



PROFESSIONAL  
BOAT CAPTAIN  
JAMIE WILMOT  
TESTS THE NEW  
PERFORMANCE  
RACER CRUISER.

**THE** very first impression of Dufour Yachts latest addition to the table is a boat of volume. The design brief for the new 36 was to take the well-known cruising name and take it up a notch to double as a competitive race boat without losing the home comforts. She sits high in her berth, which indicates the lightness of a racer but has lost nothing of the cruising elements.

I was fortunate enough to join Australian Dufour agent, Jason Antill, and new owner, Ian Fergusson, for the first Monday night race of the season on Pittwater in NSW. We lined up with an impressive fleet of over 60 boats, ranging from high performance race craft to the mum and dad day-sailer.

Our division was a mixture of several of the well-known cruising classes in all shapes and sizes. With less than ten knots for the majority of the race it was difficult for the Dufour to really hit her stride, but when she did the result was impressive.

## STABILITY

A common problem with this size of boat is maintaining high performance without affecting the required comforts. Weight distribution is crucial in this calculation and Dufour have certainly taken this on board.

Less weight in the ends prevents the boat from hobby horsing in the swells so common off Australia's east coast. The central position of the water tanks assists this weight distribution.

## INTERIOR COMFORTS

Space and storage abound in the Dufour interior. Upon first stepping down into the cabin you are struck by the amount of light and room. This is partly due to the smart use of white hull liner and head liner, with stylish timber features.

The other biggie for me was the double doors to the V berth. It opened up the whole boat and is no doubt a huge plus when racing and packing sails below.

The V berth has full storage underneath and roomy lockers. Well-placed lights ensure a comfortable cruising scenario. The second cabin in the port quarter berth has full headroom and lockers and easily sleeps two.

The head is a big feature. The size is a surprise on a 36 footer, again with full head room and you could easily accommodate several swinging cats. It comes complete with shower and storage behind an oversize mirror. (Maybe a little too much mirror for some!)

The bulkhead at the rear of the head opens onto a large lazarette under the cockpit. Again a surprise at the amount of storage on a boat this size. This area can also be accessed from the cockpit behind the helm position.

The galley is neat and well organised. The only downside I could see was perhaps a lack of storage for dry goods for long-distance cruising. There are plenty of options around the boat but not within easy reach of cooking.

The stove is two-burner gas with oven. It has a removable corian top. The fridge

ABOVE: Twilight on Pittwater and the Dufour shows her speed.

RIGHT: The Dufour is light in the helm and very responsive.



# DUFOUR PERFORMANCE 36

# SPEED AND COMFORT





provides more than enough space for cruising holidays and is easily accessed. The sink is complete with hot and cold running fresh water plus a seawater foot pump. A pull out two-bin rubbish system is a huge plus.

The two banquette lounges are stylish and comfortable with a leatherette covering. Both convert to bunks enabling the boat to sleep six. There is limited storage on top of the water tanks under the banquettes but more storage is built into the hull above the lounges.

The navigation station is compact and complete. The Nav tabletop lifts up and slides into a slot to enable a computer to fit in place. The back section can be turned over to reveal small compartments to take mobiles and pens etc securely. This was proven as Jason left his phone in situ for the entire race and it did not move.

## OPTIONS

The basic boat is aimed at the owner who really only wants to day-sail or compete in twilight and non-spinnaker events. However the options list is long and impressive and the boat can be optimised to be a complete IRC racer up to Cat 4 safety.

The original European design features asymmetrical spinnakers on a retractable



bow pole, however to cater for the Australian market the choice of symmetrical spinnakers was added to a host of other options.

## DECK LAYOUT

A lot of thought has been put into the layout of the deck fittings. The external mainsheet system is a smart idea and eliminates the drama of re-threading a lost sheet in the middle of the night in 40 knots and torrential rain.

The clutches are all easily in reach, and the winches are well positioned to be multi-functional. The addition of a clutch forward of the mainsheet block is innovative and proved invaluable when going to out-board sheeting during the race.

The style of traveller system and the twin wheels provides a spacious cockpit and ease of tacking.

There are always things you would do differently if it was your boat and one negative for me was the teak toe rails. Although as a helm I am rarely, if ever, seen hiking, for the comfort of my crew these would be an issue... especially when one of the crew is my wife!

(Editor's note: After winning the Short Offshore Race the following Saturday the crew agreed. The toe rail was removed up to the

ABOVE: This handy locker can be removed to give more space for the racing crew.

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: Space and light abound in the main cabin.

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM: There is plenty of storage around the cockpit and below decks.

# EXCEL UNDER PRESSURE



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*THE DUFOUR MANAGED TO CLIMB OUT OF THE MELEE WITH APPARENT EASE.*

**FIGURE 1 – Deck design**



ABOVE: A large cockpit, twin wheels and a swim platform.

RIGHT: The new Dufour has been winning races on Pittwater.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Architect	Umberto Felci
Overall length	10.99m
Waterline length	10.21m
Maximum beam	3.61m
Light displacement (approx.)	6,400kg
Draught	2.20m
Keel weight	1,900kg
Air draft	17.20m
Fuel tank capacity	90L
Water tank capacity	200L (+ water heater 20L)
Engine	Volvo 30 HP Sail Drive
Price	Base Boat \$225K
Racing price point	\$250K to \$270K

mast before the boat competed in the Sydney Short Offshore Championships in November.)

The transom is a drop-down swim platform, which makes loading and unloading the boat a breeze.

## PERFORMANCE

The boat was very light on the helm and responsive. As previously mentioned the weather gods were not favourable to really put the Dufour 36 through her paces but we saw enough to know that she will be a formidable competitor.

She sailed high and responded to light gusts. She certainly handled more like a race boat than a cruiser. Tacking was easy with three crew, one on main, two trimming the headsail.

The twin wheels opened up the cockpit and made steering to windward and leeward easy. Even when surrounded by a multitude of craft all fighting for the small amount of breeze on offer, the Dufour managed to climb out of the melee with apparent ease.

## CONCLUSION

The Dufour 36 is definitely a step-up from the average cruiser racer. It is the perfect boat to cruise to Hamilton Island, where it will be a competitive race boat, then revert back to the cruise boat for the long and lazy trip home.

With Dufour making over 400 boats a year they focus on the owner, with storage and short handed sailing a priority. This boat ticks all those boxes. Price is also very competitive with a lot of bang for the buck.

For more information on the Dufour 36 go to [www.antillmarine.com.au](http://www.antillmarine.com.au)\*