

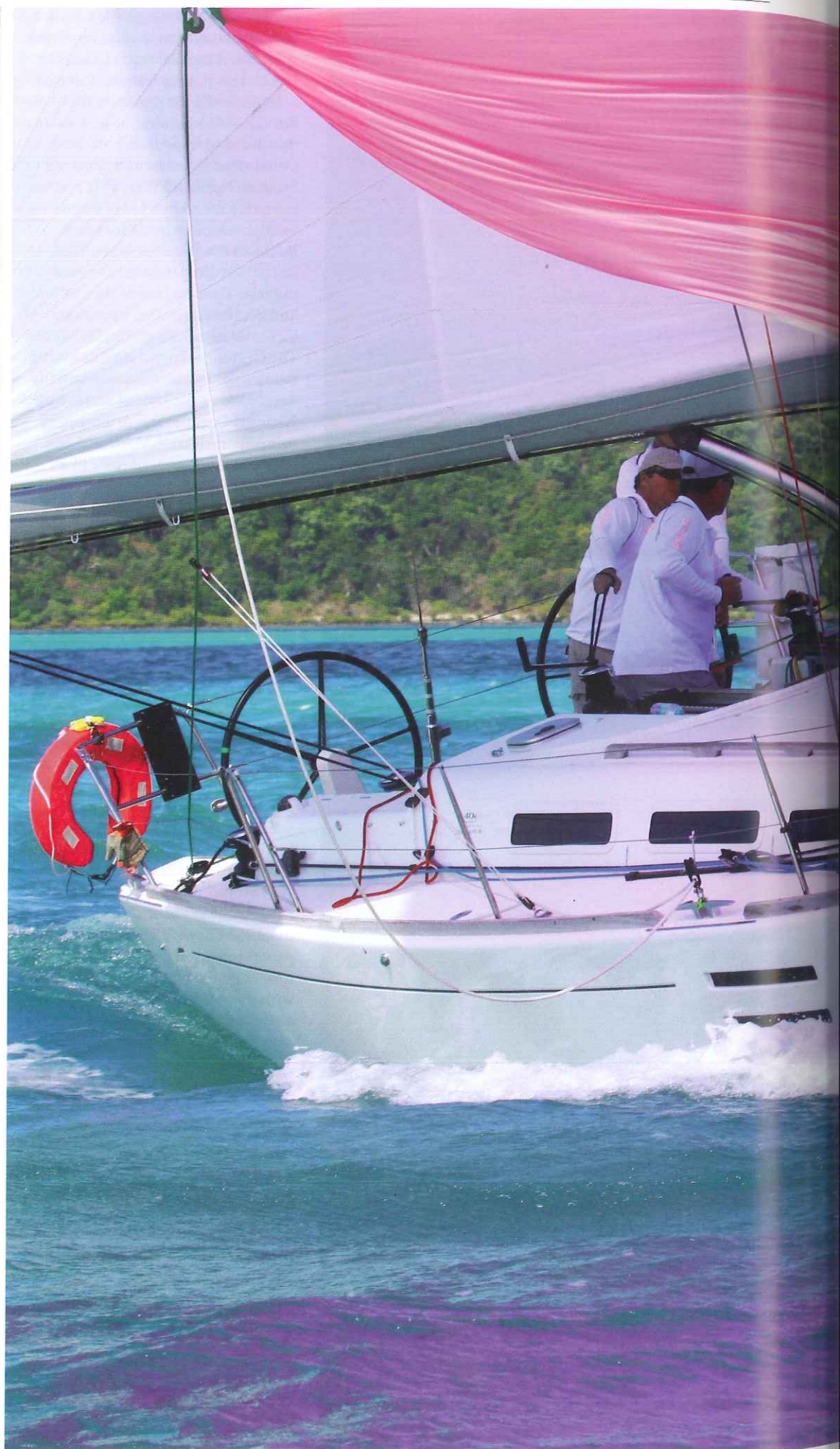
Sailing the Queensland race weeks of Airlie Beach and Hamilton Island has long been an enthusiastically supported event on the calendars of hundreds of yacht owners and their fun loving crews. There is no mistaking the magic of racing through the azure, coral waters of Queensland's Whitsunday passage, rounding rocky offshore islands dotted with green firs and palm trees as your course marks. Such weeks, spent racing on the water by day and socialising ashore by night, mark one of the great annual pilgrimages of many a yachtsman who loves competition as much as the camaraderie.

