

New Boats: Hunter 45cc

Great White Hunter

Attention to detail is only one of the many pluses of the new Hunter 45 Centre Cockpit, writes Caroline Strainig.



Big, roomy, white and glossy... the Hunter 45 wouldn't be a modern production boat if it didn't sport these features, but look a little deeper and you'll find many more that make it stand out from the crowd.

In its pre-publicity mega US builder Hunter said this yacht was developed from "volumes of customer feedback", and it shows. The attention to detail is exceptional.

Rig and layout

Okay, so it's a centre cockpit and some centre cockpits can look a bit

tubby. But not this one. In fact, most people probably wouldn't even notice it's a centre cockpit at first glance because of the sleek lines, low profile and wraparound windshield.

No surprises when it comes to the overall hull shape: fine entry, flattish bottom and beam drawn well aft. Just about every production boat designer is going for the latter because of the extra volume you can pack in.

The targa-type arch and backstay-less B&R rig has passed the test of time, so I won't dwell on it here except to say that the arch makes a

great platform for the traveller.

The twin-spreader anodised Selden mast has a full-roach battened main with lazyjacks and a solid boomvang. The twin single-line reefing, sheets and halyards are led aft to jammers and winches on the cabin top and cockpit coaming. Sails are by Doyle and the genoa (110 percent) is on a Furlex furler. The rigging winches are Lewmar ST two-speed 40s and the genoa winches Lewmar ST two-speed 48s.

The cockpit is large for a centre cockpit and the backs of the 1.9m-long fore-aft seats are comfortably



OPPOSITE PAGE: The trademark B&R rig makes a Hunter easy to spot a mile off.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Bet you can't guess where the test boat lives? Under sail on Sydney Harbour;

Most purchasers opt for the factory-made bimini;

Plenty of room in the saloon;

The stateroom has a centreline bed, dressing table, seats and hanging lockers and shelves.



Below

Hunter is famous for its huge owner staterooms, and this boat is no exception: huge queen-sized centreline bed, dressing table, seats, hanging lockers and drawers/shelves. The adjacent head can only be accessed from the stateroom and has a vanity and separate shower. A pumpout toilet and holding tank with macerator come as standard, but the test boat had the optional Quiet-Flush electric toilet that uses fresh water (minimal amount).

Adjacent to the passageway from the stateroom to the saloon is a large locker designed to take a combined washing/drying machine.

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The saloon has an L-shaped settee to port with a table and straight settee to starboard. The table legs can be removed and replaced with shorter legs to turn the port settee into a large berth. A small rectangular seat slides out from under the table and locks into the floor when extra seating is required.

The galley has Corian countertops, a twin-bowl sink, twin-burner propane stove, microwave, front-opening 213L fridge/freezer and 40L chest freezer. Strapping yourself in should be relatively easy given its U-shape.

The nav station opposite has a comfortable swivel chair covered in a synthetic leather lookalike material called Ultraleather. The inside arm can be raised and then lowered once you're sitting down to "lock" you into place. The instrument panel is clearly labelled and has a VHF radio as standard and room for whatever other instruments your heart desires and wallet can afford.

For'ard is the guest cabin, which has a good-sized V-berth, seat and hanging locker and a head with a separate shower. The latter also comes with a pumpout toilet and holding tank with macerator as standard and a Quiet-Flush an optional extra.

Both mattresses are innerspring and the stateroom's is designed to fold in the middle to make it easy to lift up to access underneath.

The electrical system comprises an AGM Orbital 60-amp-hour start battery, two gel Prevalier 227-amp-hour house batteries, an 80-amp alternator and 50-amp battery charger. You'd want to upgrade further for liveaboard sailing.

The companionway steps slide out to give access to the 75hp Yanmar – a shaft-drive with three-blade fixed prop – and you can also access it from port side and aft cabin. There is room for a generator and Hunter has fitted brackets with this in mind.

Water capacity is 564L in three tanks, two of which are under the saloon floor and one for'ard. The 288L fuel tank is under the master berth. (I'd leave the for'ard water tank empty offshore if possible to keep the weight as central as possible.)

Lights are a combination of LEDs

RIGHT: Among the galley features are a front-opening 213L fridge/freezer and 40L chest freezer.

BELOW: The nav station has a swivel chair covered in a leather lookalike material. Very comfy!

