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BOAT TEST

Hunter 37

How do they do it?

DESTINATION

TONGA

linger longer





boat review: Hunter 37

37 is the new 40

Hunter yachts have always been known to include plenty of interior space sometimes at the expense of performance but **Phillip Ross** finds the new design gets that extra ten per cent across the board.

First impression? Space. This is a 37 footer?

Helping the impression is that there are only two cabins, but they also are spacious, and one head/shower unit. However, the use of a short V-shape cockpit allows the downstairs to be quite expansive and roomy with the ubiquitous high topsides of a Hunter design.

This is an intriguing in-house hull design by Glenn Henderson. As can be seen by the hull shots the aft sections are extremely flat with a sharp chine right at the waterline instead of halfway up the topside, as seen in other designs. On a beat or hard reach the hull sits stable on

those flat sections instead of rolling over on a tumblehome or on the flattened chine plate. I would have expected a lot of leeway from this design but with a nearly two metre deep draft keel (1.5m shoal draft) along with beam and displacement comparable to a boat two metres longer, I did not notice much slip at all with the added bonus of a quite stable sailing platform.

You may think that those sorts of specifications would point towards a heavy displacement plodder, along the lines of Hunter's good old days. Not so on our test. In a nice Sydney Harbour ten knotter of true wind



allowing easy access by the helm. It does not appear to have room however for secondary winches if you opt to fly a spinnaker.

Port side lazarette is huge just aft of the shower head down below.

The binnacle looks solid but the test boat, which was the demonstrator for the agency, did give a bit of a wobble. It does have four cup holders which has to be the most I have seen!

The cockpit widens out at the transom and access to the drop-down swim platform is made easier with the folding wheel. When raised the transom swim platform makes a nice helm seat. The stern pushpit curves out past the gunnel line which adds more space to the cockpit and provides good transom seats out of the way of the steerer. With added cup holders!

The overhead bimini is a solid piece of work as it holds the mainsheet controls. This keeps rope out of the cockpit but allows the steerer to work the main easily. This solid bimini also increases the feeling of safety when grabbing hold and moving in and out of the cockpit and the side deck. Lighting and sound system speakers sit under the mainsheet arch in the middle of the bimini to turn the cockpit into sundowner soiree spot.

Performance Cruising claims this model has a lower cabin top than the older sister, the 36'. It certainly looks sexy side-on, with its curvaceous elongated ellipse dark windows. On deck this cabin top means the handholds when going forward are quite low. The deck hatches, three, are no-step areas but there is plenty of deck space to lounge. The gunnel cleats are fold down avoiding all too familiar toe stubbing.

Twin bow rollers feed directly into the massive anchor locker just behind the roller furler.

All the cross diagonals on the twin swept-back spreader rig looks complicated but the B&R rig means no interfering backstay. The mast is deck-stepped which adds to the space down below as

MAIN: Nice and level on the heel. Note the pushpit stern seats with a panoramic view.

ABOVE LEFT: Large galley for a 37 footer, lots of storage, lots of bench space, lots of handholds.

ABOVE: Looking aft through the washroom/shower/head cabin into the aft master cabin.

we reached off on a 60° apparent wind angle up to 7.5 knots. Quite acceptable. It does have a tall mast and lots of sail area. Again, most comparable to a 40 footer.

The cockpit is quite small and deep, hence the need for a small fold-away table. There is a step up to go down the companionway, the reason for that is noted later when we go down below. Other than that I like the cockpit depth. The coamings give excellent back support before sloping down to nothing at the steering station to allow the helm to sit outboard. The sheet winches are set just forward of the wheel

boat review: Hunter 37



MAIN: Underbody with the beamy flat aft sections clearly defined by the waterline chine.

ABOVE: Skipper's deck view showing the fold-up table, companionway step and handholds, inbuilt halyard tail bags and mainsheet block and tackle on the bimini.

the support strut is a lot smaller than a mast and makes it an easy handhold as well. On deck you walk forward between the upper shroud and the inboard lower.

Companionway steps are at a shallow angle and are not hinged. Access, therefore, to the 21 kilowatt Yanmar is behind the steps. Side access is excellent from the master cabin and the head. Access into the stern drive is easy via aft of the main cabin.

