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OWNER AND SCRIBE ENJOY MAIDEN SAIL ON BRAND NEW DEHLER 46

IT'S A rare privilege to be allowed to share an owner's first sail on his or her brand new boat. Over the dozens of years I have tested yachts it has only happened a few times. In reality the maiden outing of Richard Clark's new Dehler 46 was a case of seizing a tiny weather window amidst a brace of winter storms. It was much more of a short shakedown, a little sea trial before the proud owner was waiting to have his wife and family out to enjoy their first precious sail together, writes YL boat test editor Andi Robertson.

Along with Inspiration Marine's Miles Stratton we shared a peach of a morning, if not exactly stolen from summer at least a sunny interval which reminded us all of the beauty and tranquillity that the Clyde estuary can offer in December.

We saw two other yachts out. Once more a welcome reminder not only of how well Dehler span the racer-cruiser/cruiser-racer equation with style, efficiency, speed and economy in equal portions, but poses the question why anyone would keep their yacht

anywhere else.

Having flown from the south of England for £40 and arrived on the Kip dock at 1100hrs, there is no better place to be sailing in the UK and Ireland!

It's instructive to spend time with the new owner. He and his wife are replacing a much loved X Yachts 383. With three young children they wanted something a little bigger with good, but safe sailing performance. The plan, as usually worked out with the X Yacht, is to be able to do one 'boys' week a season, in regatta mode, shall we say, then cruising faster and more extensively, and maybe racing at an event.

Dehler's philosophy is much like their car counterparts in their native Germany, say Audi or BMW. The owner can buy a more basic saloon or estate car package which still gives great handling, good speed and high spec, off the shelf as it were, or you can go for a more performance option yacht with carbon rig, deep performance foils and higher spec film sails.

The Dehler 46 was first launched back in 2015 and more than 60 have been sold worldwide, in all guises, scoring success under ORC in their native northern Europe and in the Med, but equally, as in the mode chosen by Richard Clark and his family, it is most often set up as a fast, safe cruiser.

He has his set with a removable forward track for the self tacking jib, but will sail it with the overlapping headsail when the boat's in action with a more experienced, stronger crew. Naturally they looked at the X Yacht equivalent and the Arcona, but both were significantly more expensive.

The 46 is from the Judel/Vrolijk office. The hull is long, actually nearer to 50ft than 45ft, with a highly effective long waterline length. But what is immediately apparent is the flare in the aft quarters which is quite pronounced. This gives speed and power when heeled, providing a quick addition of effective waterline



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length, but minimises surface area drag in lighter airs, when upright.

It is a nice, sweet lined counterpoint to the latest slab sided, boxy, chined designs.

There are four keel options, up to 2.5m draft on the comp version with displacement between 11,550kg and 10,700kg. The comp rig is one metre taller.

A major selling point for Dehler is the carbon/glass reinforced structural grid. Not only does this give a solid, stiff solution, but it is much better than the steel chassis options used by other marques as there is less propensity for the hull to separate on hitting something hard with the keel.

The deckline is especially sweet with the long coachroof window stretching the hull length nicely. In fact there are three independently opening ports. The sidedecks are wide and safe, not usually an issue these days, but for young, adventurous feet; an important asset.

The cockpit is big and spacious but with excellent working areas. All the main winches are electric. The helm's

space is good with fold up steering platforms and spacious seating outboard. The big, safe transom drops to make a bathing or boarding platform. Otherwise the seating is wrapped with good, deep coamings, the table is well spec'd without being too intrusive and will come off when required.

The aft locker in the cockpit sole is big enough to take a six man liferaft, albeit with some careful research for one of the right dimensions. The split backstay is hydraulic powered with the ram on the starboard quarter.

