

tradeboat
SAIL TEST
JEANNEAU
SUN ODYSSEY 409

PHOTOS ALLAN WHITING

PERSONAL **BEST**

Jeanneau's Sun Odyssey 409 is the *European Yacht of the Year 2011*. But how does it measure up Down Under? **ALLAN WHITING** reports





The swivelling GPS multifunction display (above left) on the cockpit table is included in the Navigation Pack option. Helm seats (above) face inward and forward. On three-cabin 409s, chairs flank a chart table opposite the U-shaped dinette (left).



that be required after a heavy grounding.

A cast iron keel with a choice of shoal or standard draft is fitted, and the design has a vertical leading edge and aft-tapering bulb that won't catch weed. An FRP rudder blade almost matches keel depth and between the two is a saildrive. Jeanneau must be a tad shy about this departure from its traditional shaftdrive, because there's no illustration of the leg in the brochure illustrations, but Jeanneau needs saildrives to offer joystick control system options. (See our Dock & Go report in *Trade-a-Boat* issue 415).

The standard mast is a constant-section extrusion with twin, swept-back spreaders, wire rigging, fixed backstay and poly running rigging. Options are Dyform rigging, a tackle-adjustable backstay and Dyneema running rigging and sheets.

AWARD-WINNING DECK

Briand Design was conservative about cockpit capacity and the result is a space that's comfortable for eight during a day sail, but not so large that the crew feels exposed when conditions aren't so relaxed. The forward- and inward-facing helm seats feel secure and the crew has well-positioned foot-bracing bars integrated into the cockpit table.

HOMELIKE ACCOMMODATION AND PLENTY OF RELAXING SPACE MAKES IT AN IDEAL FAMILY YACHT

Ease of sailing was a primary focus in the 409's design and that starts with twin wheels that have forward-facing and coaming helm seats, with bevelled sole recesses for foot bracing. Harken 46.2 mainsheet/jib sheet winches are positioned just in front of the wheels, with clutches adjacent to the winch bases. A combination of German mainsheet system and adjacent clutches means the primary winches can alternate as mainsheet and jib sheet winches quite easily. Their proximity to the wheels means that sheets can be controlled by the helmsperson when cruising.

The standard arrangement is for a slightly overlapping headsail, sheeted via inboard deck tracks and adjustable cars to the primaries, but a self-tacker and a 140 per cent overlapping headsail are optional. The test boat had all these sail choices, so it's cruised using the self-tacking jib and raced with the overlapping headies. The 409 has a proper mainsheet traveller, in front of the spray dodger base but, surprisingly, a rigid vang is an optional replacement for the standard tackle.

Running rigging is controlled by a portside cabin-top winch that can be swapped for a powered Harken Rewind winch, which powers in and out. The test boat was fitted with this option and a second cabin-top winch.

The central section of the transom drops down to form a teak-faced swimming platform and is light enough to be manually handled. It's flanked by two lazarettes — the starboard one being a gas locker with room for two LPG bottles — and a floor bin that will hold a tender outboard. An emergency tiller cover spins off with a winch handle.

AWARD-WINNING INTERIOR

The Sun Odyssey 409 comes with a choice of three layouts: three-cabin with one head; three-cabin with two heads; and two-cabin

with one head. The test boat had a three-cabin, one-head layout, finished in standard teak, with teak/ash-strip flooring. A walkthrough saloon layout makes head access easy from the dinette as well as providing ample floor space when handling spinnakers.

The forward cabin is the same size in all three layouts, but in the two-head configuration a combined shower and toilet fits between the bulkhead and the double vee-berth bed. In the case of the test boat this space was clear, but there's an optional vanity/desk and chair available for single-head boats. Jeanneau persists in having unused bulkhead flanges in its cabin interiors, even when the forward cabin head option isn't taken up. Surely there's a tidier way of finishing off than leaving an unsightly protrusion into such a beautiful cabin.

