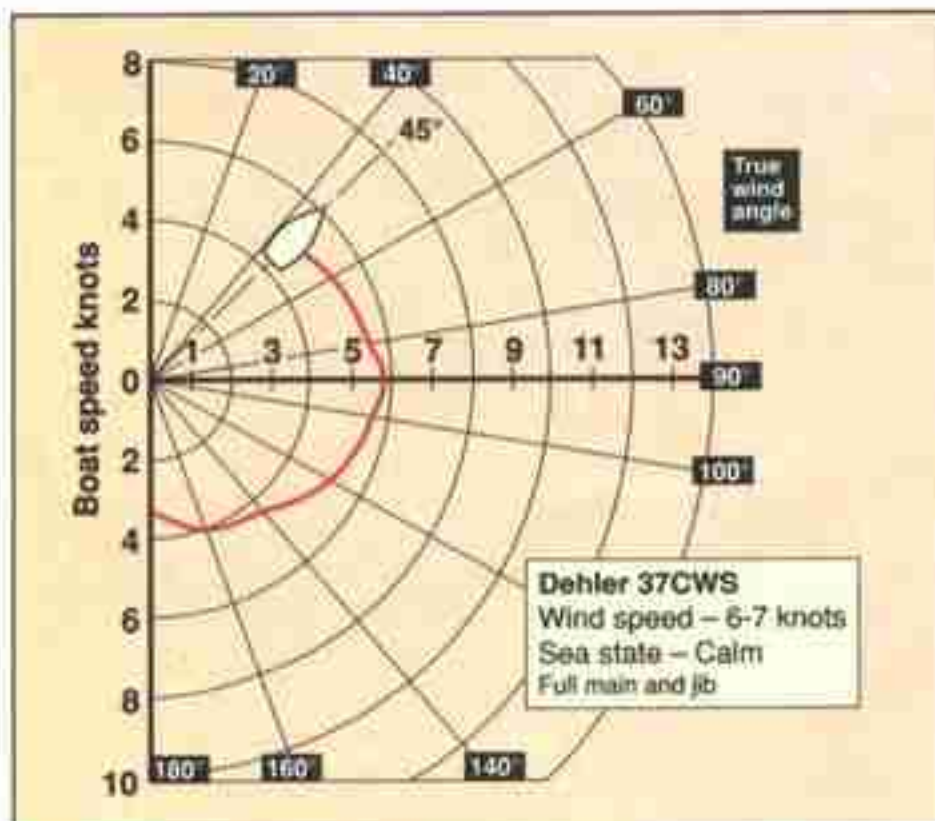
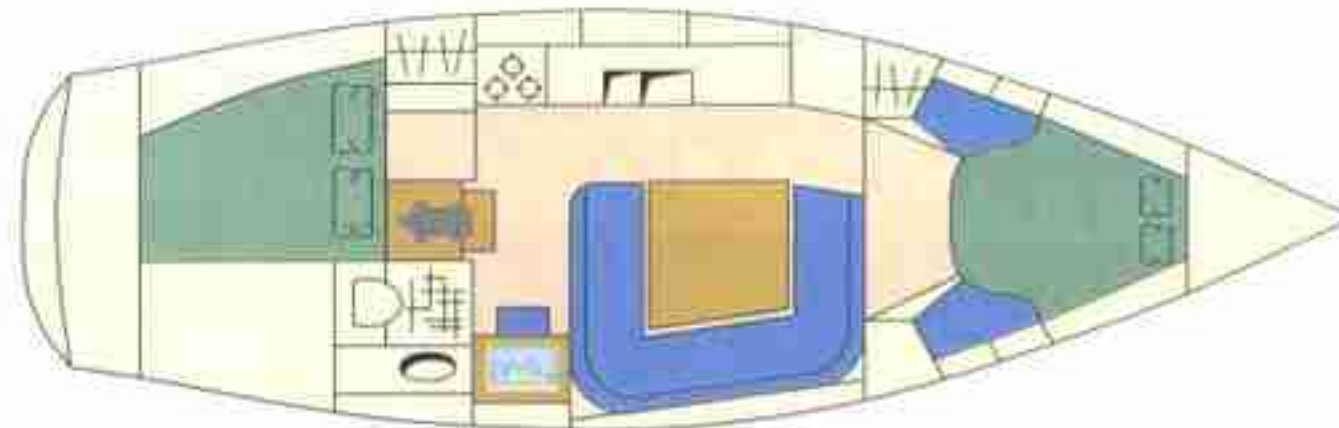
DEHLER 37CWS



