

JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 439

BANG FOR YOUR BUCK



PICTURE BY: JEAN-MARIE LOT



ROB PEILE DID A LOT OF RESEARCH BEFORE HE CHOSE HIS NEXT BOAT. THE EDITOR FOUND OUT WHY HE PICKED THE JEANNEAU 439.



ROB Peile is a successful accountant. By nature, he makes considered decisions. So he didn't just rush into buying the new Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 439 which he has named *Jazz*.

Ron Jacobs of Performance Boating Services, the Pittwater-based Jeanneau agent who sold Rob the boat, confirmed that this wasn't a client who walked in and said, "I'll take one."

Rob was replacing his Cavalier 37, which had been a faithful cruising boat for 21 years. "I was faced with either spending some serious money on the Cav or making a quantum leap into something much better," he said as we sailed *Jazz* down the NSW coast from Middle Harbour to her new home at Port Hacking. "I



researched the market pretty thoroughly and chose the Jeanneau because it gave me the best bang for my buck.”

FRENCH LOVE AFFAIR

There was always a good chance that the boat Rob chose would be French. He and his partner Liz have another French boat, a Pajot Athena 38 catamaran which they keep at Abel Point Marina in Airlie Beach. Rob also had extensive experience with Jeanneaus in Greece, after setting up a yacht charter business there in 1994.

“I got to know a lot of the charter boat operators in the Greek Islands and they

mostly used Jeanneaus,” he said. “Charter boats get a hard life and the Jeanneaus just kept bouncing back for more.”

This confirmed something I was told by a Sunsail skipper at Hamilton Island recently, who said Sunsail uses Jeanneaus because they are reliable. Basically, they just get washed and refueled and sent back out again, which keeps the revenue flowing in the right direction.

Rob obviously took the boat’s intended use into consideration too. *Jazz* will be used for day sailing and cruising up and down the coast, possibly as far as Port Stephens, with a few friends. So three cabins were important, which counted out several good designs that had only two.

“This was also a brand new design,” Rob said, “Some of the other boats I looked at were coming to the end of their run.”

FEATURES AND BENEFITS

There were quite a number of specifics that Rob cited as being influential in his decision. On the subject of strength and reliability, he pointed out that the Sun Odyssey’s hull and decks are bonded, not glued, which he feels is a stronger option, and the frame is glassed in. The boat is built to European “unlimited ocean” standards and Rob says he would be more than confident to take her offshore.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Rob Peile at the helm of his new boat.

Viewed from above, the cockpit is not big but it is deep and comfortable.

The teak toerail enhances the sleek looks of the hull and decks.



He also likes the hard chine, which begins amidships and is quite pronounced at the transom. This is a feature of the Phillipe Briand design that first made its appearance on the Sun Odyssey 409, which was launched four months prior to the 439.

Chines were generally thought to be the preserve of 18ft skiffs, Volvo 70s and other fast, performance-oriented racing craft. However, in the past two years they have started to appear on production boats and they actually make a lot of sense. For starters, a chined boat is generally designed to be sailed flat, which is how most cruisers like it. And the chine also contributes a lot more internal volume towards the stern, something that is obvious when looking into the aft cabins of the 439, which are spacious and very comfortable.

Rob said the chines also took him back to his Bluebird days. He learned to sail racing Manly Juniors at Port Hacking, before buying a Bluebird when he was 19. He also had a Compass 29 before trading up to the Cav 37 and now the big Jeanneau.

Speaking of volume, with social cruising in mind Rob and Liz both liked the 185 litre fridge, which was “biggest in class”, as well as the range that 200 litres of fuel, 330 litres of water and an 80 litre holding tank provide.

Another feature which Rob mentioned as “important”, and which is becoming standard on the European production boats, is the folding transom. Rob said he likes an enclosed cockpit to lessen the chance of taking a wave over the stern, but he loves the ease of access that the folding platform provides. The telescoping ladder means climbing aboard after a swim or a dive is simple, and boarding from a marina or a dinghy is obviously a breeze.

The cockpit sides are quite high, again giving a feeling of “safety” from rogue waves and the moulded cockpit seats are therefore high-backed and very comfortable. It's not a huge cockpit but is more than adequate for six or eight people to sit around the folding cockpit table with a few nibbles and a cold drink.

SAILING PERFORMANCE

Rob is not interested in racing but he has been a sailor all his life and prefers to sail rather than motor. He has chosen the in-mast furling, which wasn't fitted when we delivered the boat. However, he and Ron Jacobs both had a laugh when I leapt to the mast to help them hoist the main by bouncing the halyard. I quickly remembered I wasn't on a Farr 40, as the electric winch made short work of the task.

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We had very light conditions for the sail down the coast, but there was enough wind to show that the 439 is a cruiser-racer and wouldn't be out of place in any club twilight or winter series fleet.

All sail controls are within easy reach and the boat responds to minor tweaks of the traveler and mainsheet.

The only problem I discovered with the boat was that the steering was exceptionally heavy. However Ron Jacobs assured us that the problem had been identified as a lower bearing and would be immediately rectified.

The helmsman's position at the small twin wheels is very comfortable, either sitting or standing, and the centre-mounted chart plotter is readable from either position. As is common these days, the wind, log and other instrumentation is down by your feet, which for a tall person is a bit uncomfortable.

LIGHT AND AIRY

Production boat design in the last two or three years has come a long way, as the major manufacturers have employed the world's leading designers to create their products.

The Sun Odysseys are classic examples. Your first impression when you see the 439 is that she is beautiful. The lines are strong and sleek and she looks fast yet elegant.

The exterior design has also contributed to a wonderful sense of light and space below decks. Strategically-placed hatches and windows are complemented by the main window which runs almost the full length of the cabin. Whether standing or sitting in the comfortable seating, you can see out of the boat.

The photograph shows you the interior more succinctly than I can describe it, and there are a variety of options available to the potential buyer. Suffice to say, Rob and Liz were looking for a boat that would be comfortable to entertain two other couples in, and they chose this one.

As I said at the outset, Rob Peile is a careful man, who wasn't going to write a check for more than \$300,000 without doing his homework. Having spent the day with him and Liz, I am confident that they have chosen wisely and will be very happy with the new boat which is part of their current "10 year plan".

The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 439 should be on the list of anyone looking for a beautifully-designed, well-constructed cruising boat that sails well enough to race. As Rob says, it delivers plenty of bang for your buck. *



FIGURE 1 – Deck design



FIGURE 2 – Boat layout



LEFT: The 7/8 rig is very headsail-dominant. However, a smaller self-tacking jib option is also available.

ABOVE: The interior features broad access ways, comfortable seating and a light, airy feel courtesy of the many windows and hatches.