With six to ten knots of breeze and beautiful winter sun the Dehler 46 gave a tantalising snapshot of her key characteristics. As well as tracking beautifully upwind and close reaching it was amazing how she picked up as soon as there was a defined seven knots. Then there was a notable acceleration hump and speeds really rose as soon as she was nicely powered up. Below that she was hardly sluggish. This was equally appreciable from off the boat on the

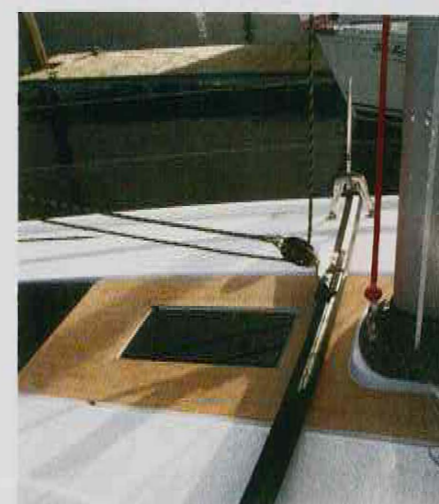




photo launch. Powered up, with a heel on, the 46 really moved sweetly.

On the helm she is light and positive and responding to the small changes in breeze is easy. The key USP in this

context is the breadth of use. In any breeze you can set the self steering and enjoy the ride, but this is a helm's yacht which will eat miles with ease while not over taxing the helm and crew.

It appears stiff and with the smaller self tacking jib, sails with little attention required.

We set the cruising chute for the reach back to Kip and the Dehler 46 picked up another couple of knots, responding in the chilly puffs off the Cowal hills with an easy acceleration. Again it is nice to appreciate the twin rudders despite our requests for more breeze not being met.

There are three different interior options. The owner's forecabin is spacious and beautifully appointed with lots of natural light to enhance the large areas of wood finish. There is a good, narrow seat to port of the queen sized island berth, suitable for dressing and undressing under way, for example. There is not so much stowage and locker space other than the huge space under the bed. But the large ensuite heads/shower room is also excellent.

The main saloon feels open and accommodating. The most prominent feature is the U-shaped saloon to starboard with lovely big deep seat

backs, loads of seating around a large table. Here the space is that of a 50 footer. Opposite, the nav station slides to be forward or aft facing but allowing the port settee to become a full length berth. Dehler have this smart fold down cover over the instrument panel which keeps the continuity of the locker lines.

The galley is good with many lockers and cupboards, two fridges, a pull out fridge drawer and top loading freezer. Overall the interior is beautiful, simple, but neatly executed with a high standard of workmanship.

I, and many others, still have a particular passion for Dehler as a range which still bears the strong influence of the uncompromising Dehler family; knowledgeable, pragmatic racers who know what their owners want. They enjoy the marque's racing successes but are not slaves to it. And here their flagship is still pretty much in a class of its own in terms of offering the whole package at a really realistic price.

DEHLER 46 SPECIFICATION

LOA	14.40m
LWL	12.90m
Beam	4.35m
Draught	2.25m (standard) 2.50m (comp) 1.85m (shallow) 2.45m (west coast)
Displacement	11,200kg (standard) 10,700kg (comp) 11,550kg (shallow) 11,050kg (west coast)
Ballast	3,500kg (standard) 3,150kg (comp) 3,850kg (shallow) 3,350kg (west coast)
Engine	Volvo D2-55 (53hp)
Fresh water	approx 450l
Fuel tank	approx 210l
CE Certificate	Class A
Mast above WL	21.20m (standard) 22.20m (comp)
Total sail area	114.1m ² (standard) 128.0m ² (comp)
Main sail	64.4m ² (standard) 73.0m ² (comp)
Furling Jib 106%	49.7m ² (standard) 55.0m ² (comp)
Spinnaker	174.5m ² (standard) 185.7m ² (comp)
Gennaker	160m ² (standard) 180.0m ² (comp)
Rig	I 18.10m (standard) I 18.90m (comp) J 5.29m P 17.60m (standard) P 18.70m (comp) E 6.25m (standard) E 6.55m (comp)
Design Interior	judel/vrolijk & co Dehler