Designed by: Van De Stadt
Built by: Dehler Yachtbau GmbH, Im Langel 22, D-59872 Meschede-Freienohl, Germany. Tel: +49 02903 44 02 82. Fax: +49 02903 44 02 82.
Marketed by: Dehler UK Ltd, Hamble Point Marina, Hamble, Hants SO3 5NL. Tel: (0703) 456595. Fax: (0703) 456596

DATA	
Prismatic coefficient	0.55
Immersion	1,064lb/in, 190kg/cm
Ballast ratio	42.86
Personal stowage	7.27 per cent
Stowage volumes	
Forecabin	59.81ft³ 1.69m³
Saloon	33.39ft³ 0.95m³
Galley	43.75ft³ 1.24m³
Head	4.54ft³ 0.13m³
After cabin	17.96ft³ 0.51m³
Nav area	5.53ft³ 0.16m³
Total	164.99ft³ 4.67m³

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 fineness or fullness of the hull.

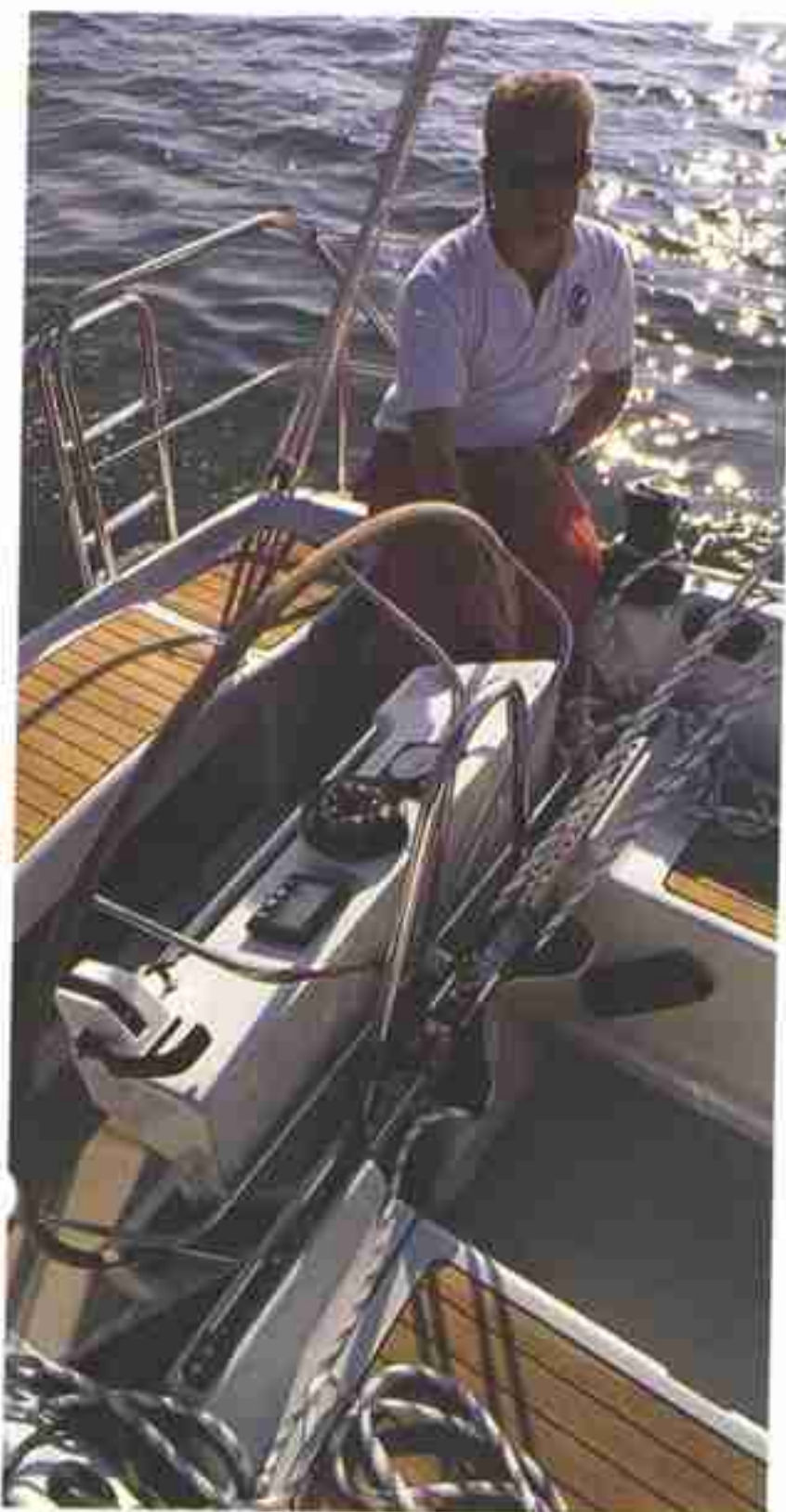


Polar diagram: Shows the optimum close-hauled angle to the true wind. Also shows speed attained on all courses. Important - consider in conjunction with the true wind speed during the test.
Sail area: displacement ratio: This ratio gives some indication of power available. Higher numbers = greater performance.

$$\frac{SA(ft^2)}{(Displacement (lb) \div 64)^{0.66}}$$

Ballast ratio: A comparison between displacement and the weight of the ballast.
Displacement:waterline length: Performance indicator. Low numbers = higher performance. $(Displacement (lb) \div 2240) (0.01 \times LWL (ft))^3$

COMPARABLE BOATS	DEHLER 37CWS		JEANNEAU SUN FAST 36		BENETEAU 35S7		BAVARIA 37	
LOA	36ft 9in	11.20m	37ft 1in	11.30m	34ft 7in	10.54m	37ft 0in	11.28m
LWL	29ft 6in	9.00m	31ft 6in	9.60m	31ft 1in	9.47m	31ft 10in	9.70m