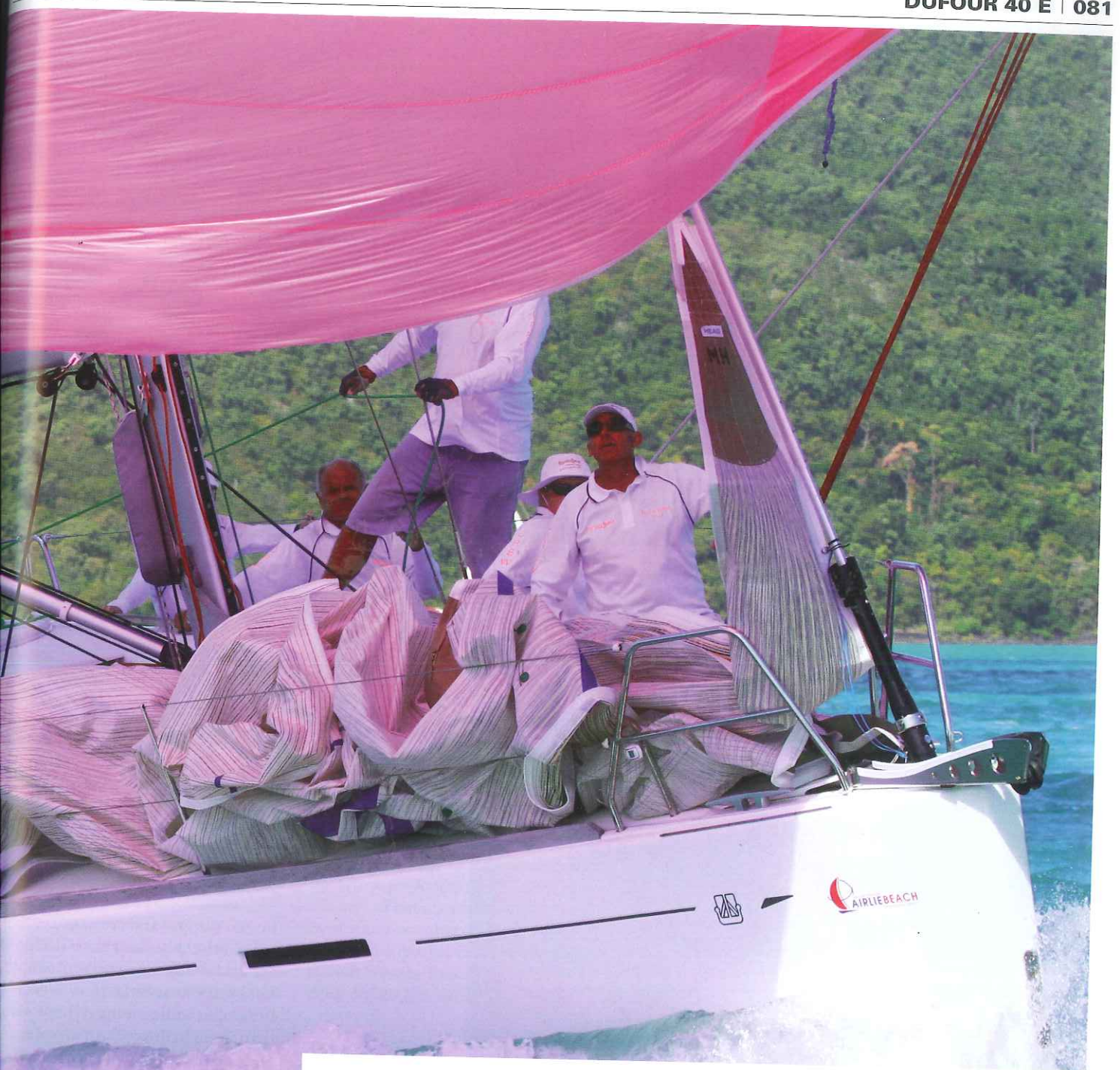
To get up there for most participating yachts requires a great commitment in resources, time away from home and logistics, most notably by the yacht owner of course. So, a yacht that can double as a truly comfortable offshore passage-maker for the long ocean delivery cruise, and still be a fast and competitive race boat when the race fleet crowds the pin end and the gun fires, is the quintessential definition of the modern day cruiser-racer. Sailing aboard Dufour's new 40 E in the Whitsundays was just such an experience, and we can safely attest that rarely can such a supremely comfortable family cruising boat perform such an effective double act as one of the most truly competitive racing yachts in its class.