On the starboard side of the saloon is a four-place — six with removable stools — U-shaped dinette with centre table and aft of that an L-shaped galley. Opposite the dinette on three-cabin boats is a pair of lounge chairs flanking a chart table; a design that allows the chart table top to function as a coffee table when not needed for nav work. On two-cabin boats the chart table and one lounge chair move aft, allowing a two-seat lounge opposite the dinette. The standard dinette table is a centre-pedestal type, but an optional fold-over-top table is available. This module has a wine storage cabinet and pushes down to create a double bed base.

Two hull ports on each side help lighten the saloon, but privacy is gained by sliding curtains across them. The curtains fold invisibly into recesses when not required. In the forward and aft cabins the hull ports can be covered by solid sliding shutters that disappear into recesses when not in use.

There's a stainless steel handrail at the base of the companionway, fiddles on the galley tops that



The forward cabin (top) is the same size on all three SO 409 variants, but on two-head models, the en suite fits between the bulkhead and vee-berth, otherwise it's clear space as per the test boat. The L-shaped galley (above) is ready to serve being immediately aft of the dinette.

Jeanneau's Briand Design team resisted the temptation to turn the new 40-footer into a 50-footer, or a catamaran-style entertainer, so the Sun Odyssey 409 doesn't exhibit a big, fat bum, high freeboard and lumpy coach house. The freeboard is there in sufficient height to give full headroom throughout the interior, but it's broken up by four longitudinal hull ports and slimming striping. A long, unbroken band of coach house glazing focuses the eye lengthways along the boat and the coach house sides are convex, so cabin height isn't accented.

Hull shape isn't radical, with an almost plumb bow, slightly hollow forward sections, a flattish

mid-section profile and now-mandatory aft chines that taper off into the forward two-thirds of hull length. Current hydrodynamic thinking is that aft chines help with sailing performance and they don't do interior space any harm, either.

