



New Sail



Improving the breed

If you didn't believe Hanse could possibly come up with a better cruising yacht, you were wrong – meet the Hanse 575.

In the modern idiom of cruising yacht design the balance between maximising interior volume, optimising sailing performance and maintaining hull lines that avoid such critical epithets as 'bulky' and 'heavy' is rapidly reaching its peak.

With each new model release, German yacht-maker Hanse and its design team seem driven by their motto – *Breaking Rules, Setting Trends* – to take this three-cornered challenge to its apex.

And the Hanse 575 is their latest product in this search for cruising design's Holy Grail.

SPACE ... AND MORE

'Impressive' is the word that comes to mind when first seeing the yacht's towering topsides from the



dockside. Heading below, facing forward (thanks to the shallow 50-degree angled companionway stairs) reveals a loft-apartment-style interior that is flooded with natural light and is airy, spacious and remarkably tall.

The main cabin features a long galley kitchen (with all mod cons) on the port side, a navigation-station-cum-office with a comfortable bucket seat to starboard of the companionway and a large dining table that can also be raised to create a day-bed from which to watch the huge television that appears with the press of a button from a mid-height bulkhead shelf unit.

In the eight-berth version that we sailed, the owner's forward cabin was a step ahead again

from the Hanse 545 (which the 575 replaces) that we tested in 2010, with yet more natural light and additional cupboard space; an additional cabin with two bunks replaced the option of a second shower and toilet off the main cabin and the two double-berth aft cabins had excellent head-height clearance.

There is precious little to criticise in this stylish, functional and voluminous interior that isn't nit-picky – perhaps the floorboards are a little creakier than previous models; the floor-board cut-outs still don't appear to be created from the parent timber; and the long open shelf above the galley is hard to reach and might be better used as additional cupboard space.

By Crosbie Lorimer



The owner's forward cabin was a step ahead again from the Hanse 545



The relative merits of the extraordinary head clearance in the cabin as set against the consequent need to provide step-ladders to open skylights outside the aft cabins, or the need for additional lower level grab rails for those who can't reach the deckhead while at sea, is one of those balancing acts on which the Hanse team has clearly made its call.

DOING IT EASY

Once on the water, the 575 takes on a wholly different appearance from her dockside persona, with the low coach roof, clean deck, topside ports and waterline graphics creating a gratifying look that belies the height of her sheerline.

The powerful and fuel-efficient 78kW Volvo D3 engine pushed us along at 8 knots (14.8km/h) as we headed down Pittwater at a very relaxed

2000rpm, while a wheel lock 'doughnut' test had the boat turning tightly in a little over its own waterline length. Down below, the engine noise was, if anything, quieter in the main cabin than in the aft-berths, but in both cases the levels were quite comfortable.

The phrase 'raising sails' has progressively disappeared from the modern cruising lexicon in recent years, replaced instead with a process that requires a fraction of the effort and a set of instructions from the skipper to a non-sailing crew member along the following lines: "if you could just press that button over there it will unfurl the sail ..."

That very action, with two buttons, was all that was required to set the sails on the 575. The Elvstrom sail wardrobe revealed in this instance comprised the standard package of a self-tacking jib and in-mast furling mainsail (in this case without the vertical batten option). The set of the mainsail leech line was inevitably not as crisp as it would be with the battened option, but in practice that was of little consequence once underway.

SUBTLE AND SURE

In a very on/off westerly, ranging from 5-25 knots (9-46km/h), that swept across Morning Bay the 575 responded with a steady and reassuring consistency, taking up the new breeze with a comfortable healing action, gaining speed remarkably fast – given her not inconsiderable 20t of displacement – and holding momentum as the breeze died away. Sailing upwind in 12 knots (22km/h) of breeze the 575 built quickly to 9 knots (17km/h) and frequently held enough speed to run through a light patch to the next line of wind.

The much-vaunted Jefa steering system and the well-balanced rig on the 575 makes helming a pleasure, even in gusty conditions, providing just the right 'feel' of weather helm for this reviewer. There is also a subtle dampening effect in this steering that enhances the sense that, even if the mainsail is not released quickly enough in a major gust, the helmsman is not fighting the wheel – something we tested and proved, if unintentionally!

None of us aboard wanted this test to finish, but all too soon we were sailing back to the dock, weaving between closely-packed moorings with the highly erratic westerly sending down periodic 25 knot (46km/h) bullets to test the boat's manoeuvrability.


Above: Head-height clearance is a feature of the stylish Hanse 575 cabins.



It's easy to make bland assertions about how high topsides make for limited manoeuvrability under power in high winds but, in truth, it is pinpoint manoeuvring which matters most in these situations. As it transpired, the strength of the Volvo engine and the two 24v side thrusters made this challenge a non-event as we berthed the 575 in one easy movement, with our dockside assistants simply taking up the slack on our lines as our skipper coned the boat into line with the dock with consummate ease.

So has Hanse reached the zenith of the performance/volume/aesthetics balance with the 575?

One suspects that Hanse will continue to test those boundaries but, in the meantime, if you're looking for a 50-something footer that

is a pleasure to handle under sail or engine, has a comfortable, stylish and luxurious interior and in which any amount of 'cat swinging' can be readily accommodated, then what you get from the Hanse 575 for \$1 million is a very appealing package. 

Below: The low counter allows for a spacious stern garage.



HANSE 575 SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	17.15m
Length of hull	16.7m
LWL	15.15m
Beam (max)	5.2m
Draught	2.85m (option for 2.25m)
Displacement	19.5t (standard keel) 20.4t (L-shaped keel)
Total sail area	160.5 m ² (105% overlapper jib), 150.5 m ² self-tacker jib as tested
Mast height above waterline	25.3m
Cabins	4 standard (with option for 5)
Berths	8 standard (up to 13)
Engine	Volvo D3 – 78kW (107hp)
Water	810lt
Fuel tank	520lt
Price (as tested)	\$1,073,947 excluding GST

For further information contact Windcraft – tel (02) 9979 1709. Web: windcraft.com.au

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