

Hanse 388



Having a light, bright interior transforms the feel of a boat, but she needs to sail well too. Graham Snook goes to see what the Hanse 388 offers

Boat shows are great for comparing boats – find a couple you like, walk off one and onto the next, and you get a real feel for the differences between them. I tried this with the Hanse 388 at this year's Southampton Boat Show and was taken aback by how light she was. The optional, pale-coloured French oak interior helped but her charcoal grey

saloon cushions didn't. The reason she was light? Nineteen windows in the deck. While she might sound like a floating greenhouse, she sailed well.

PERFORMANCE

It was October, but it was still lovely out on the Solent. We had the full range of a Force 4 between 10-17 knots. She is quite a stiff boat and was able to carry full sail on the wind

to over 18 knots. Any more wind and keeping full sail might have been pushing our luck, however, even hard-pressed in the gusts she failed to lose grip and was still manoeuvrable while well heeled. Nothing during the test fazed her. Once the sails are set, there is little else for the crew to do, unless they want to, as the helmsman has all sail controls within their reach.

Should the crew wish to get involved, space is tight, but there is enough room to access the winches forward of the wheel.

Under engine, this boat's two-bladed fixed propeller pushed us along at 6 knots 2,500 rpm, although down below it was a little loud.



Hanse 338 – Performance on test

Point of sail	Apparent wind angle	Apparent wind speed	Speed through the water
Close Hauled	26-28°	14-18 knots	5.7-6.4 knots
Fetch	60°	16-18 knots	7.2-7.9 knots
Beam Reach	90°	10-12 knots	6.7-7.2 knots
Broad Reach	120°	12-14 knots	7.5-8.0 knots
Run	180°	9-11 knots	6.4-6.6 knots

AT THE HELM

Should you relinquish one of the two wheels, you may find it hard to get the helm back again – it's a lovely feeling through the Jefa steering. Finger-light and responsive with so little friction, it just seemed right. I wish steering systems like this were the rule, rather than the exception.

Under the slightly raised helm seats outboard are deep, handy rope bins, like those on the 385, however aft, rather than fixed transom lockers there are now flip up seats above lazarette lockers. Sadly the liferaft locker that opened out on the transom (to port) has gone.

Just forward of each of the two helm

positions are Lewmar 40ST winches that take all the lines from the mast, including mainsail and jib sheets. It makes it a bit tricky to raise the mainsail because to get a decent heave on the halyard the crew has to be facing aft – and can't see what they are pulling. If left to the helm, however, the wheel and throttle control were draped in mainsheet and halyard by the end of hoisting the mainsail.

Simple to sail and delightful on the helm, the Hanse 388 is one of the best boats in her class

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

The hull was designed by the German design office of Judel/Vrolijk and, as is often the case, it was used on a previous model, the 385, launched in 2012. The hull shape remains untouched, however the deck has been refined and the interior style has been modernised; gone are fussy details and inlays, in have come flush-fronted lockers with hidden latches. But the major visible improvement over her predecessor is the addition of an array of windows – a couple of large ones in the hull, but mostly on deck. There are changes below the waterline too: her draught has increased, the T-keel has been replaced by an L-shaped →

PHOTOS BY GRAHAM SNOOK

The cockpit has been made more spacious aft than the 385 by the removal of the transom stowage boxes



Grab handles on the sturdy table are great. A larger GRP table with a central bin locker for stowage is available



The helm has all the sheets and halyards to hand at winches in front of each of the two helm positions

one instead. The hull is balsa cored, with an inner subframe moulding. The outer layer of the hull uses vinyl ester resin. The deck, too, is balsa cored, and the anchor locker is part of the deck moulding.

SAILPLAN

She carries a self-tacking jib as standard, although there is an option for Code 0/gennaker type crossover sail, or a genoa with tracks on the side deck. Either would increase forward sail area in lighter winds.

The crossover sail is supplied on a furler that clips to an eye on the reinforced twin bow rollers. If opting for this you'll also need to specify winches forward in the cockpit. These would fit in cut-outs in the ducting cover that conceals the lines leading aft from the mast.

This boat was fitted with the optional performance package that uses Elvstrøm's cruising laminate sails with vertical battens in the jib and a fully battened mainsail. It's a very easy-to-manage set up that leaves the side decks clear of sheets, tracks and cars. The vertical battens on the jib help to keep its shape off the wind, as well as reducing the occurrence of 'motoring' leech – the humming noise that can drive a crew nearly mad.

DECK LAYOUT

The three cabin layout necessitates two cabins aft, which means losing some great deck stowage – a real shame. To my mind, a coastal and offshore cruiser should be able to hide away all the wet and/or smelly clobber one needs: liferaft, dinghy for the large crew, oars, a full complement of fenders and warps, deck brush, boat hook, spare fuel etc. With this layout I'd keep the liferaft in the starboard aft lazarette locker and be religious about making sure nothing goes on top of it. The engine controls are to starboard, too, so keeping fenders and mooring kit in here would mean shifting the helmsman out of the way.

