



PICTURE BY: KEVIN GREEN

AS THE FLAGSHIP OF THE POPULAR JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY RANGE, THE 509 HAS A LOT TO LIVE UP TO AND IT DOESN'T DISAPPOINT, AS KEVIN GREEN FINDS OUT.

THE Philippe Briand designed 50 footer is a no-nonsense cruising yacht that epitomises modern production yacht designs: large cockpit, low profile cabin, wide beam and high topsides to create a voluminous interior.

Stepping aboard via the wide transom swim platform reveals a teak-clad cockpit sole with both helm binnacles cleverly integrated into the side locker bulkheads. Circular stainless grab rails separate the Carbonautica composite steering wheels from the crew benches while both binnacles contain large compasses - a good layout - and each side also has a Raymarine e90w plotter alongside ST70 readouts.

Not so good are the engine buttons which are jammed low under the starboard side wheel but the throttle is in its usual place, on the inside gunwale. However this is a long way from the other engine control, the 360 docking joystick which is on the teak clad cockpit table, centralised between the helms. The third power control, the Maxpower thruster buttons, are separate again on the starboardside binnacle area. However, despite this disseminated design once you've clicked the 360 Docking on, the joystick takes care of most manoeuvres but more about that later.

The forward cockpit area is uncluttered

with all sail controls either on the cabin top or back near the helms. Here a pair of hefty Harken 70.2 self-tailing winches with jammers reside at the helms for the genoa sheets while on the cabin top optional electric versions take care of all halyards - a sensible expenditure on a cruising boat this size. This upgraded gear is all part of the Performance Pack fitted.

The low slung cabin top definitely would benefit from fitting the optional sprayhood into the moulded track, while just ahead the Harken mainsheet track has plenty of adjustment for tweaking the slab reefed mainsail.

Halyards are neatly but sensibly not totally hidden in gutters and run either side of the flush hatches and solar panel - a clever addition. Sidedecks are clear as the shrouds are inboard ahead of the genoa track. A second genoa car track on the cabin roof adjoins the Harken self-tacking jib track, another worthwhile factory-fitted option for short-handed cruising.

Moving forward to the bow, again the area is tidy thanks to the below-deck furler. A 1500w Lewmar V4/5 vertical windlass with capstan is the only protrusion and the rode runs through double rollers from a deep chain locker.

Behind it the large sail locker is a useful

ABOVE: A truly versatile sailplan includes twin headsails, self tacking jib and conventional poled spinnaker for the race track which means the 509 should have a wide appeal.

RIGHT: Jeanneau's Sun Odyssey 509 has bluewater credentials combined with a stylish overall design.



JEANNEAU 509 BLUEWATER ODYSSEY





PICTURE BY: KEVIN GREEN

space with large entry hatch (for quickly stuffing errant kites) and has ladder access. It would benefit from some more finishing however – exposed wiring and rows of sharp deck screw ends would shred that errant kite.

CLASSIC YET MODERN SALOON

Saloon entry is via the in-vogue saloon style doors – a design that allows the hatch sill to be reduced to 150mm from 300mm for easier access – but washboards would be my preference.

Jeanneau offer several layouts along with three or four cabin options. These include a longitudinal galley, ensuites for all four cabins and variations in the lounge. The review boat came with an owner's suite forward and two symmetrical aft cabins, with one ensuite there.

In the saloon the lounge included a coffee table integrated into the side bench, though some may prefer a clear bench for stretching out on; yet another option. The portside dinette seats six comfortably and eight at a push while furnishings include moveable chairs with large bases for stability at sea.

The cream-coloured cloth upholstery on the review boat is not the most practical but certainly is a stylish contrast to the light Alpi wood veneer throughout which gives a modern yet practical feel to the saloon. Good touches include the compression post clad in matching wood, nicely integrating it into the forward bulkhead of the saloon.

There's always a compromise with the open plan layout of modern cruising boats when it comes to moving around in their saloons on the open sea but the 509 does have longitudinal wooden handrails in the high ceiling and the forward bulkhead as well as in the cabins.

In the T-shaped galley, space is aplenty as you'd expect on a 50 foot cruising boat. Double sinks and dual fridge/freezer (255L) should cope with most chilled items while the three burner Eno gimbaled stove/oven and microwave takes care of culinary eventualities.

A stylish 20 bottle wine chiller, an optional extra beside the lounge, ensures the party kicks into full swing while above is a work surface, but perhaps a bit too far away for the chef. Other good features include soft-close drawers and excellent storage thanks to more than 15 cupboards throughout the spacious saloon.

The 509 comes with an impressive list of white good options including washing machine, aircon, dryer, water maker and even a desalinator that generates 60L/PH. Running all this 220V equipment requires the 6.5kw generator to be installed in the stern quarter.

Thanks to deep bilges, in the saloon any

SPECIFICATIONS

Price	\$424,024 (base boat from Performance Boating, NSW)
Price	\$457,328 (with the 360 degree docking, bow-thruster and autopilot)
Overall length	15.38 m
Hull length	14.98 m
Waterline length	13.92 m
Beam:	4.69 m
Displacement light load with deep draft keel	13,900 kg (provisional)
Draft std cast iron fin keel	2.28 m
Draft shoal cast iron fin keel	1.73 m
Engine	75 HP saildrive with 360 Docking option
CE category (in process)	A12
Fuel	240 L
Water	615 L
Sail area std	114.0 m ²
Sail area 'performance plus'	134.0 m ²
Sail area with self-tacking jib	104.0 m ²
Distributors in Australia	www.jeanneauaustralia.com

ABOVE: Several layout options give the buyer a lot of choices and the mood is a nice mix of modern and classic in the saloon



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minor water ingress won't affect stability and parts of the area are useful storage. There's also plenty of depth around the 75hp engine, set high on stainless mounts with the ZF pod saildrive gearbox accessible from the cabins, along with main oil filter.