BELOW RIGHT: Gas bottles stow in a locker set into the port side of the cockpit coaming.



and traditional fluoros and reading lights. A nice touch are the small courtesy lights set into the cabin sole, which make getting that late-night glass of water an easy exercise. Safety-wise, especially for the older folk, there is a one-level deck right from the for'ard cabin to aft stateroom and it is easy to make your way around the boat hanging onto something. Carbon-monoxide detectors and a smoke alarm are standard.

Stowage and ventilation throughout is excellent, with dozens of cupboards and under-settee compartments and numerous hatches and ports.

Timberwork is a combination of solid teak and teak veneer, complemented by blue upholstery and soft cream headliner. The high-gloss synthetic timber floor looked good,

but I'd like to see how slip-resistant it is when wet before giving it an unconditional tick.

Mariner Package

You can get most of the must-have optional extras in a special-value Mariner Package, including in-mast furling, electric halyard winch, bimini, AM/FM

- Likes**
 - Overall look and layout.
 - Attention to detail.
 - B&R backstayless rig.
 - Water and fuel capacity.
- Dislikes**
 - Shaped fibreglass toerail.
 - Lowish angle of vanishing stability.

stereo in the cockpit, flat-panel 23-inch TV with Bose sound system (TV is VGA compatible so you can interface it with your E series chartplotter), Quiet-Flush heads, oven, top-loading freezer, inverter, vertical battens and a VHF remote at the helm. Another optional extra not in the Mariner Package but any sailor heading offshore would definitely want is the backup rudder, which you can rig on water in an emergency.

Performance

The Bureau of Meteorology had promised 15-20 knots, but we were lucky to get 10. Regardless, the 45cc performed well and nothing stood out jarringly as a negative.

Being a centre-cockpit there's not so much boat in front of you as with an aft cockpit, which gives the illusion that you are sailing a smaller and easier-to-handle boat.

Under sail we clocked up to 6.9 knots at 40°T in six-eight knots of wind. The boat tracked straight with little wake, accelerated well out of a tack and there was no noticeable weather helm. The sail plan worked efficiently one or two up, although we did have two gun crew in the form of Matt and Ed from distributor US Yachts, who run Sydney By Sail in Darling Harbour.

Having the rigging high up on the arch freed up the cockpit and cabin top but does mean that you are less likely to trim it, which is fine if you're in cruising mode but might irritate some gung-ho racers who feel they constantly have to be doing something (chill out, guys!).

Under motor we clocked 7.2 knots at 2000 RPM and noise was minimal.

Visibility for'ard was good and the bimini (optional extra) has a clear in it that enables you to look up to see mainsail trim and the wind-direction indicator on the mast. There was no dodger and in the light conditions it did not matter, but you would obviously need to add one because the cockpit in a centre cockpit is higher and even less sheltered than that of an aft cockpit.

Construction

Nothing unusual here. The hull is solid glass below the waterline and

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	13.72m
LH	12.93
LWL	11.94
Beam	4.42m
Draught:	
Shoal	1.52
Deep	1.98
Displacement	10,404kg
Ballast:	
Shoal	3353kg
Deep	3282kg
Sail area/displacement ratio:	
Standard triangle	26.4
Furling triangle	27.6
Displacement/length ratio	81.08
Ballast/displacement ratio	NA
Mast height (from waterline):	
Standard	17.48
Furling	18.7m
Sail area:	
Standard	89.37sqm
Furling	82.03sqm
Furling (with vertical battens)	88sqm
Headroom	2.06m
Fuel capacity	288L
Water capacity	564L
Holding tank capacity	182L
Water heater	42L
Engine	75hp Yanmar shaft-drive
GE category	A
Price	\$514,000 for boat as tested.
The test boat is available at the discount rate of \$490,000.	
Distributor	US Yachts Pty Ltd, ph (02) 9281 4422, info@usyachts.com.au, www.usyachts.com.au The range of new Hunter yachts can be viewed in Darling Harbour in Sydney and most can be chartered through Sydney By Sail.

CENTRE VERSUS AFT

Centre cockpits allow liveaboards a large, private well-lit cabin. They cop fewer greenies into the cockpit, keep passengers farther from the sea and have better visibility from the helm when motoring. Aft cockpits allow better nominal crew safety because all are always in sight of the helmsman and better visibility generally.

the engine and one year on all parts and fittings.

Summary

This is a good-looking, value-for-money production boat I'd seriously consider for coastal-hopping and possibly even bluewater cruising once I'd seen how it performed offshore. An amazing 160 Hunter 45ccs have been sold since this model was launched in the US last October – one heck of a ringing endorsement.