



Photo by Roy Laughlin

The Hunter 45 DS — a Modern Design for Comfortable Cruising

By Roy Laughlin
Photos courtesy Hunter Marine

LOA44' 10"	Sail Area:
LWL42' 1"	Standard Rig962 sq ft
Beam14' 6"	Furling Rig925 sq ft
Shoal Draft Model5'	Furl w/vertical battens .975 sq ft
Deep Draft Model6' 6"	Fuel Capacity51 gal
Displacement23,000 lb	Water140 gal
Standard Rig Mast Height . .57' 4"	54 HP Yanmar diesel
In-Mast Furling Height . . .60' 8"	

The debut of the Hunter 45 DS marks an advance in Hunter Marine's sailboat design that includes thoughtful choices in performance and comfort. A careful comparison of its specifications with those of similar monohulls shows that none of its specs are extreme. The boat package, however, according to Glen Henderson, chief of engineering at Hunter Marine, is an attempt to build a "low power" sailboat for either bluewater voyaging or coastal cruising, even if that cruising is from one end of a marina slip to the other.

The term "low power" is a purposely used one. The sail area, largely determined by the mast height, is modest compared to the standout sailboats in this class. The lowered mast height is to facilitate the experience of coastal cruisers, particularly passage under bridges. Designers made adjustments in hull form, including keel shape and a "reflexed" shape in the aft half to reduce drag. Whether in light air or under auxiliary power, the 45DS is notably responsive in speed and handling in light air or under auxiliary power.

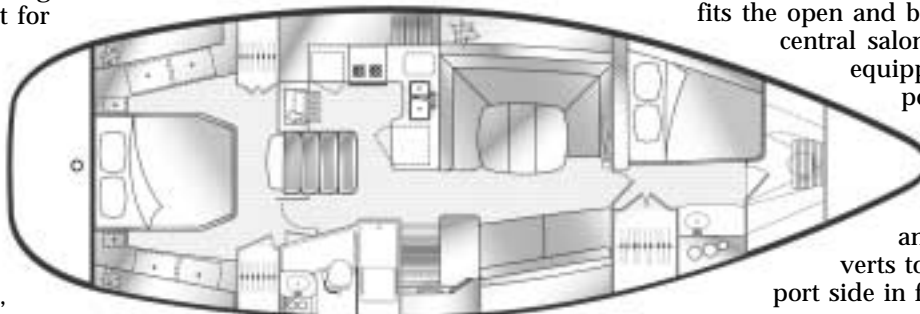
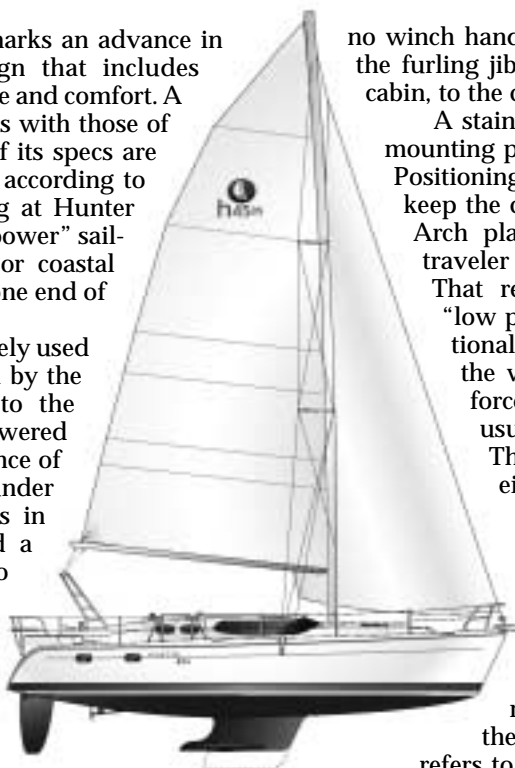
Hunter engineers have spent a great deal of effort making the sailing experience pleasant for the crew, which is often just one or two people. More modest sail sizes are easier to handle for that reason alone. The 45DS tested off St. Augustine in August had electric winches. In the test sail,

no winch handle ever appeared on deck. Lines from the furling jib and main lead aft, on the top of the cabin, to the cockpit.

A stainless arch over the helm is primarily a mounting platform for the mainsail traveler track. Positioning the traveler, its control lines and sheets keep the cockpit clean and movement in it easy. Arch placement further allows mounting the traveler and mainsheet at the end of the boom. That requires less force to operate it (another "low power" qualifying feature). As an additional advantage, when the sailboat tacks and the wind fills the mainsail, the dilution of force on the arch largely prevented the usual "tack shudder" throughout the boat. The arch also holds a canvas for shading, either a T-top or Bimini.

The cockpit is most notable for its twin helms. The skipper can comfortably see from a seated position on any tack. The need to stand to see over the cabin, and then crouch to see under the head sail is absent.

Hunter designers have put as much effort into finessing the interior as they have on deck. The DS in the name refers to *deck salon*, a designation that certainly fits the open and bright interior. The central salon includes a well-equipped galley on the port and a nav station on the starboard side just inside the hatch. A dining table and bench that converts to a berth is on the port side in front of the galley.



A settee on the starboard side converts to a berth if needed. The woodwork inside is primarily cherry with maple accents. As John Peterson, director of marketing, noted, "Customers compare a boat's interior to home, so we've taken that into account in our designs." That includes Corian countertops, recessed lighting, air-conditioning, a combination wall-mounted microwave oven and coffeemaker in the galley. There can be the usual array of home entertainment components scaled to the area of the boat's interior. The designs are comfortable but don't completely sacrifice a "yachty" feel. The sailboat's interior still has handholds, side rails on the countertops and shelves, and locking cabinetry to prevent content spillage in rough seas. The cabin has six-foot-plus head room throughout.

The forward stateroom has a head in the bow "V." This improves buoyancy but also allows a double berth on the port side and a vanity and locker on the starboard side of the stateroom. The aft stateroom has a centrally located queen-sized berth with access on both sides. The cockpit well is directly over this berth, so there's not six-foot clearance over the berth. There is around its perimeter, however.

The 45DS's designer gave the 45DS either a deep-keel



rudder or shoal-draft option to accommodate any sailing effort. An option is not such a big deal. However, the rudder and keel ballast are interchangeable after the boat is finished. If owners wanted to sail, for example, the ICW for a couple of years before heading to Europe, they could initially install the shoal-draft keel and rudder and then replace them with the bluewater versions before the big trip. The conversion is not a weekend DIY project, however—the work should be done by a qualified boatyard.

The 45DS is not a revolutionary design. It is a large step forward in a sequence that includes a contemporary design and adoption of improved hardware that Hunter Marine began over a decade ago. In this case, the 44DS includes a host of desirable design elements from the Hunter 43DS. These include light, open interiors, selection of rig components and designs to make the sailing effort convenient and physically easy, and boat sizes that take into account depths of coastal cruising waters and the existence of bridges over most cruising waters. The selection of "technology" for sail-handling, navigation and living amenities is appropriate for the needs and expectations of any reasonable sailor and the family. It's a sailboat for the sailing experience sailors look forward to and then remember.

For further information, including a complete list of specifications, please see www.huntermarine.com. The Hunter 45DS will be shown at the Newport, RI, boat show (September), the Annapolis show (October) and the Miami Boat Show (February, 2008).

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