



Cruising writ large

Yacht builders constantly look for ways to entice people out on the water, **Phillip Ross** finds the latest Dufour takes a different tack.

While many potential boat buyers may generally feel all production yachts are beginning to look the same, for the boat builders the opposite is actually true.

I was lucky enough to interview Salvatore Serio, Dufour Yachts chief executive officer, during the last Sydney boat show. He highlighted what is fast becoming the new 'norm' for global yacht builders, "the market is very dynamic at the moment," Serio said.

"Nowadays manufacturing has to be driven by product delivery."

What this means is that each yacht range must be updated in under three years to not only

take into account improvements in hull design and interior layout, but also accommodate the changing desires of the target market.

Now a global player of note, Dufour has had to allow its designs to accommodate different regional preferences, "in 2013 our Dufour 382 had an in-line galley, very popular in Europe," says Serio. "But it did not sell in the US, so now there are six different interior versions which have sold very well world wide."

This led to a strong interest in the 460 launch.

The Grand Large 460 is the latest nod to what Serio says is "definite interest in the top end of yacht length." The 460 completes the



MAIN: Bit of stern overhang can be seen aft of the waterline here.

LEFT: Well lit interior during the day. Note the split galley, the nav table can just be seen in the foreground.

Grand Large line of seven models and is the continuation of the upgrade of Grand Large's 445 and 450 from previous years.

Layout

Designed by long-standing Dufour collaborator Umberto Felci, the idea was to make the 460 look, feel, sail and be livable just as its larger sisters: GL 500 and 560.

The first striking difference from other yachts on the market is the use of the galley against the forward bulkhead. This originally appeared in the larger GLs and is now available for the smaller yacht. The preferred European style

of an in-line galley is still available down the starboard side.

Each option offers advantages and disadvantages. Our test yacht had the forward galley with the three cabins.

Interior layout options are three or four cabins with two, three or four heads. As soon as you choose the three heads you lose the forward galley. The separate owner's cabin shower recess goes when the four heads are optioned. The latter would appear to be the layout preference for the charter market.

Many cruising people would think the galley way forward at the other end of the saloon would be a disadvantage to cooking and serving to people on deck. But Dufour have a cunning plan.

In the cockpit, located aft underneath the steering position seating, is an almost complete galley. The transom seating is split into thirds, the starboard third raises to allow access to the lowered transom swim platform. Then the middle and port seats are lifted to reveal the outdoor cooking station, with the cook standing on the transom swim platform. Here you will find a neat barbecue, sink and refrigerator; more than adequate to cook and serve a fine meal to those seated around the cockpit table.

Despite all this convenience there is still room to add a bimini over the helm position (and even for the cook) as well as davits for a dinghy off the transom. It would be a tight fit, however, possibly impinging on the swim platform.

Design

Beside a hull shape designed to optimise space within the hull, providing greater width than would usually be available on a craft of this size, designer Felci has also ensured performance is improved.

Overall this is a light yacht. A deep canoe body comes with a short keel draft for a yacht in this class. The ballast ratio is about average given the torpedo bulb on the keel's base but,



while the sail area is smaller than usual in this class, with its light displacement the sail area to displacement ratio is quite generous.

What you get then is a yacht quick to respond even in light airs but, with a rounded hull form riding on a low chine, a yacht with little desire to heel in a breeze. Pretty close to perfect for a cruiser.

Indeed that was the feel obtained through the twin wheel set up for the single rudder. Sitting comfortably on either the large helmsman bench seat or outboard on

the lowered coamings, it was two finger sailing.

In a stiff Sydney Harbour breeze, with just the self-tacking jib and full main, we could certainly get the test yacht to heel but it was all good forward speeds from there on.

While the cockpit is large, any crew sitting on the benches can still rest a foot on the centre table, even when lounging back on the slanted cabin top. The port side bench can be widened to provide a day bed with extra cushions.

The coamings are high enough for good back support and, following the latest in trends, there is only one sheet winch just in front of the steering binnacles. The use of jam cleats on the coaming sides allows either mainsheet or self-tacking jib sheet to be used when needed.

On the foredeck is plenty of space for sunbathing when anchored. The hatches are recessed, so is the self-tacking jib track. A strong short bowsprit tucks the anchor away and protects the stem.