Beam	11ft 6in	3.50m	11ft 5in	3.48m	12ft 6in	3.81m	12ft 0in	3.66m
Draught	5ft 11in	1.80m	6ft 5in	1.96m	6ft 1in	1.85m	5ft 11in	1.80m
Displacement	12,346lb	5,600kg	13,670lb	6,201kg	11,660lb	5,289kg	13,117lb	5,950kg
Ballast	5,291lb	2,400kg	4,630lb	2,100kg	3,740lb	1,696kg	2,250lb	1,021kg
Sail area	710ft²	66.07m²	660ft²	61.38m²	643ft²	59.80m²	710ft²	66.03m²
Berths	4		6		4		4 to 6	
Engine	Yanmar 3GM		Yanmar 3GM		Volvo MD 2030		Volvo MD 2030	
	27hp	20kW	27hp	20kW	27hp	20kW	27hp	20kW
Water	53gal	240lt	61gal	277lt	70gal	318lt	66gal	300lt
Fuel	26gal	120lt	20gal	91lt	18gal	80lt	33gal	150lt
Sail area:disp	21.28		18.47		20.01		20.43	
Disp:LWL	214.02		195.22		173.30		181.50	
Price (ex VAT)	£86,134		£75,862		£71,938		£70,000	



The wheel and console arrangement is the most distinctive part of the Dehler's cockpit layout

In profile, the 37 has a moderate freeboard, with a low-profile coachroof that gradually tapers into the deck, forward of the mast. Sleek portholes in the coachroof sides and high coamings surrounding the aft cockpit, characterise the overall appearance of a modern Dehler. The deck and cockpit layouts also continue the theme of easy handling.

The 'cws' concept was originally born out of designs that used a single winch in the centre of the cockpit to control almost the entire boat, using rope clutches to hold the lines. Modern Dehlers use a pair of electrically powered, primary winches mounted on the cockpit coamings to adjust the main controls.