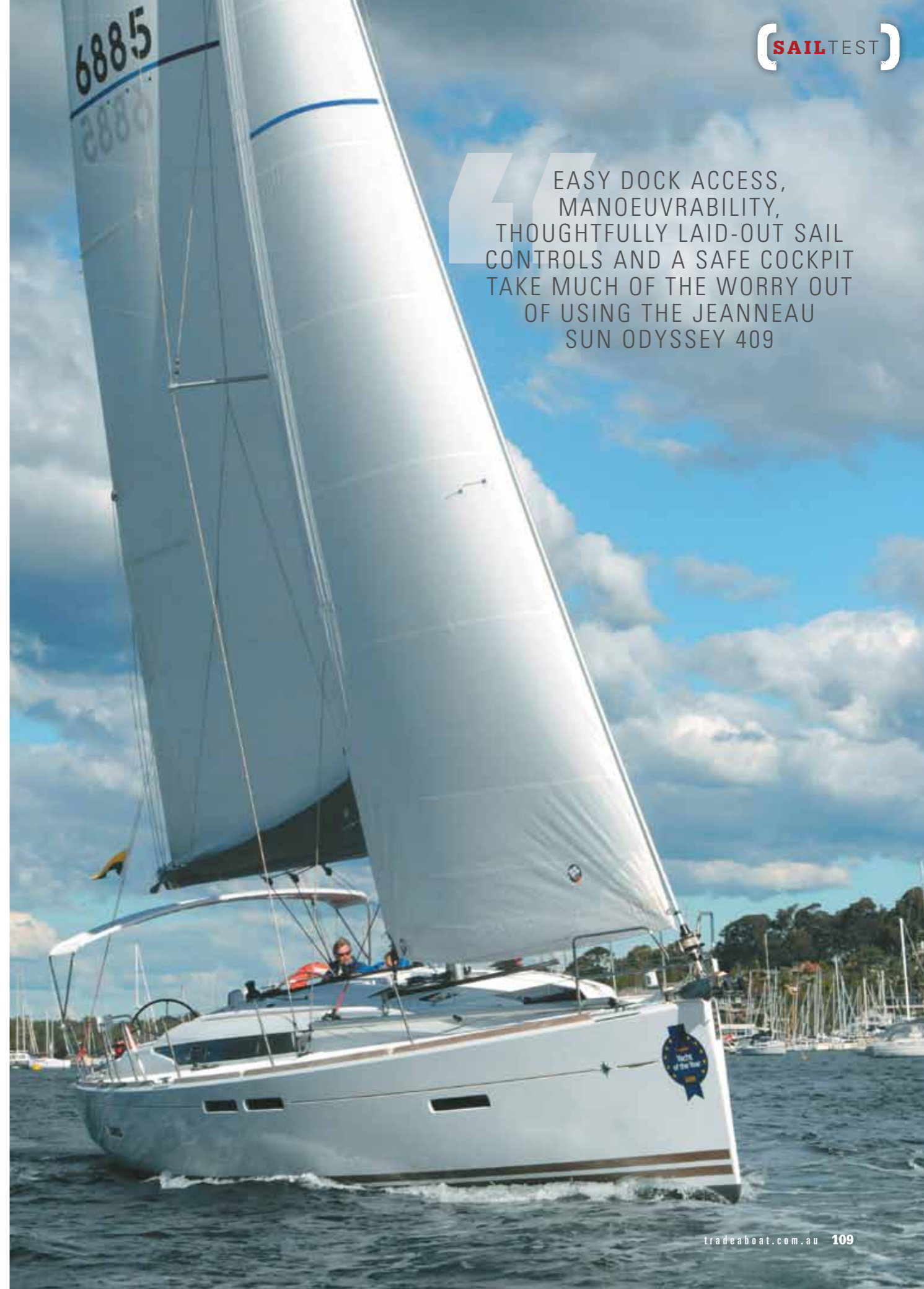
HULL TALK

Construction is a monolithic, handlaid FRP hull with a Prisma Process balsa-cored deck laminate and both are ISO gelcoat finished. A new FRP grid system with re-laminated high-load areas is employed as a hull stiffener and there's an emergency repair zone adjacent to the keel attachment. There is a dip in the pan below the floors that allows enough space to re-laminate should



Aft cabins (above left) in three-cabin layouts have double berths and wardrobes. Saloon head (left) has a separate shower stall. In forward and aft cabins, hull ports (above photos) are covered by sliding shutters that disappear into recesses when not in use.

EASY DOCK ACCESS, MANOEUVRABILITY, THOUGHTFULLY LAID-OUT SAIL CONTROLS AND A SAFE COCKPIT TAKE MUCH OF THE WORRY OUT OF USING THE JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 409



double as handholds, and handrails at shelf height and recessed into the cabin roof.

The saloon heads have separate showers, with optional plexiglass doors dividing shower and toilet, but the smaller forward head in two-head boats is a combo design.

Aft cabins in three-cabin layouts are both doubles with wardrobes, but the aft cabin in two-cabin layouts is a queen bed. This version also has a larger head compartment and a huge storage bin, accessed from the portside cockpit locker.

The galley is fitted with a gimballed two-burner gas stove with oven, a top-loader fridge/freezer, twin sinks with reversible cutting board lids and a glass splashback. There's a cleverly designed magazine rack at the front of the galley cupboards.

Engine access is excellent, via a lift-up companionway and large aft-cabin-bulkhead side covers. Large, lift-up floor panels provide access to under-sole plumbing and wiring and we were pleased to see a bilge pump sump and limber holes in the reinforcing grid.

The only downside of the saloon we could see was the lack of fresh air cross-ventilation that might

become an issue moored in a pen that doesn't align to the prevailing breeze. Only small hatches in the forward and aft cabins, the heads and galley open sideways.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Test breezes were light, with wind speeds ranging from six to 12kts. We relish these conditions when checking out cruiser/racers, where light-air performance is a good indicator of likely leg times and club-racing ability. Almost anything will go well in a blow.

The Sun Odyssey 409 slid out of its pen under little engine power and soon was motoring smartly along at 7kts, with almost no noise and vibration. When the engine warmed up, we took it momentarily to 9kts-plus at WOT.

An optional powered halyard winch had the main out of its boom bag with no effort and the self-tacking headsail unfurled easily. With no jib or mainsheet adjustment needed through the tacks the 409 went to windward with merely a turn of a wheel. All crew had to do was hang onto their drinks, if they'd neglected to put them in the fiddled holders on the cockpit table top.