At the mast, Felci and Dufour have obviously listened to its market, the boom gooseneck is very low on the mast. This makes it easy to reach into the mainsail bag and easily stow it away without having to stretch at dangerous angles while reefing at sea. The boom then angles upwards to the clew to provide a height in the cockpit of 195 centimetres.

All halyards running from the base of the mast go aft over a large sun roof area with two pop up hatches, then under the cabin top cover for the German mainsheet traveller system to appear either side of the companionway. Here is a nice addition: LED lighting embedded in the cabin top handholds for night time.

The steerer has unlimited view over the top of the cabin. Due to increased beam, the cabin top is also wider than previous, but it is not so wide as to infringe walking forward on the side decks. The spreaders are not swept back too much to keep the shrouds at beam max amply supported by a split backstay well out of the way of access to the transom.

Down below

Given the outdoor galley, it therefore becomes superfluous for the main galley in the saloon to be near the companionway. By putting it up against the forward bulkhead and offsetting the entrance to the forecabin, it opens up the saloon ergonomics.

The galley itself is split either side of the bulkhead door. The port side includes the sink, gimbaled oven and cooktop and another refrigerator. this fridge is small but it complements the other at the transom. To starboard is more bench space above an enormous double door freezer, with lights that turn on when you open it!

Due to the splitting of the galley like this you tend to achieve more bench and locker space than with all the amenities in the one space.

Now you have a saloon that is not removed from the companionway. With seating around the table, including a centreline seat, for five to six people, another two seated on the small port settee and another seated at the forward facing navigation station this is party central.

The trick with being able to swap positions of the navigation table and seat, turns the saloon into a massive over two metre berth.

The cabin shower/head to port of the companionway is tight but adequate. This is where the holding tank is situated and access to all the necessary valves is easy.

The owner’s cabin is something else. The head is tight when seated on the toot, but long for leg room. The separate shower to port is huge; like, seriously massive. Two of you could fit in there.

Headroom throughout, from aft cabins to forecabin was good enough at 190 centimetres or over, with it just under two metres at the base of the foreberth.

The forecabin berth is a stand alone, allowing you to walk around it and get on and off easily. The bed itself is about as wide as a double and as long as a queen size.

All three cabins had plenty of locker and light. Lots of LED lighting is throughout the cabin, promoting mood and good vision even while sailing.

Standard engine is a 41 kilowatt Volvo Penta, the owner of the test yacht upgraded to a 55kW. At top speed around 3000 revolutions per minute we fairly hummed at over nine knots! Maybe the speedo needed some checking. With a 250 litre fuel tank you should get over 60 hours motoring with the standard engine and over ten hours at full speed.

The insulation in the engine space was 50 millimetre and kept the downstairs noise to an acceptable level, comparable to car noise.

Given the deck and downstairs layouts catering for sumptuous anchoring, I believe the Grand Large 460 is catering for a market oriented to the location point of sailing. Do not get me wrong, this is a Dufour and as such it sails slick and easy, which is its point: get you to your anchorage quickly and enjoy all the good life this yacht has to offer. 



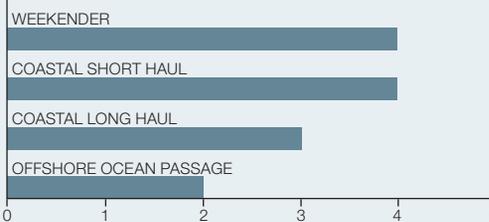
OPPOSITE PAGE: MAIN: In a nice stiff Sydney Harbour breeze she sits on her low chines comfortably. Note the boom angling upwards from the gooseneck and soft rounded aft sections.

INSET: Port side main galley section.

DUFOUR 460 SPECIFICATIONS

Length	13.5
Waterline	12.54
Beam	4.5
Displacement	10760
Ballast	2850
Sail area	99.8
Sail area:Displacement	20.82
Displacement:Length	152.09
Ballast ratio	0.26
Theoretical hull speed	8.59
Beam:Length	3.0
Base boat price	\$440,000

SUITABILITY



Test yacht supplied by Performance Cruising Yachts with thanks: <http://performancecruising.com.au/>