#### PURPOSE BUILT

This mid-size cruiser-racer hails from the French yard of Dufour, located in the historic port of La Rochelle. *Vitesse*, the 40 E we were aboard that perfect Queensland day, is hull #2 of this new model to Australia. It is a sleek and slippery looking design that from the first glance presents a profile appearing similar to what we have come to expect from the various performance-orientated models coming out of the big French yards of recent years.

The new 40 E, while familiar to those who may know its more cruising focused stable-mate the Dufour 405 Grand Large, presents a lower, longer, more purposefully performance profile. With this racing-orientated design, the coach house and topsides of the 40 E are much lower, the rig and sail plan taller and the performance-racing keel deeper. The hull, while of similar length, is narrower and lighter with a much finer entry, while retaining a beamy transom for downwind speed





## Passage-making with panache

BRIGHT AND BREEZY SAILING CONDITIONS DURING THE RECENT WHITSUNDAYS RACE WEEKS PUT DUFOUR'S SLEEK, STYLISH, FRENCH-BUILT 40 FOOTER TO THE TEST. AND SO DID WE, WHILE REVELING IN THE CLOSE RACING AND NATURAL BEAUTY AROUND THE ISLAND COURSES. ANTHONY TWIBILL CAME AWAY IMPRESSED THAT SUCH A COMFORTABLE YACHT COULD ALSO BE SO FAST.

and a roomy cockpit. Slim coach house windows and double-letterbox styled hull windows also provide a distinctly 'Dufour' appearance, so as not to be confused with its other French cousins.

When you take a closer look aboard the 40 E, you notice that the set-up of the boat is quite different to many other 40-foot euro cruisers in its class. As the primary focus of this Dufour model is defined as 'fast passage-making' rather than family cruising or racing, the cockpit is therefore set up for short-handed offshore sailing with all lines leading back to winches and jammers directly ahead of twin helm wheels. The black leather trimmed wheels are set on pedestals located further aft than the norm for a boat of this size, maximising cockpit space ahead. A full width traveler and German mainsheet system is close at hand



for the skipper and crew, as are the primary winches and sheets. This is an ideal set up for a cruising couple, but I imagine it could tend to get a little tight while racing if there's more than three in the cockpit at once, as all controls are so closely grouped.

Only when the start gun fired and we began sailing the 40 E in the punchy 20 to 30 knot breeze that nature dished up to yachties throughout race week this year, did we notice why Dufour yachts have been so highly regarded for their pure sailing qualities. While the yacht sports a similar profile to others in its class, the 40 E does sail a little differently, displaying a helm with a great balanced feel and a certain finesse in its steady progress through the water and precision in its pointing and sailing performance underway; a Dufour characteristic over the 55 years since French engineer Michel Dufour first opened the yard.

The 40 E is a yacht that gets up and goes, quickly accelerating its

**FAST IN ANY LANGUAGE**  
Up or downwind, the 40E lived up to the name on its transom, *Vitesse*: French for 'fast'.

atively light 7,950 kg and tracking  
me in a groove with more than  
ough elbow room to keep her  
iling fast, while seeing 7.5 knots  
8.5 knots of upwind boat speed in  
e 20+ knots of breeze of the day.  
ownwind runs under symmetrical  
innaker in the conditions saw the  
ght easily surfing along at 10 to 11  
knots, so for a 40 foot luxury 'cruising  
at' the 40 E really delivers exciting  
iling performance. Thoughtful  
aches I liked included teak safety  
ab handles on the flat coach house  
of (which also incorporates teak  
ck panels as do the cockpit bench  
ats); the multitude of Spinlock  
mmers on the coachhouse roof  
th the halyard winches; the  
erman mainsheet system and the  
venience of all controls to the dual  
lm wheels. My one gripe is that the  
ngle adjustable backstay is too close  
the helm positions, making it a  
nor obstruction when tacking.

