

Boat Test Jeanneau  
Sun Odyssey 409

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*Sailing*  
MAGAZINE

# The chine shines

and so does the style and handling of this high-tech cruiser





The sailing industry is on the rebound and it's not due to a government bailout. Builders are beginning to prosper again by making better and more affordable boats—it's pretty simple really. Recent new models from leading manufacturers represent an impressive commitment to quality, innovation and value. A case in point is the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 409. This finely honed Philippe Briand design is user-friendly, sleek on deck, roomy below and quite affordable.

Jeanneau, part of Groupe Beneteau, has hit several home runs in recent years, including its popular deck-saloon models. However, the Sun Odyssey series has long been the heart and soul of the company's fleet and this new 409 model, which replaces the 39i, will soon be showing up at marinas all across the country. This boat has success stamped all over it, and not surprisingly it was voted the European Boat of the Year for 2011.

#### The details

The first thing you notice about the 409 hull is the pronounced chine. Chines have long been associated with flat, fast-sailing small boats, and more recently on the big-boat ocean racing around-the-world speedsters. It's no surprise that chines make sense on modern long-waterline, shallow-forefoot big-boat cruisers too. Flat and fast is a nice way to sail, and the 409 will not appreciate being sailed on its ear. I think most of us are OK with that. Furthermore, any spray that you do kick up will be deflected away from the cockpit by the chine. The 409's chine, a new twist on an old design concept, runs from amidships aft and gives the profile view a nice, angular distinction. I like it, it's sexy. On the practical side, it also provides a bit of additional form stability and more usable space below by expanding volume in the upper hull sections.

The 409 represents a synthesis of precision engineering and production, the use of state-of-the-art materials, and just enough old-fashioned craftsmanship to give the boat a welcoming feel. Jeanneau maximizes the huge advantages of scale production without diminishing the distinct identity of every model, and that's not easy to do. Although most Jeanneaus are built in France, the company has plans to build the



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**LED Lighting**  
Energy-saving lighting in a well-lit package is the way boats should be.



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**Let the sun shine**  
Now a standard feature, the solar panels harness the sun to keep the batteries topped.

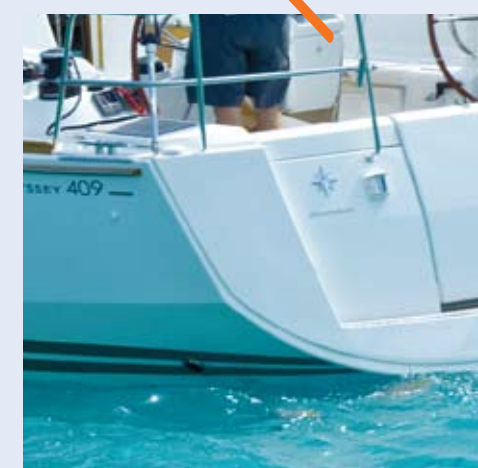


#### Swim step deluxe

The the helm seat removes and the transom flips open, creating a platform perfect for swimming or boarding the dinghy. And the telescoping ladder is nifty for taking a dip.

#### Shape of speed

Hard chines are not just for around-the-world record setters, and the 409's hull is built for speed and comfort



#### Rewind Revolution

Harken's revolutionary Rewind electric winches come standard, making sailing push-button easy with their ability to trim and ease without removing the sheets from the self-tailers.





# Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 409

LOA 40'6", LWL 36'1", Beam 13'1",  
Displacement 16,424 lbs., Deep draft  
6'10", Shoal draft 5'1", Ballast deep  
draft 4,982 lbs., Ballast shoal draft  
5,445 lbs., Sail Area 849 sq. ft.



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Base Boat Price

\$194,900

409 in Marion, South Carolina, at the plant it shares with Beneteau.

The hull is solid fiberglass, a simple and well-proven construction method. The balsa-cored deck is resin-injected to ensure precise ratios. This process requires two separate molds but the result is worth it as it keeps the deck light and strong, and significantly reduces the chances for delamination through voids. It also produces two finished sides that are nice from an aesthetic and production standpoint. The hull and deck are mechanically and chemically joined on an inward-facing flange. Bulkheads are cut with incredible accuracy and then tabbed to the hull the old-fashioned way. The keel is cast iron and externally fastened. The deep draft is 6 feet, 10 inches, while the shoal-draft keel, which reduces draft to just over 5 feet, should be popular on this side of the Atlantic. Jeanneau uses a structural fiberglass grid in the interior that includes cutouts for access to important hull areas.

## On deck

We had a bright, breezy day to test the new 409 on the shimmering waters of Biscayne Bay off Miami. Steve Sullivan and I had the boat to ourselves, and maneuvering off the dock I was immediately impressed. We made a tight three-point turn and headed out the Dinner Key Channel. Once in deep water, we set the furled main and fractionally rigged, self-tacking headsail and headed south on a close reach. With the east wind steady around 15 knots we sped along at near 7 knots, sailing fast and flat, just like we were supposed to.

