



HANSE 415

GERMAN ENGINEERING COMBINED WITH EASY SAILING MAKES FOR ONE FUN BOAT

Leave it to the Germans to combine precision building and high styling with ultimate ease of handling in one sweet package — and really make it work. The new Hanse 415, a wolf in sheep's clothing, is a no-nonsense, good-looking speedster but is so easy to handle, it comes off as a tame family cruiser.

The 415 replaced the very popular Hanse 400, of which more than 700 hulls were built, so the bar was set high for this new model. It benefits from the unique focus on speed by its designer, Rolf Vrolijk, the mastermind behind the lines of America's Cup winner *Alinghi*. But what comes shining through after a day on the water is how easy and how much fun the 415 is to sail, especially shorthanded.

DESIGN, DECK & RIGGING

The two most marked characteristics of the Hanse 415 are its bold styling and understated simplic-

ity. The nearly plumb bow and low cabin top give the boat an aggressive look, and the deck is devoid of clutter, with flush hatches and a low, stylish coach roof. There are very few obstructions that interrupt the flow of the lines from stem to stern. From the opening anchor locker on the bow, wide decks run aft. The shrouds are well outboard, so there's nothing to impede your progress toward the large social cockpit with twin helms. A wide drop-down transom forms the swim platform and extends the cockpit when it's open. A life raft cubby is tucked neatly in the back and is accessible when

the manually controlled transom is deployed.

The waterline was extended 2 feet, but the sail plan was kept the same, so the 415 should be slightly speedier than its predecessor. The new model carries an extra foot of beam well aft and provides more headroom below, so the overall interior also gained about 10 percent in volume.

Two keels are available: a T-shaped standard deep keel (6 feet, 9 inches) and an L-shaped shoal keel (5 feet, 7 inches). For West Coast depths and wind conditions, the deep keel will be a good choice and will keep the boat tracking well upwind.

The fractional rig is a tapered deck-stepped mast with double aft-swept spreaders and mid-boom sheeting. The self-tacking jib is really a lifesaver when you're sailing shorthanded. A traditional full-battened main is standard, but you can add lazy jacks and a StackPack to help gather the dropping sail or opt for in-mast furling. There are no winches on the coach roof; instead, there are two sets aft — a set for jib sheets and a set for hal-



yard and reefing controls, with two sets of stoppers, all within the skipper's reach. Our test boat has optional electric winches, which make sail handling and reefing a snap.

Large sheet bags are conveniently placed near the wheel pedestals, so control lines stay out of the social area of the cockpit where there are two long settees and a folding table topped by handholds and an optional chartplotter. (I like it better when the plotters are at the aft end of the table and not on top of it, where they're likely to become expensive handholds when the boat heels.) The optional black carbon Y-spoke wheels will make you look like a racer even if you're not, and they're connected to Danish-built Jefa steering (with bearings instead of bushings), which makes the boat very responsive, even if you drive with just a finger.

LAYOUT & ACCOMMODATIONS

For a production boat, the Hanse 415 is somewhat customizable. There are dozens of variations in the interior, from fabric and wood choices to

layout and configuration differences. Owners can personalize their vessel ad infinitum, and that helps them feel more involved in the design.

There is a choice of six layouts, mostly due to the permutations available with three modular sections. The A section includes the forepeak, which houses the master stateroom and an optional head. The middle B section includes the salon and offers variations in the galley shape. The C section offers a choice of two cabins aft or one cabin with a really nice storage lazarette to starboard.

The sleek, practical interior design has clean, minimalist lines and very functional furniture that creates a chic and contemporary living space. The salon is modern but not stark, and the satin mahogany finish has a rich look. To starboard is a U-shaped settee with a large drop-down table that converts to a berth, and on port, a straight settee with a navigation station drops down on gas struts to provide additional seating or to create a good sea berth.

The L-shaped galley is to starboard

ABOVE Hanse has given the interior a sleek, practical design with clean, minimalist lines and functional furniture. Buyers have a choice of six layouts and dozens of fabric and wood choices, including this boat's satin mahogany finish.

and has large working surfaces, so the chef and a prep-cook can work simultaneously. Opposite the galley is a head with a stall shower that could serve as a wet locker for soggy foulies. The two-cabin version has a longer galley with more countertop space, or you can opt for a smaller galley with a full workroom aft where you can add a large freezer. This area leads directly into the cavernous starboard lazarette with built-in shelves and access from the cockpit.

The pluses below include an elegant, angular and very practical design that looks to be of better quality than most production boats. The plentiful overhead hatches, integrated sliding polycarbonate companionway washboards and side ports add lots of light in the salon, and there is 6 feet, 5 inches of headroom. In the minus column is the stateroom bed, which is a

traditional V berth rather than an island like many other boats of this size have. Also, with only 40 gallons of fuel, the 415 will be challenged when making passages. A discussion with a dealer might yield some ideas on the possibility of adding tankage.

