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SUN-SATIONAL

With two fresh models for 2018, the **JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 440** and **490** redefine deck layouts in innovative new ways.

BY HERB MCCORMICK & MARK PILLSBURY

Every 10 years or so, a new wrinkle in boat design or layout comes along that alters the way in which we perceive cruising boats. Way back when (OK, more than a decade ago), it was the not-so-subtle shift from full-keel yachts to those with fin blades and skeg-hung rudders. More recently, raised deck saloons changed the way we looked at interior spaces, opening up the main living area with wraparound windows, more light and headroom, and panoramic views. Then came chines, once the purview of metal boats but suddenly ubiquitous in fiberglass production craft, with claims of better performance (maybe) and voluminous accommodations (definitely). And let's not forget the explosion of cruising catamarans, which are a separate discussion altogether.

Now, with the introduction of Jeanneau's Sun Odyssey 440 and 490 — the first models launched in the eighth generation of the company's Sun Odyssey line (time flies!) — we may be witnessing yet another shift in the evolution of mass-produced cruisers. It's too early to tell, of course, but this latest design wrinkle totally impressed our judging panel in last fall's Boat of the Year contest, so much so that they unanimously dubbed the 440 the Most Innovative yacht for 2018 (see "A Most Unusual Year," January 2018).

So what, exactly, is this revolutionary innovation? The deck layout and, especially, the cockpit configuration. Really? That's it? Yes, and anyone who's ever clambered over a coaming in a nasty seaway and felt the world had just become a very dangerous and unforgiving place will certainly understand this once they've experienced the ingenious arrangement both models share.

The biggest change is in the sloping side decks, which are basically outboard on- and off-ramps that lead from sole level in the cockpit directly up to the level of the coachroof. Then, with lower shrouds set inboard and upper shrouds placed outboard, the path to and from the foredeck is equally unimpaired.

But as they say, it's the sum of the parts that make up the whole, and the cockpits on these sister ships have many other features. Let's begin with the 440. The layout is asymmetric, meaning the central table is offset to port, allowing easy egress from the companionway through to the drop-down transom. The split backstays terminate inboard of the seats for the twin helms (usually they are outboard), which means the driver is not pinned against them when at the wheel but can sit comfortably with their back nestled into the stern rail. Flip-

The Sun Odyssey 440 was named Most Innovative in the 2018 Boat of the Year contest. For photo galleries of both the 440 and 490, visit cruisingworld.com/1805jeanneau.

BILLY BLACK

SPECIFICATIONS

JEANNEAU SUN
ODYSSEY 440

LENGTH OVERALL

42'7" (13 m)

WATERLINE LENGTH

41'5" (12.64 m)

BEAM

14' (4.29 m)

DRAFT

7'2"/5'2" (2.2/1.6 m)

SAIL AREA (100%)

972 sq. ft. (90.38 sq. m)

BALLAST

5,027 lb. (2,280 kg)

DISPLACEMENT

18,874 lb. (8,561 kg)

BALLAST/DISPLACEMENT

0.26

DISPLACEMENT/LENGTH

119

SAIL AREA/DISPLACEMENT

21.9

WATER

87 gal. (330 l)

FUEL

53 gal. (200 l)

HOLDING

26 gal. (100 l)

MAST HEIGHT

60'6" (18.4 m)

ENGINE

45 hp Yanmar

DESIGNER

Philippe Briand/Jeanneau Design

PRICE

\$360,000

Jeanneau

410-280-9400

jeanneau.com

SEA TRIAL

WIND SPEED

10 to 22 knots

SEA STATE

Choppy

SAILING

Closehauled: 8.6 knots

Reaching: 9.6 knots

MOTORING

Cruise (2,800 rpm) 7.9 knots

Fast (3,150 rpm) 8.5 knots

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down coamings are another pleasant surprise; they can be positioned upright when sailing and then lowered to convert into comfortable daybeds once the hook is down and the refreshments served.

Down below, there are three accommodations plans from which to choose. For a big family, there's a four-cabin layout with twin double staterooms forward and aft. Alternatively, you can opt for a forward owners cabin with the twin doubles aft. Our test boat had the layout I'd prefer, with the forward stateroom, a generous double cabin aft to starboard and a dedicated utility room/workshop to port.

