

VROOM WITH A VIEW

PHOTOS SUPPLIED

The beauty of sportscruisers, like this Jeanneau NC 14, is their versatility – take the family away overnight, tow some watertoys – and all on a seakindly hull that's ideal for an offshore blast. KEVIN GREEN reports...



During recent years, French builder Jeanneau has created an extensive power range that includes centre consoles, sportsfishers, luxury cruisers and the utility NC range. The New Concept sportscruiser brand has sold more than 300 since its inception three years ago, with the NC 11 winning European Yacht of the Year in 2011 and the NC 9, which I test-drove in 2012, also selling in numbers.

The NC 14 is the new flagship to this range and aims to offer "an apartment on the water with terrace", to quote the French builder. It does this by maximising the internal volumes throughout the 45-foot Tony Castro hull, featuring elongated portlights and topside windows.

The overall shape has snubbed hull lines fore and aft and similarly abrupt topsides, lending the NC 14 a utilitarian look that certainly stood out even among the exotic fleet in the Cannes Marina when I boarded it.

More recently, the first Australian NC 14 was brought to the Sydney International Boat Show by NSW dealer Matthew Willett who said he had high hopes for this boat. "The NC 14 will appeal here due to its ability to suit a wide range of boaters including ex-yachties who want single-level, easy boating in a well-priced package," he told me.

While being very similar to the single-engined NC 9 that I enjoyed driving last year, the NC 14 does earn its flagship status by having its own unique characteristics, including being the first of the range to use Volvo Penta IPS, the first hull design from British superyacht guru Tony Castro and plenty of versatility for your onboard lifestyle.

VERSATILE CABIN

This useful versatility kicks-off as you step aboard via the electric passerelle which guides you safely onto the wide, teak swimplatform. The swimplatform is extendible thanks to the movable transom couch, so there's plenty of space when all those watertoys are deployed or at sea for safely stowing the rubber ducky; especially if you take the hydraulic lifting option.

The U-shaped seating also converts to a sunpad with dining table. The aft deck is well protected with a GRP roof and the high surrounding bulwarks ensure safe passage to the wheelhouse doors.



The wide, electrically operated sunroof transforms the NC 14 experience at the touch of a button.

STEPPING UP TO THE STEERING CONSOLE GIVES YOU COMMANDING VIEWS FORWARD AND ALL AROUND IN FACT – A GOOD SAFETY FEATURE WHEN THERE'S NO LOOKOUT TO GUIDE YOU



Bench seat helm stations are popular as they encourage family involvement.



Natural light and easy tones are a highlight in the saloon (top) and throughout the boat. Portside twin settees and table (above) convert to a daybed (right). A functional galley (below) is fully concealed when not in use.



Aft, the single-level entry via the triple sliding doors should allow easy serving of alfresco lunches from the portside galley or indoors to the starboardside dinette and yet another dining setup forward where opposing bench seats divided by a table sit alongside the helm. The longitudinal galley has all the necessities for the weekend escape or longer, thanks to the twin-burner ENO stove-oven, stainless steel sink, 130lt fridge and mini Electrolux dishwasher – all neatly covered in a streamlined, dark wooden worktop with smoothly rounded edges to prevent bruising at sea.

The only blemishes on this early-production model was some rough welds around the window supports. Meanwhile the adjustable dinette

table becomes a daybed, while the booth seating up front converts to an aft-facing lounge or perhaps a child's berth.

But underfoot is the biggest surprise – a large lazarette with space for plenty of heavy items that can also enhance stability when fully loaded with holiday gear. With no shafts, the Volvo Penta engines are positioned towards the back, freeing-up space here. Our test boat was fitted with a washing machine, freezer and of course being a French boat, wine racks; while leaving plenty of floor space for extra jerry cans of water, folding bicycles and so on. There's also good access here to all the main electrics, hot-water system and refrigeration components.

THE TWO-CABIN LAYOUT SHOULD SUIT A FAMILY OF FOUR OR A COUPLE WITH GUESTS



The double in the master cabin (this photo) cleverly splits to offer twin singles and is serviced by an en suite (right).



The twin-single cabin boasts clean styling and offers surprising space.

and there's plenty of headroom around the foot of the queen-sized bed too. Cleverly, it also separates to become two singles while revealing a hidden drawer. Two sizeable hanging lockers give plenty of additional storage, along with side shelves and a laptop recess. Natural light comes from those rectangular hull windows and an unusual curved top hatch that offers views forward; while opening that way as well to catch the breeze at anchor. The bathroom shower is at the back and nicely separated from the head with bi-folding doors, an opening porthole gives ventilation and sensibly there are two sets of handrails.

Guest cabin space is fairly limited by the saloon bulkhead, so queasy sailors should choose the outboard bunk with sea views rather than the more claustrophobic inside berth on which you should be able to sit up to read in bed – with LED spotlights – and there's a large wardrobe.

SMART SYSTEMS

As the first NC to utilise the forward-facing propellers used by the Volvo Penta IPS system, it gives this 45-footer plenty of versatility when it comes to manoeuvring in tight spots and with the Maxpower bowthruster fitted, your topsides should remain unscathed. Simrad's excellent 4G radar was also fitted and ideal for night-time port entries due to its broadband detailing.