Lifting up the companionway gives quick access to top-up the oil, water filters and 110amp starting battery. House batteries are triple 110 A/H with another two optional and an 80A alternator runs off the Yanmar. Alternatively, trickle charging the batteries can be done from the optional 68w solar panels integrated into the cabin top.

The portside navigation faces aft and shares the dinette seating. It is dominated by a large 26" LED screen that can show charts and other media but there's enough room for paper charts – always an essential for secondary use and maintaining separate position fixes – thanks to a large table with nearby cupboards; where a traditional plotter could be installed.

The master cabin in the forepeak is a pleasant berth with good natural light from elongated portholes and double deck hatches (while night lighting looks to be a mix of LED with some halogen throughout the boat).

The island bed has separate mattresses and is surrounded by fitted wooden surfaces – all that's missing is some longitudinal shelving as there's a lot of topside height. Over at the vanity, the table is a good office space and has a movable stool styled similarly to the dinette chairs. Again, oodles of storage with wardrobe and cupboard space on either side and under the bed.

For ablutions the ensuite has a shower area separated from the Jabsco head with Perspex door. Other pluses here include a shower seat and four cupboards finished in the Alpi Teak veneer used throughout.

Guest accommodation, in the two asymmetrical stern cabins, is fairly standard but with good surrounding shelf space. Only downside is the cockpit sole bulkhead which intrudes on standing space. Natural light is good thanks to windows and opening hatches and the review boat layout had the bathroom beside the port cabin.

VERSATILE SAILPLAN

Showing serious sailing credentials, the 509 comes with a range of sailplan options which benefits both fast passage making and club racing. The Performance Pack fitted to our boat meant both a large (upgraded from 106 to 140% genoa) and a Code 0 unfurled, while a fully battened slab reefed Technique Voile mainsail lay in lazy jacks; accessed by climbing the pull-out mast pegs.

The double spreader Z-Spars deck-stepped rig is held up by inboard wire shrouds,

tightened fore and aft by a Sailtec hydraulic backstay. For reducing those downwind angles, there's a conventional symmetrical spinnaker pole clipped to the mast as well, so the 509 really is well equipped.

The solid GRP hull has an injection-moulded deck with large tie rods from the shrouds attached to substantial internal moulded beams. Outside, the waterline is maximised yet there's enough rake on the stem and stern to give the 509 an elegant rather than abrupt profile. Her wide stern is tucked in with a hard chine while a fairly standard cast iron fin or shoal draft version keeps everything upright.

AT SEA

Casting off from the pontoon in a 50 foot yacht can be a daunting prospect, especially if it's just you and your wife. In fact dockside manoeuvring can stress out even old salts so it's unsurprising that pod drives are growing in popularity on sailboats and the French builder has responded with the introduction of 360 Docking last year, the result of a collaboration with ZF Marine and Yanmar.

Available on eight Jeanneau models now, the uptake rate has been strong with about 70% of new owners choosing the easy docking option. Taking a mere 1.6 seconds to swivel the propeller into the desired direction, the joystick is moved then twisted to increase the revs and the system is very intuitive. Just add a touch of bow thruster going sideways and no dramas will ensue; and that's exactly what we did as we departed Cannes marina to sample the day's Mediterranean breeze, a fickle creature at the best of times.

Cranking up the 75HP Yanmar saildrive I motored clear of the coast, doing a brisk 9.1 knots (28000rpm) and with the throttle fully down reached 10 knots (while probably doubling fuel consumption) as I searched

for some pressure along the beautiful French Riviera. Hughie was playing hard to get until eventually my host Erik Stromberg, Jeanneau's director of product development, spotted some breeze around the rugged islands in the bay.

We sprang into action – Erik unzipping the sailbag while I clicked the helm to auto and went forward in the cockpit to wrap the halyard around the electric Harken. After the main was run up and the solid vang tensioned I returned

FIGURE 1 – Sail Plan



FIGURE 2 – Boat Layout



THE FORWARD COCKPIT AREA IS UNCLUTTERED WITH ALL SAIL CONTROLS EITHER ON THE CABIN TOP OR BACK NEAR THE HELMS.



PICTURE BY: JEANNEAU/KEVIN GREEN

Wide walkway between helms and spacious swim platform gives the 509 plenty of appeal at rest.

to the helm and rolled out the Code 0. All easily done, which allowed me to relax on the teak-clad coaming as the 509 settled into the light wind.

The lightweight Carbonautica wheel effortlessly controls the spade rudder, allowing me to focus on our beam reach in the 5.1 knot breeze, eventually squeezing an impressive 4.8 knots boatspeed in the flat conditions. Tacking Code 0's of course involves a bit of effort, with it having to be furled on its continuous line then unfurled once tacked but all this was done from the helms and we proceeded on our way, past the island that actor Hugh Grant lives on.

With pressure funnelling between the island and the mainland it was my excuse to unroll the genoa, again easily done with sheets guided through jammers right beside the helmside Harkens. As the breeze fluctuated between 8-10 knots we hardened up with 5.1 knots showing on the Raymarine ST70 as our sleek bow aimed towards Antibes, the kind of place this stylish boat wouldn't look out of place in.

Overall I think the 509 achieves its aims of being a versatile cruising yacht and I would expect to see plenty in next year's ARC, mostly at the front of the fleet, as the 509 is definitely a winner on all fronts. ✨

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