



Dufour 36 Performance Best Crossover

Purpose: competitive club racing, weekend cruising

Recommended race crew: 7 to 8

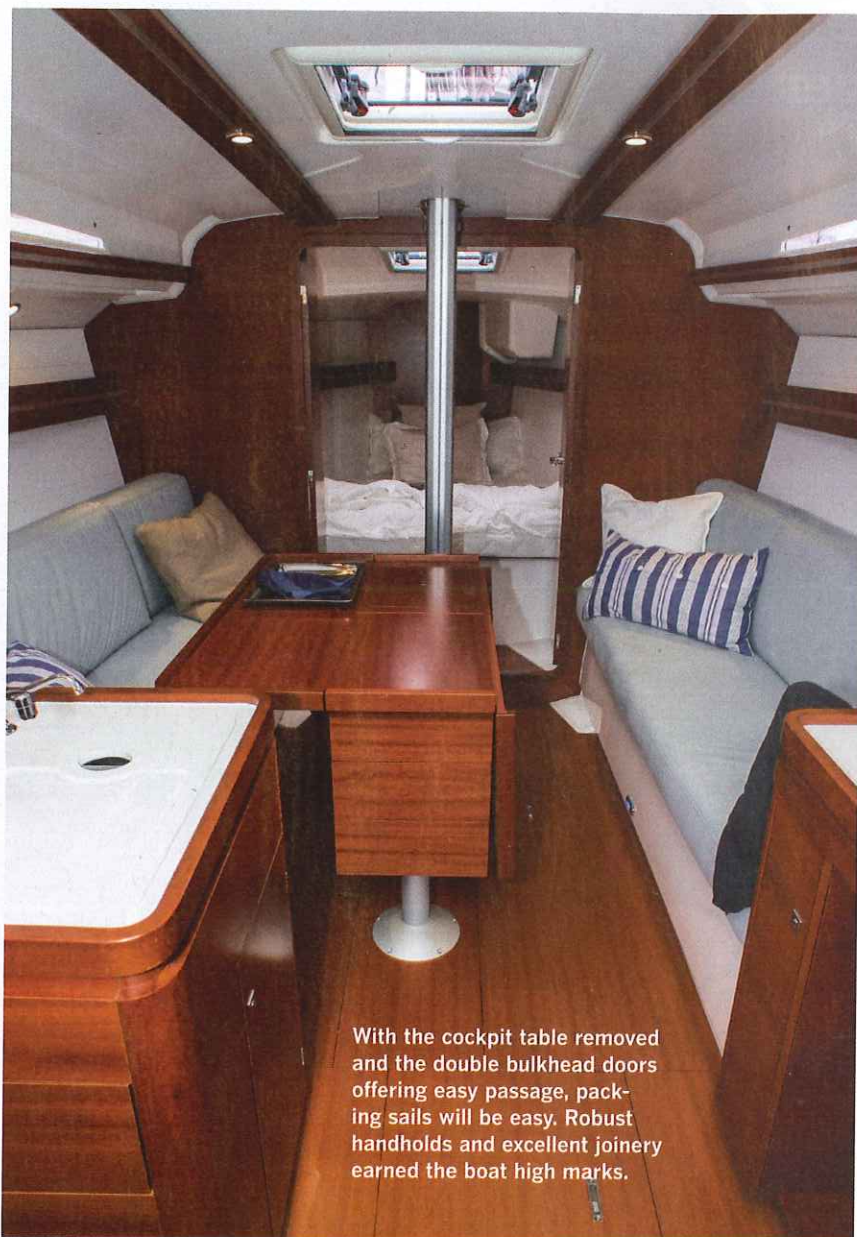
Best attributes: stability, cockpit design,
and interior volume

Price: \$225,000

www.dufour-yachts.com

"WE HIT A COUPLE OF PUFFS, AND THE BOAT JUST TOOK OFF." When a Boat of the Year judge describes the performance of a boat in such a way, the subject of the conversation is typically about one of our sportier boats. Not this time. Allen's praise was directed at the year's best crossover, a surprisingly quick 36-foot performance cruiser from the French boatbuilder,

DUFOUR'S APPROACH to its new performance range gives them a high-quality crossover that was quick, responsive, and easy to sail.



With the cockpit table removed and the double bulkhead doors offering easy passage, packing sails will be easy. Robust handholds and excellent joinery earned the boat high marks.

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Dufour Yachts. Production builders are pretty loose with the use of the term “performance” these days, but as far as the judges were concerned, the Dufour 36 Performance can rightfully claim it.

Credit is due to the design team and management at Dufour, which launched the 36-footer as the first in its new line of modern boats with far better racing potential. What they’ve brought to market is a more aggressive-looking and efficient hull shape with generous bow volume for upwind performance, a hard chine aft, and a deep rudder and T-bulb keel package for good all-around stability. On deck, the set up is definitely more for racing than cruising, with the twin wheel pedestals pushed out to the side, a split main-sheet system, six winches, a retractable carbon sprit, and easy-to-adjust sail controls everywhere on the boat.

“I rated this one really high because of how well it sailed,” said Stewart after testing the boat in 15 knots of wind. “It was really fun to drive. The boat is set up right; it’s got a good in-hauler system on the jib, and all the lines are the right sizes. Without the big, cumbersome steering pedestals you find on similar boats, it was easy to move around the cockpit.”

Its removable cockpit seats also help address the challenge of trimming on a boat with seating and high cockpit coamings, added Stewart: “With the seats removed, the jib trimmer has much better access to the primaries. Downwind, the spinnaker leads were good. With the beveled cabin top edge you could take the sheet to the cabin-top winch and trim from there, if you wanted to.”

High praise was also given to the boat’s construction and interior layout. The V-berth has double bulkhead doors (making moving sails below much easier), onboard settees are long and comfortable, and there’s everything you could possibly need to cruise it properly for a week. “It was amazing—none of us could find a single thing to complain about,” said Allen. “The craftsmanship you get for the price is unbelievable. This isn’t just the best crossover. I think it’s best value of the year, too. It sailed extremely well, and if you really intended to race it beyond the club level, you could lighten it up with a carbon rig, but as it is, it’s the best crossover we’ve sailed in a while.”