With all three layouts, the main saloon is remarkably open thanks to the rig placement for the deck-stepped mast, which is well forward. This means the compression post down below is also positioned forward. The compromise here is that it removes a bit of room from the owners cabin, but the trade-off, I think, is worth it (after all, the double berth is appropriately sized, and you don't need the extra area if the space is primarily used for sleeping or lounging anyway). Plus, when the double doors for the cabin are opened, the entire floor plan is open as well.

The saloon in all three versions is identical, with a navigation station, straight-line galley and head to port, and a dining table with a U-shaped settee and a second head to starboard. A trio of windows in both sides of the hull bathe the interior in plenty of natural light.

As with the interior layout, there are also three rigs from which to choose: a standard rig with a full-battened mainsail, a performance rig with a taller mast and tricked-out sails, and a third option with an in-mast furling main. Our test boat during sea trials on Chesapeake Bay was equipped with the third choice. To be honest, the rather shapeless sails were less than impressive, but in a breeze

that topped off at better than 20 knots, we managed speeds of over 8 knots, and as the wind softened into the 10-knot range, we still recorded a decent 5-plus knots of boat speed. The dual helms were light and totally responsive, and our overall opinion was that the 440 would be one hell of a boat to steer with either the standard or performance sail package. The last thing you want to do with a hull this fast and slippery is put a governor on it.

It will be interesting to

see if other builders adopt or create something similar to Jeanneau's innovative cockpit and deck layout — imitation, as the old saying goes, is the sincerest form of flattery — but there's no question it's a fresh, smart take on one of the most important features on any cruising sailboat. Whoever said there is nothing new under the sun hasn't had a look at the Sun Odyssey 440.

Herb McCormick is CW's executive editor.

MEET THE BIG SISTER



The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 490 enjoys a nice brisk sail off Miami, where it debuted last winter.

Hot on the heels of launching the Sun Odyssey 440 last fall, Jeanneau this winter brought a big sister — a stunning 49-footer — to Miami's International Boat Show for its North American debut.

Like the 440, which won accolades from our Boat of the Year judges following the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, the Sun Odyssey 490 features Jeanneau's creative cockpit and topside design that includes

uncluttered side decks that slope down to meet the cockpit sole. On the 440, the cockpit table is offset to provide a clear path from the transom to the companionway. On the 490, it's the companionway that's slightly offset to port to achieve the same end. On both boats, seat coamings fold out to create spacious spots for lounging. A double backstay, whose ends terminate inboard on the transom, leaves the corners of the cockpit open for the helms-

man to work at either of the twin wheels, where winches are mounted nearby and inboard to facilitate trimming, and where there are clear sight lines to all instruments, including chart plotter and engine display.

Eventually, all these attributes will be duplicated as Jeanneau adds more new models to the eighth generation of its Sun Odyssey line. In the meantime, I'm willing to wager here and now that many of these ideas will be copied in some fashion or another by rival builders, because each and every one makes sailing either safer, easier or more fun.

But new ideas aboard the 490 aren't limited to the great outdoors. Down below, the distinctive lines of the full-chined Philippe Briand hull translate into voluminous interior space that has been put to practical and attractive use by designer Jean-Marc Piaton. With a beam of nearly 15 feet, the saloon can't help but look spacious — and it is, with three different areas in which to congregate. First, there's the nav station to port at the foot of the companionway stairs. It has a properly sized desk for chart work, and cushioned seats fore and aft, so it doubles as a breakfast nook or place to sit and chat.

Also to port is Piaton's take on the now popular galley-forward design. A Corian U-shaped counter gives the cook(s) lots of working space. When standing and facing outboard (with a view out to the sea), double sinks are to the left. A top-opening fridge and gimballed three-burner stove and oven sit front and center. In the right corner, there's space for a pop-up microwave, and beneath the counter that abuts the forward bulkhead, there's room for an additional fridge or freezer. Drawers and storage areas with deep fiddles abound. The latter will keep gear from sliding about in a seaway, and they provide much-appreciated handholds.