The cockpit works well, although there were unfriendly stainless-steel corners, at the aft end of the cockpit table, built out to house the multi-function display. A friendlier GRP version is an option. Under the sprayhood the trays for assorted day-to-day bits and bobs have gone, replaced by glass windows for the aft cabins. The table has great stainless-steel hand-holds, but there's no cubby holes inside it, or around the cockpit, for suntan lotion, binoculars, etc. These could go in the large rope lockers under the helm seat on the deck (as long as one is careful when

releasing lines), or in the gas bottle locker that takes up the aft end of the port rope locker, but it's not ideal.

On deck, the walk forward is clear of sheets. I would have liked the coachroof hand rails to stretch a little further aft so they can be used sooner from the cockpit and when boarding via the optional guardrail gates.

LIVING BELOW

The interior is light, and it's not just from the optional French oak composite wood veneer interior. There are overhead windows flanking the companionway, as well as two more fixed overhead windows; one aft of the forward bulkhead (17cm x 61cm) and a larger second (28cm x 61cm) just forward of the galley.

The saloon windows have also grown (forward: 1.24m x 13cm; aft: 1.18m x 18cm) compared to her predecessor. There is a 65cm square opening hatch overhead. There are also 43cm x 24cm hull windows on each side. That's all before you've switched on the recessed LED lights in the headlining and under the seats, the down lighting and the reading lights on stalks, which have handy USB sockets in their base.

The layout remains unchanged but the styling has improved, making

Key cruising features

The feeling in the helm was truly wonderful: light, precise and responsive

The cockpit table offers excellent handholds, but no stowage inside

Six extra windows have been added on deck, and two large windows have been added in the hull

The control lines from the mast, including the mainsheet and jib sheets, are led back to two winches by the helm position

The mainsheet arrangement is kept simple with no mainsheet traveller

The self-tacking jib makes sailing the 388 simple and stress-free

her feel more modern and less fussy. Push-button latches have been replaced by neat squeeze latches hidden either above or below the locker doors. Finding the latches – above or below – can be a bit of a challenge, as the location depends on the design of the locker.

The C-shaped saloon seating to starboard converts into a double berth by sliding out the seat base, giving the possibility of nine berths in total, although with seven or more people on board her RCD Cat A status is reduced. The cushions are attached to the boards beneath so there is no danger of the cushion sliding off, they are, however, a little unwieldy.

Those used to seeing a latch-free floor – Hanse uses a rubber sucker to remove its floorboards – will be surprised to see a latch in the floor, aft of the saloon table. The good news is that beneath this there is a bottle locker for four wine bottles. There is more bottle stowage for another four bottles in a drawer in the saloon table. The top of this drawer is the overhang from the aft end of the table; I'm not convinced it would survive the grasp of a weighty crew member.

The heads was a little tight and there was no separate shower compartment. There was, however, a moulded GRP lid that covers the toilet and acts as a seat for use in

the shower. This arrangement does leave the owner with a wet floor after showering, and without a mat it will be walked through the boat.

The forward cabin has a somewhat homely feel about it, as the top of the 1.60m (5ft 3in) wide vee berth is only 65cm (2ft 2in) high, so it feels like a bed to sit on, rather than a berth to climb on to. There is a hanging locker to starboard with a good drop to it and compartmented stowage behind the locker door to port. There's a handy lidded bin locker by the head of the bed on each side along with reading lights. There are short shelves above, but the forward area of this spacious cabin is a little plain.

In the port aft cabin there are new slit windows outboard providing light and a somewhat narrow view of the world. The berths here are over 2m (6ft 7in) long and 1.5m (4ft 11in) wide reducing to 1.10m (3ft 7in) in width with hull windows above the aft end.

The starboard cabin is a mirror image, but where you'll find the calorifier under the berth on the port side, to starboard you'll find a fuel tank. Above the berth in the starboard cabin the headroom is reduced to 63cm (2ft 1in) and it's this cabin that is removed if you select the two-cabin layout. →



Her hull is the same as the 385 with a deeper keel and the addition of large saloon hull windows

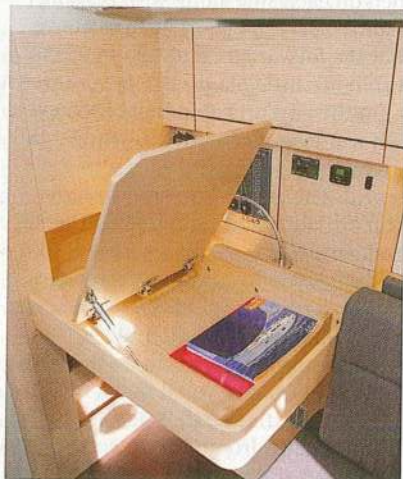


The saloon is a nice space, flooded with natural light. The C-shaped seating converts to a double berth