The athwartships double berth master cabin is massive with non-claustrophobic headroom on the starboard side bedhead as

the underside of the cockpit seating is nearly two metres from the floor (1.84 metres). There are two hanging lockers in the master cabin along with other shelving.

Due to the step-up from the cockpit to companionway you can walk around the aft of the engine, for'ard of the bed and directly into the shower/head cabin. There is access also down the port side to the aft bulkhead. Remember, this is a 37 footer.

Both cabin berths are two single mattresses on a single base. This means you can raise a lee cloth between berths when underway. All the cabins are stepped down from the main saloon.

The forepeak cabin is a pyramid shape at 2.05 metres long down the middle. Plenty of room for most people with double hanging lockers, other shelving and a side seat to port. This is almost a better cabin than the master as it is breezier and lighter, albeit with a smaller bed.

Five can sit comfortably around the saloon table and there is a three seater lounge on the port side.

The galley is a large L-shape with lots of under cabinet storage, as well as above the countertop. The front opening fridge means the heavy Corian bench top is always available to use and there is space for twin sinks. There is an opening hatch directly overhead.

I found the woodwork quite exceptional in look and craftsmanship.

Sea cocks are conveniently clustered at the base of the companionway steps in a dedicated bilge space with its own bilge pump.

Solid stainless handrails run alongside the companionway hatch which is a smart safety inclusion, they follow down the steps and around the galley edge for plenty of safety while under sail.

Both cabins have large hanging lockers which I find particularly pleasing.

In the saloon there is a dedicated navigation station which is another welcome sight. Even though the nav table is still too small for full-size maps, it is deep enough for the myriad of electronic navigation aids. The battery switches are under the nav seat and this I find an excellent addition making it easy to access from the saloon as well as being close to the companionway.

The hull will do 6.5 knots comfortably at cruising rpms of 2500 from the 21.3 kilowatt Yanmar and has a nice top speed increase to 7.4 from 3500rpms if you need an extra bit of grunt. In reverse the props bit well while the wheel remained in control. Engine room sound deadening was of a suitable type and thickness, but the noise in the cabin registered an equivalent decibel level to in-car noise of 85dB.

The port side shower/head cabin is well sized, plenty of elbow room whether soaping up or tooting. The toilet/shower can be closed off from the washbasin section but, of course, is still accessible from the aft cabin. This means someone can get in and have a shower without bothering another cleaning their teeth for example.

Hunter still lays up a vinylester laminate of the hull below the waterline while topping off with an end-grain balsa deck inlaid with aluminium backing plates. The interior is finished off with a blended polyester resin.

Following on from its bigger Hunter 40 (*Cruising Helmsman* November 2013) this boat is a significant change from the Hunter's you used to know. New sea-kindly but slippery hull designs with inspired interiors making a point of difference from the European designs. Yet still favouring Hunter strength in construction along with its proven B&R rig.

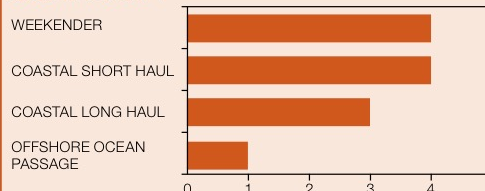
Providing a boat sitting between the popular sizes of 35 and 40 feet, the Hunter 37, with its 35 foot feel and 40 foot space, makes a suitable claim for attention.



LEFT: Hollowed bow sections give a nice ride in a seaway.

SPECIFICATIONS	HUNTER 37
Length (m)	11.91
LWL (m)	10.87
Beam (m)	3.99
Draft (m)	1.98
Displacement (kg)	8343
Ballast (kg)	2325
Mast height from waterline (m)	18.03
E (m)	5.37
Sail Area (m2)	79.53
Sail area:Displacement (sq ft:cub ft)	19.7
Displacement:Length (tons:LWL)	181
Ballast ratio	0.28
Theoretical hull speed (knots)	8
Beam max. to LOA (%)	54
Transom beam:max beam (%)	84
Headroom at mast (cm)	193
Headroom at main berth base (cm)	184
Headroom under boom (cm)	225
Engine decibels at mast @ cruising speed	85
Base boat price:	\$268,000
Dollars per cubic metre of useable volume (\$)	\$7,984

SUITABILITY



Test boat courtesy Performance Cruising Yachts
<http://performanceyachts.com.au/>