A pair of 300hp Volvo Penta IPS400 D4s come as standard but I found that the larger 370hp D6s fitted to our test boat ensured sports cruiser performance – touching 30kts at full throttle – but more importantly

VIEWS ON HIGH

Stepping up to the steering console gives you commanding views forward and all around in fact – a good safety feature when there's no lookout to guide you. Also handy for single sailors are doors either side, allowing you to dart out and secure a warp to the midships cleats on both gunwales.

The console is a busy spot, controls and analogue engine dials dominated by a Simrad NSS 12in plotter nicely angled to allow the sitting or standing steerer to read it, even with the sunroof open.

The starboard end of the console houses the electronic throttles beside the optional IPS joystick, which is near the door so you can operate it from outside. A few ergos that could be better are the

awkwardly placed trim tabs above (rather than below) the throttles and a grab bar that obscures the system buttons. Generally though everything is well planned and finished throughout, the leather-clad wheel plus similar handrails enhancing this stylish Garroni-designed interior.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY LAYOUT

The two-cabin layout should suit a family of four or a couple with guests. Buyers can choose the two-head version (as on the test model) or opt for an inbuilt desk/vanity in the owner's cabin and the extra storage of a walk-in closet.

The owner's en suite cabin is in the bow and uses those upright topsides to utilise the space well



[HIGHS]

- > Flexible seating and accommodation layout
- > Useable topsides with versatile aft deck
- > Good performance and economy

[LOWS]

- > Cramped guest cabin
- > Console trim tab positioning
- > Some rough welds on saloon metalwork



[tradeboat SAYS...]

Jeanneau's NC 14 really does live up to its model name – New Concept – as it brings plenty innovation to the sportscruiser market, with a versatile interior packaged in a stylish hull that can take you wherever you want to go.

gave a comfortable cruising speed of 22kts without too much effort or cab noise. Engine access is via the aft deck hatch which takes you down via a ladder to a fairly busy space dominated by the Volvo D4s, with 11kW generator located midships, but leaving just enough space for servicing the essentials – filters, water and oil. The twin 450lt fuel tanks are forward as well, to help balance the trim from the aft-mounted engines.

On deck all the essentials are well-appointed with midships cleats, handrails and high guard rails to guide you safely forward to the bow for anchoring, where a vertical Lewmar windlass with remote control sits in the chain locker. Here, twin sunpads slope down to the teak deck to finish things off nicely.

AT SEA

Gliding out of Cannes Marina I aimed the NC 14 bow east towards Antibes and once clear of the harbour speed limit, opened the throttles to bring us onto the plane. The large windows all round gave me plenty of confidence on the wheel and only a rain shower spoilt things, causing me to click the electric roof closed.

The hull's flatter aft sections (compared to the NC 9 and 11) had us planing quickly and I reached for the trim tabs to bring the bow down (50 per cent trim). This caused me to inadvertently bump the throttle,

before sitting back on the comfy double seat to enjoy the ride, with a light touch on the leather clad wheel and minimum noise in the cab.

Searching for some added chop in the light swell I followed the old wake of the interisland ferry and set the NC 14 along its line, which caused a few groans from the saloon cabinetry before I banked the hard-chined hull into a series of turns. The 10-ton hull's good manners inspired ever tighter turns then figure-eights – with both handling and visibility remaining good as we banked over hard.

In a straight line I noted 3600rpm at 29kts with fuel consumed at 157lt/h. Throttling back to a more sedate cruising speed of 15kts gave an economical 62lt consumption, allowing a cruising range of 174nm; which would easily cover the offshore trip over the horizon to the world heritage island of Corsica, with plenty to spare.

Back inside the busy confines of the harbour, the IPS proved itself an option worth having as I held station outside our berth – despite the Mistral wind and wake from the passing superyachts – before edging astern into the tight berth aided by the forward-facing propellers which work efficiently in both directions. This was neatly done – as with everything about this boat. The NC 14 performs well, giving comfort with speed; so does everything you could ask for in a sportscruiser. 🚩

Facts & figures

JEANNEAU NC 14

PRICED FROM

\$649,000

OPTIONS FITTED

Upgraded engines, bowthruster, 11kW generator, air-conditioning, Simrad NSS12 MFD and 4G radar, VHF, second bathroom, washing machine, dishwasher, 22in LED TV, Sonic Hub, Fusion hi-fi, passerelle, and removable saloon carpet

GENERAL

MATERIAL GRP

TYPE Planing monohull

LENGTH OVERALL 13.73m

BEAM 4.1m

DRAFT 1.07m

WEIGHT 10,500kg

CAPACITIES

PEOPLE (NIGHT) 4

FUEL 900lt

WATER 414lt

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL 2 x Volvo Penta IPS400 D6 (as tested); 2 x 400hp

IPS400 D4 (standard);

TYPE Six-cylinder turbo-diesel

RATED HP 370 (each)

DISPLACEMENT 5.5lt (each)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit jeanneauaustralia.com

LAYOUT



Test day weather information supplied by