CHART TABLE

The chart table is surrounded by a shallow 2-3mm fiddle which would have its work cut out to stop anything sliding off. The table is 68cm x 48cm (2ft 3in x 1ft 7in), but unusually, the longest length is parallel with the centre line. While standing at the chart table it is outboard-facing in landscape orientation but when sat it is aft-facing in portrait. Beneath the forward-hinged lid, supported by a gas strut, is the 6cm (2.5in) deep table.

The switch panel is outboard, above which are top-hinged lockers – one of which conceals a VHF radio. Aft of the chart table is a 13cm (5in) deep unit to allow flush-mounted instruments to be installed without them going into



The chart table can be lowered, providing an extra saloon berth

the heads compartment. There's also an option to make the chart table slide down to extend the saloon seating. Although this would make a good sea berth, chart access and navigation take priority.

GALLEY

Coming down the companionway there are two stainless steel grab rails that stretch from sole to ceiling. The starboard pole provides a good handhold and brace for using the galley area at sea. There is also a grab handle at the inboard end for passing the galley, or using the sink area in unfriendly conditions. The fridge is outboard and is deep, so deep that there's also a door located at knee



Washing up in the galley sinks can be done from two positions

height for access to its lower regions.

The brushed stainless-steel one-and-a-half sinks are arranged so the full sized sink is aft and the smaller bowl is forward giving the option of washing up while keeping out of the galley. There is a decent splashback forward, aft of which is a 8cm deep stainless steel tray to keep sponges etc out of the sink. Beneath the sink is a deep drawer to make the most of the space under the sink. Above this drawer is another smaller drawer.

Outboard there are three deep bottom-hinged lockers. They are all 31cm (1ft) high but they don't have any shelves or any dedicated way of securing crockery.

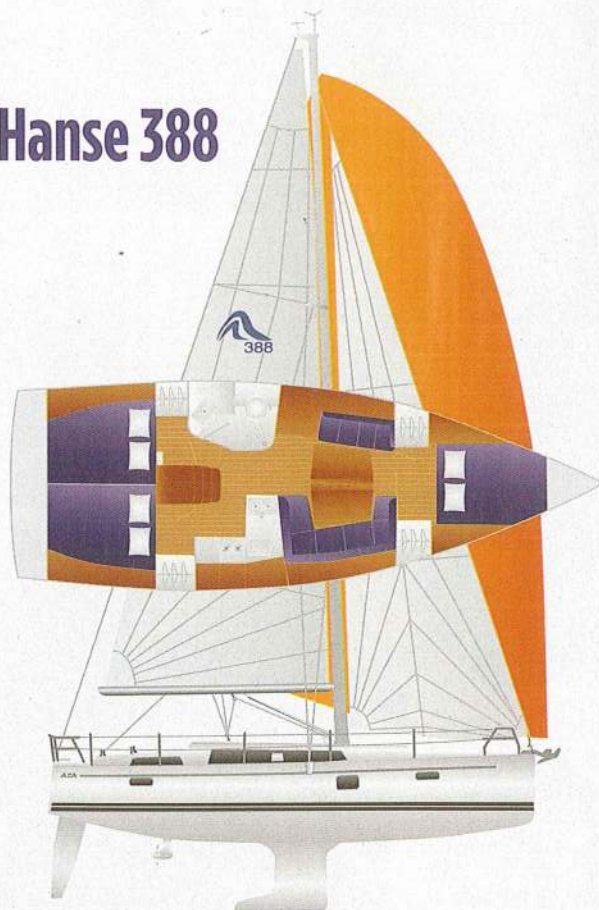
Stowage is good, and if opting for the two-cabin layout you'll get more stowage and even more workspace.

MAINTENANCE

Hanse use Truedesign composite plastic through-hull fittings (certified for use above or below the water) on all skin fittings to eliminate corrosion and electrolysis issues.

Access to the forward end of the engine is a bit tight as the companionway steps only lift to horizontal (but are held by gas struts) and the hinges aren't mounted that high. Access to the saildrive oil is a bit restricted too as it's under a fixed wide partition between the two aft cabins. It can be reached, but it could be easier. Access to the rest of the services, including the electrical panel is good.

