



Jeanneau's Leader 40 offers luxury and performance in a fully optioned package. By Dag Pike

Weather plays a crucial role in boat testing: Sometimes you get calm seas and have to imagine how the boat would behave in rough water, and other times it's so tempestuous that everyone's reluctant to head out. When I tested Jeanneau's Leader 40, conditions were snotty and the sea trial was delayed several hours thanks to 40-knot winds. When the wind dropped to 30 knots, we went out into short, steep seas that proved the benefits of this yacht's deeper-than-average V-shaped hull.

The 40's hull has a 17-degree aft deadrise, which is not too unusual, but the deadrise remains con-



stant much farther forward than on similar-style vessels before rising to the bow, giving her the ability to cleave waves easily. Running upwind in the breaking 5-footers, the 40's speed was restricted to around 20 knots, which was good in these conditions. Downwind, I could use more throttle and felt encouraged to do so to stop the bow from dropping off into the trough, and 30 knots was a comfortable speed. You're unlikely to find yourself in these adverse conditions during normal cruising, but you can rest assured that the 40 has a good performance margin in tough seas.

Our crew wanted to go inshore to find calmer conditions to record performance data, but it was a speed-restricted area, so the manufacturer supplied the numbers seen here. According

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to the builder, the 40 has a top end of 32 knots with 300-horsepower Volvo Penta diesels. With the larger, 370-horsepower diesels or the MerCruiser gasoline engines, the speed reportedly rises into the high 30-knot range. All engine options are coupled to stern drives, and there is a joystick control option to enhance harbor maneuvering. I found the Volvo Penta Duoprop drives' engagement to be abrupt, but they helped when maneuvering into a tight berth inside the windswept marina.

The Leader 40 comes in two versions: the sportop, which has a fixed hardtop and retractable sunroof, and the open, which features an open cockpit that can be enclosed with canvas screens attached to the arch mast. Both have the same cockpit layout with a single-seat helm to starboard and a combined seat and sun bed to port, leaving the aft section as a loung-

SPECIFICATIONS:
LOA: 40'5" **BEAM:** 12'0" **DRAFT:** 3'7" **DISPL.:** 16,603 lb. **FUEL:** 192 gal. **WATER:** 66 gal.
DEADRISE: 17 degrees **ENGINES (tested):** 2 x 300 hp Volvo Penta diesels **ENGINES (opt.):** 2 x 370 hp Volvo Penta diesels or 2 x 380 hp MerCruiser gasoline inboards **BASE PRICE:** Upon request

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	DB(A)
600	4.7	0.8	53
1000	6.7	1.9	57
1500	9.1	4.8	66
2000	10.8	11.4	74
2500	18.3	16.8	74
3000	26.0	22.3	76
3560	32.3	30.8	80

TEST CONDITIONS:
 Speeds were measured by GPS off the west coast of France in calm seas and minimal wind with 60 percent fuel, full water and six persons aboard. Fuel consumption was measured with the Volvo Penta electronic engine-monitoring system. Sound levels were measured at the helm with windows and doors closed.

ing/open-air dining space with an aft sun bed. This is a practical solution, and the wraparound windscreen offers good protection from the wind and spray plus good visibility from the helm. On the sportop, headroom is limited and you don't want to stand up unless the sunroof is open. When it is, you have a great view over the top.

This 40's helm layout has an adjustable wheel, and the throttles are set directly under your right hand. A two-tier dash has engine and power trim dials at the top with the compass, while below is the central chart-plotter display. Belowdecks, the layout with two large cabins plus a central salon and galley demonstrates Jeanneau's mastery of maximizing space. The galley is beside the stairs. It has all the requirements for cooking with a two-ring gas cooktop, plus microwave and fridge, all of it topped with white-stone working surfaces. The salon sports an L-shaped



The salon area benefits from abundant light coming through those wide side windows. Retract the hardtop to put some wind in your hair.

settee surrounding a table with a TV on the opposite wall.

The master cabin is forward with a double bed and a cozy closet for weekend-cruise clothes. There is natural light from deck hatches and side windows, and this cabin has an en suite head.

The bulk of the guest cabin rests under the helm, so stand-up headroom is limited, but there is full headroom in the entrance for dressing. You need to watch your head as you enter because there is an intrusion from the footwell of the seats above too. In the standing area, Jeanneau's designers have found

space for a settee that is long enough to act as a child's berth, and a small wash basin takes some of the pressure off demand for the single head in the master. Throughout the accommodations, mahogany accents create a warm feeling.

Her engine compartment is accessed via a cockpit deck hatch, and it's an admittedly tight fit to get below, with limited headroom too. The use of stern drives allows the engines to be hard up against the transom, and there is space for an optional generator. For the DIY crowd, all of the motors' major service points are easily accessible.

The Leader 40 is at the top of Jean-

neau's sport-cruiser range. This series has been designed to offer a solid value for those who want exciting performance, but who don't want to break the bank to get it. In many ways, the Leader 40 is a remarkable 40-footer. Her designers have managed to fit a great deal into a compact space, and the boat does not feel crowded. As for performance, there is probably as much as you can handle, and engine options allow you to specify the performance and fuel to match your needs. So don't worry about the weather: She can handle it.

Jeanneau, 410-280-9400; jeanneau.com