Rope clutches are still used and are mounted just forward of the winches. A pair of secondary winches are mounted on the coachroof top, either side of the companionway hatch.

The wheel and console unit are the most striking features of this cockpit. Unlike conventional wheel steering, this version has cranked spokes, allowing the huge glassfibre steering pedestal moulding to fit within the diameter of the wheel. The console carries the sailing instruments, engine controls and compass, as well as one of the two sets of winch control buttons.

The large-diameter wheel allows you to steer comfortably from either side deck with the console unit providing a good foot brace. The only problem we experienced with the arrangement was a tendency for control lines to get trapped between the cranked spokes of the wheel and the trough moulding in the

cockpit sole. The result was unnerving at first as the wheel steering suddenly tightened up.

Knowing about the risk in advance and maintaining a seamanlike tidy cockpit, using the rope-tail bags that are provided as standard, would prevent the problem arising.

Like others in the range, the hull design makes maximum use of her overall length with minimum rake on the bow and a near vertical transom. Under the helmsman's seat the transom folds down to provide an easy-to-board diving platform.

Forward of the cockpit the decks are clear and covered with an excellent low abrasion non-slip material, even though there is little reason to venture forward.

RIG AND SAILS

Producing a rig that can be handled easily from the cockpit without compromising performance is a tall order, but Dehler have achieved this by starting with the basics.

Opting for a fractional rig with a non-overlapping headsail is much more than a fashion statement. Keeping the headsail to a 100 per cent, non-overlapping sail means that the sheet loads are rarely too heavy to handle. A large sail area in the mainsail, on the other hand, is easier to manage and also contributes to good downwind performance without necessarily having to resort to a spinnaker.

Although the jib looks as if it should be self-tacking, it is conventionally sheeted onto longitudinal tracks on the coachroof. Being a relatively small sail, it is easy and quick to trim.

The mainsail is fully battened and uses Dehler's own, tried and tested Mairdrop system which combines lazyjacks and a boom-mounted sail bag stowage. As with the deck layout, the system works well and requires no effort to hoist the sail when using the powered winch, and takes two minutes to stow.

The deck-stepped mast is produced by Dehler and has two sets of aft-swept spreaders to avoid the need for running backstays.

ACCOMMODATION

Searching for the washboards, in the dark, at the end of your trip, is almost as irritating as discovering the damage they have done to the joinery as they slid about the cabin. They should, of course, be stowed securely, but this is not always easy.



With the steps in place a substantial firebox surrounds the Yanmar 3GM saildrive unit



All photos: Malcolm White

A fully battened mainsail and non-overlapping jib make for easy sail handling and good performance

Dehler have recognised this problem and have fitted a set of plastic concertina washboards permanently held in place by a pair of multiple groove tracks either side of the companionway. A simple, but effective solution.

Down below, the light ash joinery makes for a bright and spacious feel. As with several of Dehler's designs, the interior has been split into two main areas.

The sailing part is sited close to the companionway steps. Immediately to starboard is the outboard-facing chart table with a permanently fixed, but hinging seat. This position is secure and comfortable and there is plenty of space for instruments, although the chart table is small – 29x22in (740x550mm), just under the size of a folded Admiralty chart.

Locker space for pilot books and the normal navigator's clutter was limited as well. But given the choice of a practical work station or locker space, the comfortable and workable Dehler option would win.

Abaft the navigation station lies the head compartment. Throughout most of the 37's accommodation headroom is typically 5ft 11in (1.8m). But in the head the restrictions of a moderate freeboard become apparent.

The head unit itself is mounted directly beneath the cockpit moulding which intrudes into this area, making standing access awkward. Other than this, the layout is workable, the shower unit practical and the seacocks easy to see and operate.

Opposite the head a double after cabin suffers from the same space restrictions as the ▹

On test

head, but this cabin is more of a sea berth and full standing headroom throughout is probably not as important.

The 8ft (2.45m) galley runs the length of the saloon on the port side and presents over 14ft² (1.32m²) of worktop space in total and still boasts over 8ft² (0.8m²) without the sink and cooker tops. Outboard lockers, with sliding doors are fitted along the complete length of the galley, making this a practical part of the boat to work at sea.