**CRUISING COMFORT**

hough this Dufour 'Performance'  
odel is designed primarily for  
eed under sail, the 40 E is very  
omfortable below decks, with either  
ree double cabins of stylishly  
ointed accommodation (or you  
n opt for just two cabins with an  
tional cavernous locker aft, as seen  
oard *Vitesse*). It is spacious and  
y comfortable in the saloon, with  
ss timber finishes, sumptuous  
nishings and all features well up to  
high European standard of a luxury  
ising yacht above 40 feet or so.  
But performance is certainly the  
ong suit of the 40E and indeed all  
the more sporting focused models  
the Dufour line feature large sail

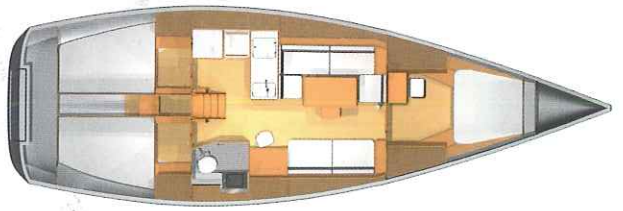
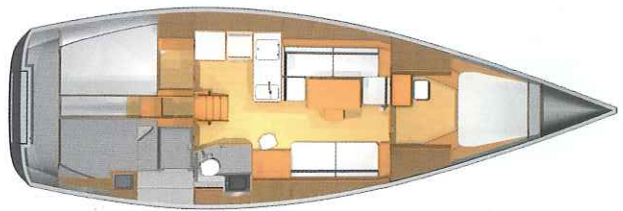
plans (94 sqm in the case of the 40 E  
for main and genoa alone, excluding  
spinnaker), fully adjustable back stay,  
flat deck furler system, adjustable  
genoa cars, German mainsheet  
systems, and all of Dufour's  
performance yachts are specified with  
performance North Sails (Kevlar in  
the case of *Vitesse*).

Some of the really 'go fast' features  
of *Vitesse*, being a Performance  
version of the 40 E, include a deep  
keel draft of 2.1 metres (an optional  
1.75 m shoal keel is available),  
suspending a torpedo lead bulb of  
2,386 kg, a rudder blade hydro-  
dynamically designed for laminar  
flow to minimise drag, and a tall  
racing rig (of aluminium) with double  
swept-back spreaders supporting 94  
sqm of upwind sail area (compared to  
the standard 88 sqm of the 40 E).

The target that was set by Dufour  
for naval architect Umberto Felci and  
the Dufour Yachts design office was  
to come up with something better  
than the popular Dufour 40, which  
preceded this new and speedy 'E'  
model. When you pause to consider  
it you can only conclude that it is  
a very well thought-out balance: a  
deck layout optimised for cruising  
/ racing, suitable for sailing with a  
full or reduced crew and passage-  
making out on the open sea or racing  
around buoys, all blended with  
all-round refinement and quality  
accommodation below decks.

Dufour Yachts have certainly come  
up with a 40-footer that appears to be  
the best of both worlds – performance  
racing and cruising comfort, all  
packaged superbly in those sleek and  
stylish French lines. ⚓

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**LAYOUT OPTIONS**  
Top: 2 cabin / 1 head  
Middle: 3 cabin / 1 head  
Bottom: 3 cabin / 2 head



SPECIFICATIONS	Dufour 40 E
DESIGNERS	Umberto Felci / Patrick Roseo
LOA	12.35 m
HULL LENGTH	11.99 m
LWL	10.76
BEAM	3.89 m
DISPLACEMENT	7,950 kg
DRAFT (DEEP KEEL)	2.10 m
BALLAST (DEEP KEEL) WEIGHT	2,386 kg
FUEL CAPACITY	220 L
FRESH WATER	360 L
ENGINE	Volvo Saildrive 40 hp (29kW)
TOTAL SAIL AREA	93 sqm (980 sq ft)
MAIN SAIL	48 sqm (514 sq ft)
GENOA	45 sqm (466 sq ft)
HULL	Hand Laminated GRP hull, vacuum bagged PVC foam core sandwich shell plating.
PRICE	From AUD\$288,400 for 2 cabin / 1 head layout and standard rig without electronics or sails.