

CRUISIN' TIME

Hunter's revamp of its entire cruising yacht range has now extended to the 10-metre model. The 2012 Hunter e33 retains the cabin-top design cues first seen in early 2010, along with clever interior changes. **ALLAN WHITING** took the new boat for its maiden sail on Sydney Harbour



You could always spot a previous-generation Hunter, because it had a variety of cabin window shapes that suggested the company had surplus stock of mismatched ports that just had to be got rid of. That's not the case with the new-generation models that have classy coach-house styling, with distinctive edge-styled cabin windows. Hunters are still easy to spot, but for a much better reason.

The new e33 accommodates the styling introduced on the 39 very well, despite its shorter overall length. The convex sweep of the cabin top continues into high coamings that flank the cockpit, giving the boat a clean profile, while making the cockpit more secure.

A fresh cockpit approach sees aft pushpit seats flanking a pair of transom lockers — one dedicated to twin-bottle gas storage — and a walkthrough transom with drop-down swimplatform and telescopic ladder. Optional teak trim is done in real wood, not the awful synthetic stuff Hunter used to offer.

The rig looks virtually unchanged from its predecessor's, preserving dimensions and sail area. Like all Hunters since 1993 the e33 sports a B&R rig that has more in common with multihull rigs than monohull ones.

Headstay and cap shrouds are disposed at 120-degree angles, with the shrouds led over long, swept-back, twin spreaders to external chainplates. The arrangement is stiffened with diamond stays between mast and spreaders, and is designed to handle extreme weather without the need for a backstay. Lars Bergstrom and Sven Ridder developed this rig design in the 1960s, for use on shorthanded, around-the-world racing yachts.

The standard rig for the e33 mounts a slab-reefed mainsail with boom cover and lazy jacks, but the test boat was fitted with optional in-mast furling. In concert with the standard 110 per cent overlapping jib on a Furlex, the Selden roller-main made sail handling a breeze.

The e33's hull looked the same as its predecessor's, preserving all major dimensions and with distinctive slightly hollow sections aft and at the bow, to mimic a longer waterline. However, below decks all is different.

The U-shape galley (top) scored a microwave oven and fridge on the test boat. The V-berth (middle) has a remarkable amount of storage, with two wardrobes and more space underneath, while the rear cabin (above) impressed as a cosy spot to grab some zeds. Stainless steel grabrail (left) protects the helm's sail instruments.



A FRESH COCKPIT APPROACH SEES AFT PUSHPIIT SEATS FLANKING A PAIR OF TRANSOM LOCKERS... AND A WALKTHROUGH TRANSOM WITH DROP-DOWN SWIMPLATFORM AND TELESCOPIC LADDER





THE BOAT WAS MUCH HAPPIER WITH SHEETS CRACKED SLIGHTLY AT LESS POINT TO WINDWARD AND SPEED CLIMBED TO 6.5KTS. ON A BROAD REACH THE HUNTER E33 ROMPED ALONG AT 7.8KTS



The dinette (above left) converts to an extra berth via a crank handle hidden in the wine storage bin, while the settee opposite (above right) becomes a couch with the table folded back. Natural light spills into the cabin thanks to this large skylight (left) under a hatch in the cockpit seat. The head (below left) is larger than on the predecessor.

21ST-CENTURY LIVING

As with all new-generation Hunters the companionway is an angled staircase-style, making it safe to walk forward in land-lubber fashion when going below, rather than with the traditional ladder-descending action. Large grab handles help make the operation safe.

This graduated stairway lifts to reveal the engine and new saildrive unit. The extended shape of this under-stair pod allows good access to the mechanicals. Interestingly, the saildrive leg is mounted forward of the engine, which 'faces' aft. A panel in the aft cabin gives access to the 'front' of the engine.

Positive engineroom ventilation is employed and the fan operates when the engine is switched on. The outlet is in the cockpit, giving the helmsperson positive feedback on engine-blower operation and also a warming flow of air in cool weather.

A fresh cockpit approach sees aft pushpit seats flanking a pair of transom lockers — one dedicated to twin-bottle gas storage — and a walkthrough transom with drop-down

swimplatform and telescopic ladder. In good weather the seat can be raised, allowing the cabin hatch to open fully. Two opening hull ports complete ventilation flow-through in this double cabin.

A U-shaped galley is located to port, as before, but the starboardside head is bigger and now has a new opening port, for improved ventilation. The port is incorporated into the window profile and has a grid moulded in, so that even when it's open there's privacy — handy when rafted-up with mates. A similar grid-port is fitted in the galley.

Galley fitout includes Corian benchtops with stainless steel fiddle/handrails, a lidded icebox with bilge drain, lidded waste bin and single-bowl sink, Force 10 two-burner LPG stove with oven and a pair of 240V power outlets. The test boat scored a fridge and a microwave oven.

The new saloon employs design tricks that have converted the same space into comfortable seating for eight or more, instead of a squeeze. The chart table is now located in the centre of the starboardside settee, where it can double as a coffee table between

two seats. However, when more seating is required the table folds back, revealing a seat on its underside. Why hasn't someone thought of that before?

But, as the man said, there's more. The dinette table lowers to form a bed base — nothing new about that you might think, but the e33's table cranks up and down via a handle inside a central wine storage bin. Once cranked into place the bed is completed in seconds by a pair of cushions on the table top.