Our only concern was when sailing on port tack, in big seas. The saloon table and part of the seat back would make natural braces, but they did not feel as secure as we had expected. Handholds are provided in the galley area, but work there often requires the use of both hands.

The forward cabin is the owner's and has a large double berth in the centre. Headroom is good, as is ventilation through the large deck hatch, which comes complete with an effective blackout blind.

Overall the layout is practical, comfortable and can only be criticised for feeling a little flimsy in places already referred to.

CONSTRUCTION

All Dehler's hulls are hand-laminated under Germanischer Lloyd's supervision and include Kevlar for impact strength. Below the waterline, the hull is a solid laminate consisting of a combination of woven rovings and mat. Above the waterline a balsa core forms the sandwich construction. The deck, too, is balsa sandwich construction.

As well as the normal transverse and longitudinal beams moulded into the hull to provide stiffness, galvanised steel members are also used to distribute the keel and rig loads.

The bolt-on type keel is cast iron and adopts Dehler's familiar 'upside-down' shape. The spade type rudder is elliptical in profile with a stainless steel stock onto which the steel framework is welded.

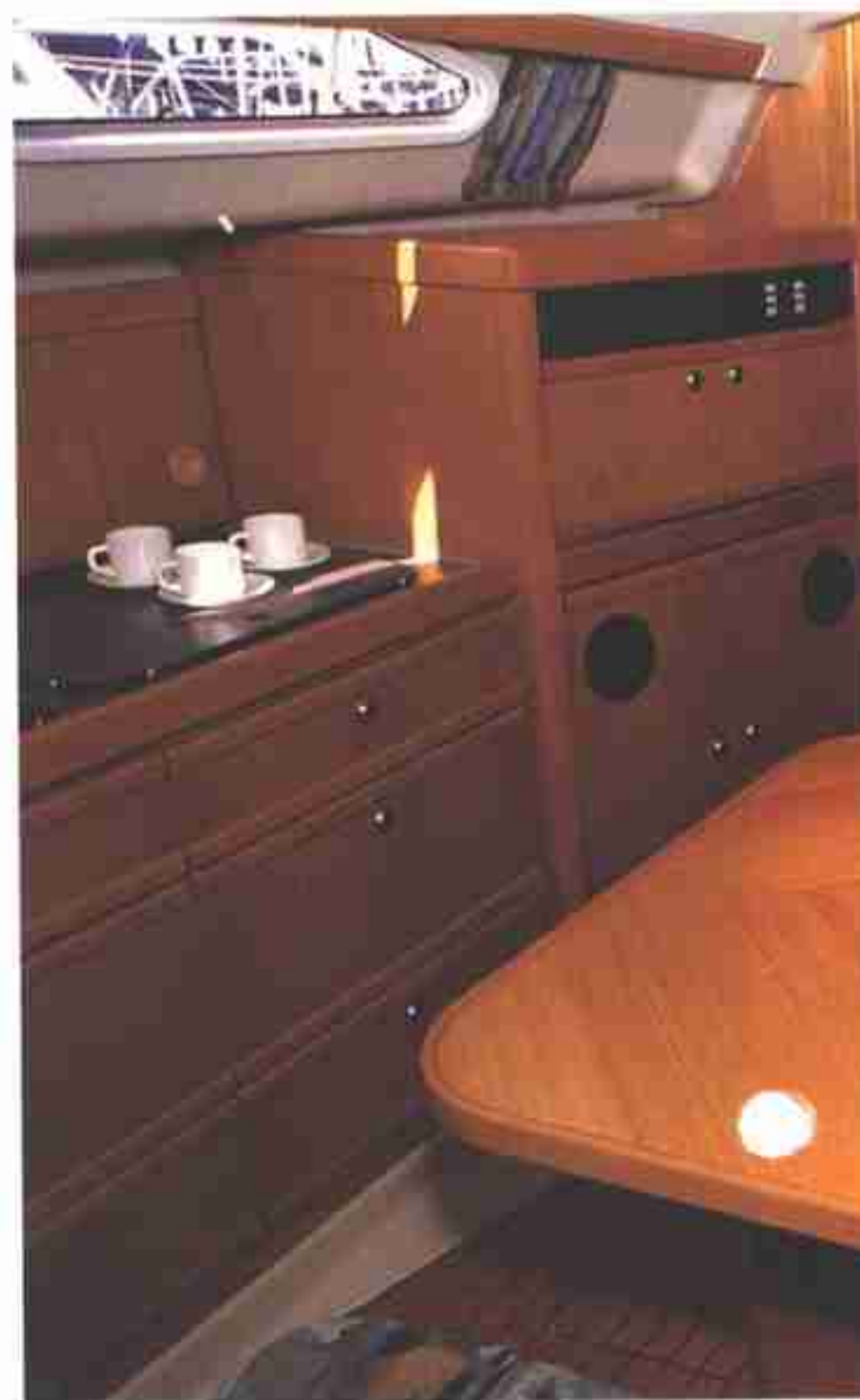
The standard engine for the 37 is a 27hp Yanmar 3GM diesel with a folding propeller on a conventional shaft.