Opposite is the dining area. A generously sized table drops to make a berth for additional guests, and is

surrounded by U-shaped seating and a centerline bench. Additional storage is outboard of the couches, helping to keep weight low and eliminating the need for overhead compartments that would restrict one's view. Add in ports in the hull and cabin sides, and overhead hatches that let light pour in, and you get an interior that is bright and feels big but secure underway.

Space is put to good use in sleeping areas too. The aforementioned offset companionway is flanked on either side by doors to the two aft cabins, each fit out with a rectangular double bed and hanging locker. The location of the stairs also makes room for a large head and shower to starboard that's shared. If desired, one of the cabins can be converted into a workshop or stor-

In 16 knots of breeze, we trucked upwind with the GPS speed in the high 7s. In one puff, I read 8.7 knots.

age space. (There are also options for four cabins and four heads, or five cabins and three heads.)

It's the owners cabin forward that benefits most from the space created by the chines. From the queen-size rectangular bed, one looks aft at a centerline bookshelf and flat-panel display screen. Outboard to either side are hanging lockers. To port, there's a head and sink in their own compartment. To starboard, there's another sink outboard, and tucked behind the bookshelf there's a large shower stall on the centerline with an opening hatch overhead. The cabin actually feels like a small apartment.

It's a small gripe, but jumping aboard the 490's fold-up swim platform to go for a test sail after the show, the step up to the cockpit sole seemed rather tall. Apparently, I'm not the only one to notice;

an intermediate folding foot-hold is going to be added to both the 490 and 440.

Getting underway and clearing the tight confines of the boat-show dock was not a problem, thanks to a retractable bow thruster. Once we were in open water, in-mast furling made setting the main an effortless task, as was unfurling and sheeting in the 106 percent genoa using the electric winches. Jeanneau long ago adopted double-ended German-style mainsheets led to line clutches near either wheel. I really like the setup because it gives you multiple ways to trim the sail, and either sheet is at your fingertips in case things have to happen fast.

While crewmates lounged around the cockpit table forward, I made full use of the working space at the helms to tack back and forth a few times singlehanded. The boat spun on a dime and accelerated nicely. "So responsive!" I jotted in my notes. With the breeze up and the boat heeled, the twin rudders proved their worth.

My one wish was that the 490 had been rigged with the standard full-batten main, lazy jacks and boom pouch. Still, in 16 knots of breeze, we trucked upwind with the GPS speed in the high 7s; in one puff, I read 8.7 knots. Off the breeze, on a reach (with the wind down to maybe 10 to 12 knots), we made 6 knots. I'd definitely take advantage of the boat's bowsprit and order a downwind sail if I were a paying customer. For someone headed up and down the Intracoastal Waterway, there's also an option for a bridge-friendly 63-foot mast.

You can get into a stripped-down version of the 490 for \$354,400, ready to go and delivered to the East Coast. Load it up with perks such as air conditioning, electronics and a 7.5 kW Onan genset, as was the boat we sailed, and the price will be closer to \$425,000. Either way, you'll be buying into a whole new way of experiencing life afloat.

Mark Pillsbury is CW's editor.

SPECIFICATIONS

JEANNEAU SUN
ODYSSEY 490

LENGTH OVERALL
48'6" (14.78 m)

WATERLINE LENGTH
43'5" (13.23 m)

BEAM
14'8" (4.47 m)

DRAFT (standard/shoal)
7'4"/5'4" (2.24/1.63 m)

SAIL AREA (100%)
1,188 sq. ft. (110.4 sq. m)

BALLAST (standard/shoal)
6,327/7,083 lb.
(2,870/3,213 kg)

DISPLACEMENT (standard)
24,890 lb. (11,290 kg)

BALLAST/DISPLACEMENT
0.25

DISPLACEMENT/LENGTH
136

SAIL AREA/DISPLACEMENT
22.3

WATER
169 gal. (640 l)

FUEL
63 gal. (238 l)

HOLDING
34 gal. (129 l)

MAST HEIGHT
65'4" (19.91 m)

ENGINE
57 hp Yanmar, saildrive

DESIGNER
Philippe Briand/Piaton Bonet
Yacht Design/Jeanneau Design

PRICE
\$425,000
Jeanneau
410-280-9400
jeanneau.com

SEA TRIAL

WIND SPEED
15 to 18 knots

SEA STATE
Moderate waves

SAILING
Closehauled 7.8 knots
Reaching 6 knots

MOTERING
N/A

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BACK *to* BASICS

A pair of simple, beachable pocket cruisers hints at the fun of just going out for a sail.