The 409 cockpit is large and comfortable and well set up for shorthanded sailing. All halyards and lift controls are led aft, and partially under deck, before terminating in a series of clutches on the cabintrunk. The mainsheet, however, which is often found next to one of the halyards on the coach-roof and thus inaccessible from the helm, is instead led aft and can be trimmed from either wheel station. Our test boat was fitted with Harken Rewind electric winches, which allow you to both trim and ease a

sheet without ever taking it out of the self-tailer. These ingenious winches are revolutionizing the way we trim sails, soon making winch handles optional.

The twin-wheel arrangement makes sense on many levels. It opens up the cockpit, provides good site lines on either tack, and offers clean access to the stern step. Sailing instruments are housed in a pod mounted on the aft end of the lovely teak table and visible from either wheel. There are clever line lockers below each helm seat and excellent access to the steering system through the port lazarette. I like the dedicated life raft locker between the helm seats, and the fold-down swim platform with a telescoping ladder not only makes boarding after swimming easy, but also assists in climbing aboard from a dinghy.

The low-slung deck layout invites you to leave the cockpit and mosey forward. The side decks are wide and although the handholds are a bit low, they do extend forward to about the mast base. Each chainplate is a single pod positioned well inboard for very tight sheeting angles and it's also easy to slip around. The 409's spar has double spreaders



The chart table and galley make the most of the space, above, and the nicely finished saloon is bright and airy, facing page.

and the rig is a 7/8ths fractional. Air draft is just less than 60 feet. A rigid vang is standard. The halyards and headsail sheets are Dyneema. There are several different sail plans. The main is available with either standard jiffy reefing or set up for roller furling. A full-batten performance main is optional. A small, roller-furling genoa is standard



while the self-tacking working jib and track is optional. Standard deck hardware includes beefy amidship cleats, a Quick 1000 electric windlass, a Delta 44-pound anchor with serious ground tackle and even a bracket for the outboard motor.

## Down below

The interior is bright, with light teak veneers and plenty of natural light. Like most Jeanneaus, there are several different layout plans. The most common arrangement for boats sold in North America is the two-cabin, one-head plan that includes a large storage space/workroom to port aft. A three-cabin, two-head plan is also available for the charter trade.

The L-shaped galley is to starboard and features twin sinks with covers that are also cutting boards, a 12-volt fridge, and a two-burner stove with oven. The galley is separated from the saloon by a partial glass partition. In the two-cabin layout, a large head and separate shower stall is immediately to port when you drop below. Access to the workroom is through the head. In the three-cabin model, this head is smaller, and instead of the workroom there are twin double cabins aft.

The saloon includes a U-shaped settee to starboard that drapes around a clever and

versatile table. Completely extended, it's a dinner table that can seat a crowd, folded in half it becomes a cocktail table, and folded again it becomes part of a lounging area with a built-in bar. It also cleverly folds down to form a spare double berth. Opposite, the settee includes a small table that doubles as a navigation station. There are lockers outboard along the hull and additional storage below the settees.

The owner's cabin is forward. In the two-cabin model there are hanging lockers to port and starboard and a small desk/vanity to starboard. In the three-cabin model, there is an en-suite head in the forward cabin. The 409 features LED lighting throughout the boat, including leather-wrapped LED reading lights in the sleeping cabins.

A 40-horsepower, three-cylinder Yanmar diesel engine with a fixed three-bladed prop with a saildrive transmission is standard. An optional 50-horsepower, four-cylinder engine is also available, and the optional three-bladed folding Flex-o-Fold prop is worth the money. Access to the engine compartment is from behind the companionway and through the aft cabins. Fuel capacity is 53 gallons. The systems throughout the boat are very well thought out, and for the most part, accessible for inspection and ser-

vice. Jeanneau even offers optional factory-installed solar panels.

## Under sail

As Steve and I were putting the 409 through its paces, our first observation was how easily the boat was handled by two people. We immediately felt at home on the boat, which is a sign of a great design. It's a small thing, but being able to trim the main from the helm is a big step in making a cruising boat more user-friendly. Hard on the wind we maintained speed inside of 40 degrees apparent. Not surprisingly, the 409 seemed to like reaching best. With winds ranging between 12 to 15 knots, we hit 7.5 knots on a sweet beam reach. Several powerboat wakes gave us the chance to see how the 409 handled a chop, and I was impressed as she sliced through the man-made waves without pounding. She did lose momentum, but then accelerated rapidly.

The Jeanneau 409 pushes the right buttons. It is comfortable, sails well, and is designed for easy maintenance while using the latest technologies. It is well built, and backed up by the largest part of the largest sailboat manufacturer in the world. And it's affordable. No wonder Jeanneau is selling boats.