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Two become one

Jeanneau have just launched an innovative, fuss-free new charter-only 'monomaran' to appeal to a modern customer. Helm charter broker **James Foot** went to Marseille to run the rule over her. Here are his findings

When Jeanneau first unveiled plans for a new breed of charter yacht, a self-proclaimed "mono-cat", many – myself included – scoffed at the concept. But the new Sun Loft 47 goes pretty far in dispelling the doubters.

The press release talks of

a revolution in by-the-cabin charters and the layout looks, at first glance, cosy to say the least. But up close, she reveals her true colours – and they're very bright.

The core concepts here are space and simplicity. Frédéric Bonin from Jeanneau explained that this drive for keeping everything simple and clutter-free makes the Sun Loft both customer and charter

ABOVE
Charter events such as The Yacht Week have definitely influenced Jeanneau's thinking

company friendly. This philosophy also helped them get to market quickly – by basing the Sun Loft 47 on the existing hull of the popular Sun Odyssey 490, Jeanneau had a ready-made mould, saving time and money, to which they have added a new deck and layout below. They've also added extra lead to the keel to counter the extra weight up top, and the result is remarkably balanced.



The cockpit is fully enclosable in case of bad weather, or the bimini can fold down to open the area up. A retractable central sun roof is a great touch, supported by the flared hardtop "flyroof", adding the kind of all-elements protection usually only found on catamarans.

The new layout effectively swaps out the central module (saloon, galley, etc), with a new one that significantly extends the cockpit forward, and lifts the galley outside to just aft of the companionway. This has a somewhat decluttered feel to it, as below there are simply cabins and heads, with all living and socialising space on deck. The bow and midships cabins are still accessed via the companionway, while the two aft cabins have separate direct entrances, much like a catamaran.



ABOVE
The cockpit/galley/
cocktail bar

BELOW
The Sun Loft 47 has
600w speakers as
befits a party boat

Very sociable

Initially, I worried about space in the cockpit, crammed as it now was with all of the galley equipment and necessary storage, but I was pleasantly surprised to find that we could happily fit four of us in the galley area, and still socialise with those lounging on the stern sunbeds, not overheat, and have great view – all unusual for anyone who's spent their share of time above the stove.

The new cockpit galley features a large plancha grill and a single hob, able to hold a 24cm pan. Jeanneau claim the plancha can hold 12 steaks or 24 sausages simultaneously – sadly we did not put that claim to the test, but our grilled chicken and vegetable skewers were delicious. There are four generous fridges, each of which can go to -2°C, ideal for keeping your food fresh and your sundowners nice and cold.

Two large dining tables at the back both convert easily into day beds, and you can comfortably fit seven people around each table at meal times. This combination of deck-level lounging, sailing and

cooking space lends the Sun Loft 47 a distinctly catamaran-esque feel.

Controversially, there is no chart table and also no chart plotter. Bonin's reasoning here was simple – charter guests these days, especially in the era of free data roaming, prefer to use apps such as Navionics on their tablets and phones, rather than relying on a potentially outdated fixed chart plotter. To cater for this, the dashboard in front of each helm station houses adjustable brackets for phones or tablets instead. As for passage planning, this can be done at either of the two large aft tables.

21st century touches

All models will come with a standard 750l water tank, as well as an innovative 350l drinking water tank, complete with a carbon filter and dedicated tap. Jeanneau hope this will help reduce plastic waste, and in turn help the yacht appeal to a more environmentally savvy young customer base. Choosing not to add to the hundreds of thousands of plastic water bottles carried by charter yachts around the world is certainly something to be praised.

Pitched clearly as something of a party boat, the Sun Loft needs a speaker system that matches her appeal, and the 600w beasts (usually at home on wakeboard boats) at either side of the stern certainly do it justice. LED strip lighting runs throughout, adding to the ambience.

There is nothing earth-shattering about the fixtures and fittings, just simple, well-executed solutions, such as the storage boxes, washboard



Boat test ~ Jeanneau Sun Loft 47

storage sleeves, or the chopping board integrated into the sink top – there are no gimmicks like wine racks in the biles though. Another nod to modernity comes in the shape of the USB chargers – the Sun Loft 47 has 21 fully waterproofed chargers throughout.

Accommodation

This is where the Sun Loft 47 really comes into her own, with six double cabins, plus a skipper's cabin. The two amidships cabins also very easily convert into surprisingly spacious bunk cabins, thanks to a couple of Pullmans. This is a great set-up for crews of eight or even nine who each required their own bed.

The open space at deck level makes her ideal for larger bareboat or skippered groups of 10-12.

Performance

The Sun Loft 47 is a yacht that knows its niche and sits very comfortably within it. This is a yacht targeted solely at the charter market, towards holidaymakers happy to be on the water, rather than diehard sailors. All models will be equipped with in-mast furling and a self-tacking jib, harking back to the core principle of keeping things simple.

Given these caveats, as a sailing yacht, she still holds her own. On my test sail, we had her doing 5.7kn upwind in 8.2kn of true wind speed. So, for a comfortable holiday platform, she still performs reasonably. There is even the option of adding a Code 0.

PHOTOS: JEANNEAU YACHTS

RIGHT
The distinctive lines of the Sun Odyssey 49 are still there, but the cabin top is radically different

BELOW
The large lounging area is a key feature



VERDICT

Designer Philippe Briand has actually experimented with the crossover monohull/catamaran concept before, as he drew the Dufour Atoll almost 20 years ago. I'm pleased to say that his newest work is a marked step up from that out-of-its-time design and has a much more refined feel to it.

A monohull with the space and open, single-level layout of a catamaran, the Sun Loft 47 has been pitched as a modern solution for the sharing economy, designed for by-

the-cabin charters. But this is much more than just a cabin yacht. The extra space created by the cockpit galley opens up new possibilities and feels truly innovative. The flexible midship cabins mean this could be the ideal larger group bareboat yacht for those who want to get from A to B comfortably and in style, rather than just quickly.

LOOKS: ★★★★★

COMFORT: ★★★★★

PERFORMANCE: ★★★★★



JAMES FOOT

James is a yacht charter broker who has spent his life in, on or under boats of various shapes and sizes. When not on the water, he can be found thinking, talking or writing about boats as marketing manager at Helm

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THE SPEC

LOA: 45ft 11in (14m)

Beam: 14ft 9in (4.5m)

Draught: 6ft 1in (1.85m)

Cabins: 6 + 1 (max 12 people)

Heads: 4

Price: Not available for private purchase