Access to systems is fairly typical, with the engine below the companionway steps and additional access panels via the aft cabins. Through-hulls, batteries and transducers are easy to reach. The fuel tank is aft to starboard, while the water tank is under the master berth forward.

UNDER WAY

For our test, I joined JK3 Yachts' Jeff Brown, Jack Lennox and the rest of the team for a relaxed day on San Diego Bay. Brown is a gung-ho sailor who spends a lot of time racing J-boats and has connections to the America's Cup, so it was funny to

TESTER'S OPINION:

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watch him fidget aboard the Hanse on a lazy day with little breeze. At first, I did some slow upwind tacks and found a breeze for a downwind push. But soon, we all settled into a beautiful day of easy sailing. There was little for us to do if we didn't want to do it. The self-tacking jib was effortless, and at one point I watched Brown reach for the button of the electric primaries to trim the sail and laughed. One-finger sailing is hardly what he's used to with the racing rock stars, but it certainly speaks to the way most cruising boats are used by a family, a couple or a singlehander, who all just want to enjoy their boat without much drama.

Of course, for the A-type personalities aboard, relaxing was fun, but we would have liked to test the boat in a blow. It looks like it could take on a blustery day with a bone in its teeth. The polar diagrams suggest the 415

will sail at 6.7 knots in 14 knots of wind at 40 degrees apparent wind. When it kicks up to 20 knots of apparent wind speed, and you crack off to a beam reach, the top end should be more than 9 knots. Under power, the standard engine will push the boat in flat water around 7 knots at 2600 rpm.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

I test a lot of boats, and I like most of them. On rare occasions I leave thinking, "I wouldn't mind owning one of those." That's how I felt walking off the docks in San Diego, because the overall lack of fussiness left quite an impression. The Hanse 415 is easy to sail singlehanded, and if you can go alone, you'll go out more often, because you don't have to wait for the family to be willing or your friends to have time.

Personally, I'd opt for the two-cabin layout minus the forward head, because I don't like en suite toilets. This version not only saves money, because it's completely standard, but also has a larger galley and master stateroom. I'd take the teak trim in the cockpit only, because I've lived with aging teak decks long enough to know that less teak is better. I'd also take the Simrad navigation package and add radar and autopilot, so I could go out alone whenever I pleased. I'd also opt for the larger 55 hp engine, because when it's snotty out, nothing goes to weather like a great big diesel.

For heavy-air days, the self-tacking jib is heaven sent, and for light days like we had for our test, I'd opt for the gennaker package, which is a \$5,800 add-on. Just to look like a pro at the dock, I might opt for the bow thruster and joystick control, although there's nothing more humiliating to a sailor than coming in with the thruster roaring. Blowboaters are such purists.

The Hanse line is built in Griefswald, Germany, where boats have been built since the 1300s, and Hanse has had a state-of-the-art factory staffed with local craftsmen for the past 20 years. The assembly lines hum with activity, and the volume translates to good value with high quality, which

➔ SPEC BOX

LOA	40 ft., 8 in.	BEAM	13 ft., 8 in.
DRAFT (DEEP/SHOAL)	6 ft., 9 in./5 ft., 7 in.	SAIL AREA (100%)	936 sq. ft.
DISPLACEMENT	19,620 lbs.	WATER	80 or 125 gals.
FUEL	40 gals.	MAST HEIGHT	64 ft., 4 in.
ENGINE	Volvo 38 hp or 55 hp w/Saildrive		
PRICE (AS TESTED)	\$295,000		

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

T-shaped deep-draft keel, traditional mainsail, self-tacking jib, drop-down stern platform, twin steering wheels, Jefa steering, 2-burner LPG stove, mahogany satin wood interior cabinetry, maple flooring, AGM batteries and more.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

In-mast furling, gennaker, StackPack w/lazy jacks, Simrad electronics, 3-burner stove, electric head, 2- or 3-blade folding prop, electric winches, bow and/or stern thruster, electric windlass, cockpit shower, teak decks, additional house battery, American cherry or Italian oak finish, pinstripe flooring, leather upholstery, larger inverter; various prepackage options called Cruising, Comfort and Navigation packs; and more

BUILDER

HANSE YACHTS AG, Griefswald, Germany; hanseyachts.com

WEST COAST DEALERS

JK3 YACHTS, San Diego; (619) 224-6200, jk3yachts.com
 JK3 YACHTS, Newport Beach, Calif.; (949) 675-8053; jk3yachts.com
 FREEDOM MARINE, Vancouver and Sidney, B.C.; (877) 609-0985; boatingfreedom.com

owners around the world appreciate. With a developing network of dealers in the U.S., Hanse is poised to build a greater number of boats and take on established competitors.

The base price of the Hanse 415 is \$207,000. Our test boat, with tons of extra gear and options, costs \$295,000. That's still not bad for a new, solidly built boat that is fast, good looking, remarkably easy to sail, and has German precision and quality throughout. 🌊