BY MARK PILLSBURY

Most of the new sailboats I look at in a given year have me filling my notebook with lines' worth of creature comforts, electronics packages and long lists of options, from air conditioning to windows that darken at the flick of a switch. So that's why a pair of simple sailboats — each a throwback in its own way — sort of stood out from the crowd at last year's U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland.

At first glance, the new Stiletto-Xc and the Malbec

r8 are very different beasts. Heck, the former has two 30-foot hulls built from exotic fibers and resins, and the latter is a monohull and about two-thirds the size.

But the boats share a “keep it simple” credo, and both are the products of builders who've reached to their pasts to enlighten the future.

Stiletto catamarans were built in Florida from 1976 to 1986, and attracted a cultlike following. Known for their rocket-ship looks, including tear-shaped companionway

pod, they performed admirably as spirited daysailers or outright racers. They could be parked on a beach, and whole families could sleep topside, enjoying the night air after a day of thrills on the water.

In 2016, a group of Stiletto owners and devotees licensed the brand, secured a factory in Columbia, North Carolina, found financing and hired multihull designer Doug Schickler to freshen the concept. The ultimate goal is to build a foiling cat, the Xf, but in the interim, the Stiletto-Xc (“c” is for cruising) was developed, aimed to appeal to a wider audience.

The Xc is 30 feet long, built from Kevlar and Nomex honeycomb coring and epoxy resin. The boat is designed to be trailered and, like its predecessor, sailed off the beach, if desired. With 4-foot daggerboards raised, it floats in a foot or less of water. Accommodations below in the hulls are minimal: a mattress for sleeping in one, a simple galley and head opposite.

Hull number one was introduced in Annapolis, and was still a bit of a prototype — but what a hoot to sail. A traveler, which spans the width of the transom, provided excellent control of the mainsail. The jib is intended to be self-tacking, but was rigged with sheets and leads the day we went out. Just as on a beach cat, tacking — backwinding the jib to blow the bow around — took a little getting used to, but once mastered, it was off to the races. In maybe 10 knots of breeze, the speedo hovered in the low-7 range. As the wind petered out, we popped a chute and gained another half a knot as we headed for the barn.

A base boat costs just shy of \$90,000; set up with a 9.9 hp Honda outboard and a few other options, the boat we

sailed had a sticker price of \$120,000.

The Malbec r8 is built by Ventura Sport Boats, whose owner, Ken Lange, has a boat-building resume that includes a number of pocket cruisers, including the popular West Wight Potter. The 18-footer was designed by Herald Norbert Ruesch and first built in Argentina. Lange purchased the molds, made some modifications, and began manufacturing the boat as the Malbec in Oxnard, California.

His goal: Produce a boat that can sleep four, and sell it for less than \$20,000. Adding a small outboard and trailer tacks another four grand onto the bill.

“I say hats off to the builder because I think the whole idea of getting a boat to market at that price is something that our industry as a whole is really lacking,” said Boat of the Year judge Ed Sherman.

There were three aboard when we took the boat for a sail in nearly calm conditions, which is too bad. Had we had a little more breeze to work with, or a lighter load, I suspect the ride might have been lively.

Below, there are indeed bunks for four in a cushioned 6-foot-long V-berth and on settees to either side. A small table can be mounted for meals, and there's room for a simple camp stove, cooler and water jug. There's even an option to add an electrical panel and battery for night sailing, if desired. Lange has spruced up the fiberglass interior with a blue-fleck coating; a large companionway hatch lets in ample light and provides headroom.

A 4-foot centerboard with 300 pounds of lead gives the boat a bit of stiffness when deployed; raise it up and you can float in 10 inches of water.

Many a sailing family has gotten its start on just such a vessel. To be able to do it for less than 20 grand and still enjoy that new-boat smell, well, that's saying something.

Mark Pillsbury is CW's editor.



Malbec r8



Stiletto Xc