The cabin windows in the saloon

are fixed, but twin cabin-top hatches are hinged oppositely, so that at least one of them should catch the breeze when the boat is at anchor or berthed.

The forward vee-berth cabin now houses two wardrobes, under-bed storage and the water tank, and has 12V and 240V power outlets.

Almost the entire cabin sole area lifts to allow access to wiring, plumbing and through-hull fittings. The shelves on both sides of the saloon have disguised handrails full-length.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Our test of the new Hunter e33 coincided with a rare burst of fine weather during Sydney's coldest, wettest summer for 50 years. A 20-knot southeast breeze kicked in to provide plenty of motivation for this cruising yacht.

We left US Yachts' Darling Harbour pen and were pleased to discover that the optioned-up engine and saildrive powered the boat along at up to 7kts, with no sign of the powerful prop 'walk' we'd experienced with the



[HIGHS]

- › Cockpit layout
- › Folding swimplatform
- › Value for money
- › Ease of sail handling
- › Warranty

[LOWS]

- › Close-hauled performance with furling main

It is nice to see genuine teak (left) is now an option instead of the synthetic stuff.



Facts & figures
HUNTER e33

AT THE HELM
Compared with the outgoing Hunter 33 the new e33 has 40mm more cockpit length and a drop-down swimplatform that greatly increases lounging space. Deeper coamings improve safety and allow hiking when racing. The new interior maximises available hull volume and the longer cockpit provides more aft cabin space. Optional teak is now real wood and cabin soles are also real hardwood. Bulkhead and cupboard woodgrain now runs horizontally for a more spacious impression.

PRICE AS TESTED
\$189,140 introductory offer (normal RRP, including the options listed below, is **\$198,660**)

OPTIONS FITTED
Epoxy barrier coat and antifoul, in-mast furling, mainsheet traveller, fridge, ST60 speed and depth, sound system, folding wheel, electric anchor windlass, bimini, deep keel, hatch and shade package, helm winches (sheeting and blocks), VHF, teak package, and engine upgrade

PRICED FROM
\$185,000

GENERAL
MATERIAL: FRP monolithic and balsa sandwich hull, and plywood sandwich deck
TYPE: Keelboat
LENGTH OVERALL: 10.21m
HULL LENGTH: 10.08m
WATERLINE LENGTH: 8.97m
BEAM: 3.51m
DRAFT: 1.37m (1.67m optional)
WEIGHT: 5624kg

CAPACITIES
CE CLASSIFICATION: A/8
BERTHS: Two doubles and settee three-quarter
FUEL: 95lt
WATER: 190lt
HOLDING TANK: 57lt
WATER HEATER: 19lt

SAILS
SAIL AREA: 50.4m² (with mast-furling main); 58.1m² (non-furling); asymmetric spinnaker (optional)

ENGINE
MAKE/MODEL: Yanmar diesel
TYPE: Saildrive
RATED HP: 21 (29 optional)
PROP: Fixed two-blade (three-blade and folding props optional)

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tradeboat SAYS...
The new-look Hunter range deserves to attract new buyers and the highly equipped e33 is an excellent entry boat, with pricing below the magic \$200K mark. Cockpit and below-deck space utilisation is first class. Primarily a cruising yacht the e33 has some club-racing potential if fitted with the optional deep-draft keel and performance sails.



shaftdrive e36. Engine noise and vibration were both commendably low.

Twin furlers soon had the brand-new sails drawing, with the main partially rolled inside the mast. The main set reasonably well when reaching, but looked out of sorts sheeted in on the wind, with its leech flapping in protest. However, we made five-plus-knots close-hauled, which wasn't bad for this pure cruising rig.

The boat was much happier with sheets cracked slightly at less point to windward and speed climbed to 6.5kts. On a broad reach the Hunter e33 romped along at 7.8kts. An optional folding prop would have improved performance even further.

As with all Hunters the beamy e33 could be run square, wing-a-wing, without the need to pole out the headsail.

Balance with the slightly reefed main was very good on all points of sail and the helm was easy to control, one-handed, from a windward perch. The high coamings proved a boon when we assessed the boat's club-racing potential, because it would be easy



Folding steering wheel (above) clears a passage through the cockpit from the drop-down swimplatform. Pushpit seats have lockers underneath, the portside one dedicated to twin gas-bottle storage (left).

for crewmembers to hike on the coamings without fear of sliding into the cockpit. A Hunter e33 with slab-reefed, battened mainsail should have quite respectable social-racing performance.

Hunter's patented Arch mightn't look very attractive, but it works well in keeping mainsheet tackle out of the cockpit, while also being an ideal base for a bimini. The test boat was fitted with an optional Mariner Package that includes a traveller on top of the Arch, with blocks and cleats at each end. The mainsheet is double-ended and can be controlled from the starboard cabin-top winch or from the portside sheet winch. A clutch on the Arch locks the mainsheet, freeing the port sheet winch for jib duties.

Even without an optional autopilot it's possible to handle both sails singlehandedly from the helm position. ⚓



The targa arch (top) is great for adding a bimini as well as keeping the traveller out of the cockpit. Test boat had the optional 29hp Yanmar (above).