The overall specification of the standard boat is high and includes all the items you would expect to find, from a 28ft³ (0.8m³) fridge unit to hot and cold pressurised water, as well as all the necessary kit for shore power and battery charging.

All joiner work is to a high standard with no rough edges or corners without a radius. Joins between woodwork and moulded panels are all neatly finished and the overall appearance is of a boat that has been put together with care. Having said this, the 37 is a production boat and there are areas in the finish below that feel a little lightweight.



Above, the compact navigation station owes much of its comfort to the hingeing navigator's seat which provides security on either tack. Right, there is plenty of space around the saloon table set to starboard of the accommodation



UNDER POWER AND SAIL

If your preference is for a boat that sails well, with the minimum of effort, you will love the 37. She points well, is well balanced on the helm and her all-round performance belies the fact that she is essentially a cruiser.

Leading control lines back to the cockpit to make a boat easy for a single-hander has long been a subject for debate. But while many manufacturers believe this is a desirable feature, there are precious few who can make the system work properly. Dehler can.

From the moment of hoisting the mainsail, the helmsman can reach all the major controls without ever going forward of the wheel. The main halyard, reef controls, headsail furling line and sheets are all led back to this position.

Winches are self-tailing as standard, which means that you do not have to take more than one hand off the wheel to press one of the two-speed buttons to operate the winch.

There are sceptics who frown at the thought of a 37ft boat needing electric winches and who will raise all kinds of objections, mainly centring around power usage and letting yourself depend on non-manual equipment.



The galley runs longitudinally along the port side allowing plenty of work surface area

Their arguments would hold water were it not for the fact that the powered winches are there to make life a little easier, but they are not essential. Hauling the mainsail up by hand, or tacking the jib without power, is still easier than aboard many of the 37's competitors.

For the rest of the crew, the boat is equally well laid out. For family sailing, the cockpit is deep, secure and clutter-free. Having recently sailed a boat where two toddlers seemed determined to poke their fingers into the self-tailing jaws of the winches, I can see how the primaries close at hand could prevent torrents of tears.

Under power the boat is equally well behaved, although it is as well to know in advance that the propeller is the folding type before you bowl headlong into your berth in the naïve hope that a flick of the throttle will stop you.