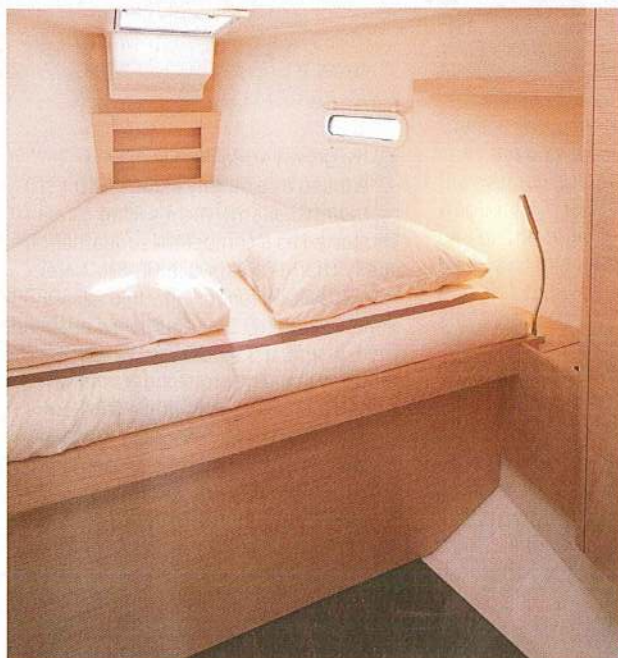
Hanse 388



GRAPHICS: LIZA SAWYER

FACTS AND FIGURES

- **Price** £210,930 Inc VAT
- **LOA** 11.4m (37ft 5in)
- **LWL** 10.40m (34ft 1in)
- **Beam** 3.90m (12ft 12in)
- **Draught** 2.06m (6ft 9in)
- **Displacement** 8,270kg (18,232 lb)
- **Ballast** 2,380kg (5,247 lb)
- **Ballast ratio** 28.8%
- **Sail area** 72m² (775sq ft)
- **SA/D ratio** 17.9
- **Diesel** 160 litres (35 gal)
- **Water** 295 litres (64 gal)
- **Engine** 30hp
- **Transmission** Saildrive
- **RCD** category A
- **Designer** Judel/Vrolijk / HanseYachts Design
- **Builder** Hanse Yachts
- **UK Agent** Inspiration Marine Group
- **Tel** 02380 457008
- **Website** www.hanseyachts.co.uk



The forward berth feels like a bed; it's only 65cm high

OUR VERDICT

WHAT'S SHE LIKE TO SAIL?

The 388 was a lovely boat to sail, with a feel on the helm usually reserved for more expensive yachts. The Jefa steering was light and responsive with excellent feedback. There was a nice weight to the helm and nothing I could do would make her misbehave; she remained composed and in control, whether she was hard on the wind or thrown into a fast tack.

Both the self-tacking jib and the mainsail can be controlled from around the wheels; the mainsheet on both sides, the jib to starboard. The crew can help the helm, but the winch position doesn't offer the most ergonomic position to winch from.

Once the sails are set the crew can sit back and relax; the helm has all controls at their fingertips with all lines being brought aft to either helm.

WHAT'S SHE LIKE IN PORT AND AT ANCHOR?

She has a stout, deep-cheeked double bow roller, which can take a mooring while still leaving the bow anchor secured in place. The lead to the mooring cleats isn't the best; a minor point, but one to consider if you plan on leaving her on the mooring.

The engine and throttle controls were to starboard on this boat, so judging distance when coming alongside to port will take practice – a retractable (fitted on this boat) bow thruster is an option.

Deck space on this version was limited to a single sole-depth cockpit locker and two lazarette lockers beneath the helmsman's feet, which I felt was substandard for practical cruising, so I'd recommend the two-cabin version. The optional fold-down transom can be specified with bathing stairs that come out of the side of the platform.

Below decks, it's bright and pleasant. The layout works well, and with the sinks inboard it gives the cook more room to work their magic if someone wants to wash up.

WOULD SHE SUIT YOU AND YOUR CREW?

Like many of her rivals calling themselves 38-something, her hull length is 36ft. So if they feel a little smaller than your existing 38ft yacht you know why.

I'm not wholly convinced that twin aft cabins at the expense of deck stowage is good on a cruising yacht of this size – I was struggling to think of somewhere to store a dinghy for the crew it will be required to transport – even if the liferaft was stowed on deck. I can only report on the boat I test; a shame because with better deck stowage she could have easily been a five-star boat in two of five categories below.

If you want twin aft cabins, buy a bigger boat. However, with the larger galley and deeper deck locker stowage that the single aft cabin layout provides, she's one of the best boats in her class.

The 388 makes sailing easy. If you're the type who likes to tweak she may not fulfil you unless you opt for some extras, but if you're after a boat that's simple to sail and delightful on the helm, then few other yachts can compete.

Would she suit your style of sailing?

CREEK CRAWLING



COASTAL PORT-HOPPING



OFFSHORE PASSAGE-MAKING



TRADE WIND VOYAGING



HIGH-LATITUDE ADVENTURE