[HIGHS]

- › Value for money
- › Ease of sail handling and manoeuvring
- › Accommodation, cockpit and deck layout

[LOWS]

- › Unused bulkhead moulding in forward cabin
- › Awkward mainsail stowage with bimini in place



Lewmar chain/cable steering and a balanced rudder meant the helmsperson didn't need to hurry across to the windward wheel, because the 409 held course beautifully.

Even with a traveller, mid-boom sheeting isn't ideal for mainsail control, but the upside is shorter mainsheet length, meaning there's less line to handle when gybing. The test boat had a basic Dacron, partially-battened standard offering. In concert with a self-tacker it had reasonable windward performance, but I've seen this boat club-racing with a genoa and it does well in its class. We'd love to try a 409 with the optional Performance sail kit: a fully-battened taffeta tri-radial main and matching 140 per cent headsail.

On the wind in club-race mode there would be more for the crew to do and jamming the leeward mainsheet frees that primary winch for headsail control. If the mainsheet hand needs to alter trim it can be done from

the windward winch, while the leeward winch is being used for headsail sheeting. I reckon you'd get away with some spinnaker handling with the standard winches, too, because the brace could go on the windward primary and the sheet to the leeward cabin top winch, leaving the leeward primary free for mainsheet adjustment.

We dropped the halyards down the companionway during our test, but there are optional rope bins for the forward end of the cockpit. Rope tails from the aft winches drop into a pair of lidded bins, so there are no lines to tangle feet cruising or two-sail racing.

We found tidying up the boat for berthing easy enough, but bagging the mainsail would be tricky with a dodger in place. Manoeuvring into a tight berth was straightforward, thanks to the large rudder and no evidence of prop-walk. A bowthruster is optional, but unless the boat needs to negotiate a tricky berth it shouldn't be necessary. ⚓

The upside of mid-boom sheeting (above) is shorter mainsheet length meaning less line to handle on gybes.

Facts & figures

JEANNEAU SUN ODYSSEY 409

AT THE HELM

A competent, safe cruising yacht that's easy for a small crew to handle, but with good club-racing potential. Homelike accommodation and plenty of relaxing space makes it an ideal family yacht.

PRICE AS TESTED

\$319,423

OPTIONS FITTED

Premiere Pack (amidships cleats, electric windlass, LED nav lights, shower divider door, 220V shorepower and charger, additional battery, ST-70, two-burner stove, second anchor roller, shades and flyscreens for hatches and ports, and cockpit shower); Preference Pack (CD/MP3 player, interior and cockpit speakers, power winch on cabin top, folding cockpit table, starboard lifeline gate and indirect saloon lighting); part Navigation Pack (spinnaker fittings, second cabin top winch and adjustable backstay); autopilot; bimini; and swivelling C90W GPS multifunction display on cockpit table

PRICED FROM

\$263,414

GENERAL

MATERIAL: FRP hulls and decks — balsa resin composite deck and monolithic hull

TYPE: Keelboat

LENGTH OVERALL: 12.34m

HULL LENGTH: 11.98m

WATERLINE LENGTH: 11m

BEAM: 3.99m

DRAFT: 2.1m; 1.55m (shallow-draft option)

WEIGHT: 7450kg

BALLAST: 2260kg (shallow draft keel 2470kg)

CAPACITIES

BERTHS: Two or three double-cabin berths; one or two heads

FUEL: 200lt

WATER: 530lt

HOLDING TANK: 80lt

FRIDGE-FREEZER: 180lt

SAILS

MAINSAIL: 42m² (optional 45m² fully battened Performance)

HEADSAIL: 28m² self-tacking jib (optional 35m² 106 per cent jib and Performance 48m² 140 per cent genoa)

SPINNAKER: 120m²

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL: Yanmar 3JH5-CE

TYPE: Diesel

RATED HP: 40

PROP: Saildrive with fixed three-blade propeller (folding prop optional)

SUPPLIED BY

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tradeboat SAYS...

Easy dock access, manoeuvrability, thoughtfully laid-out sail controls and a safe cockpit take much of the worry out of using the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 409. Below decks, it's naturally lit and has a choice of stylish yet practical layouts. Performance options available for cruiser/racers include tri-radial-cut sails