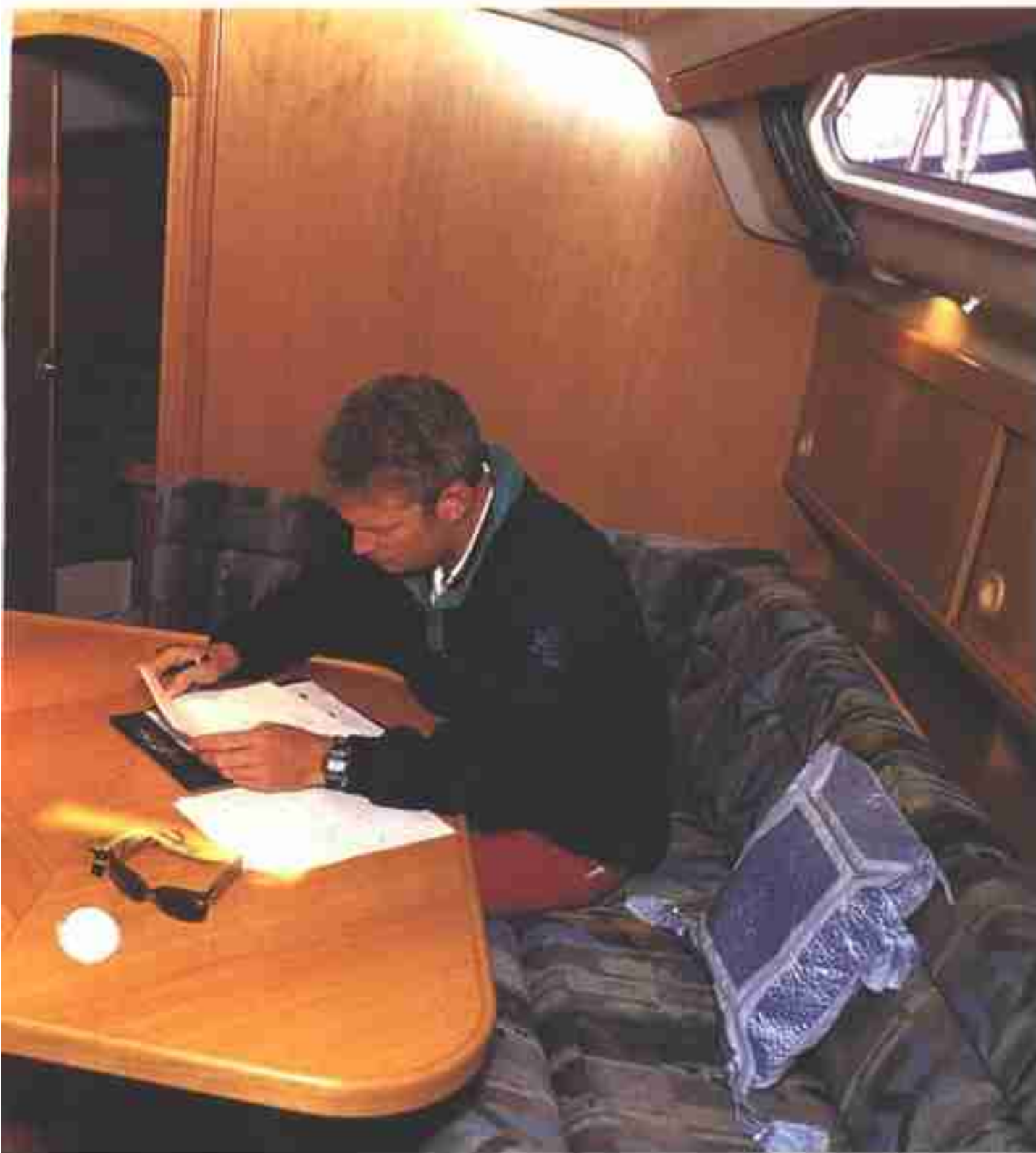
Her turning circle is between 1 to 1½ boat lengths and she is relatively quiet, even at maximum speed of eight knots.

CONCLUSIONS

The Dehler 37 is a boat to enjoy for the pleasure of sailing. She is not a floating drinks platform, nor is she bristling with berths and shower units. Her equipment is well specified and the quality of equipment is high where it matters – sails are the best example.

Supplied by Elvström, the standard sails are well made and set perfectly, straight out of the bag. This is in contrast to many production boats that do not seem to pay much attention to the quality of sails they are setting. To us, this said much about Dehler's approach.

Her standard specification means that she comes complete and genuinely ready to sail for £86,134 ex VAT. □



The accommodation layout is typical of many of Dehler's range and keeps the living areas forward in the boat, away from wet foulweather gear



Unlike many forward cabins, the double vee-berth is easy to get into from both sides. Headroom and ventilation are good

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