

# FIRST TEST WAUQUIEZ PILOT SALOON 42

*One of the showstoppers at Boot Düsseldorf was the Wauquiez PS 42.  
Graham Snook went to see if she had the wow factor on the water*

Words & pictures Graham Snook

## SPECIFICATIONS

### MAKE / MODEL

Wauquiez  
Pilot Saloon 42

### PRICE FROM

£402,000 inc VAT

### DESIGNER

Berret - Racoupeau  
Yacht Design

### BUILDER

Wauquiez Boats (France)

**T**here is no boat quite like this one. It's not often I can say that. The Wauquiez Pilot Saloon 42 is not unique in her design, nor does she have an original concept, but below decks... Wow! I haven't seen anything quite like it on a production yacht before. Custom yachts, motorboats and superyachts, yes. But 42ft French cruisers? Non.

Gorgeously finished teak, white and grey leather, swathes of white Corian, light surrounds, light switches and plug surrounds in brushed aluminium and little leather pull toggles on the locker front are just a few of the details. Then there are cool blue saloon windows that clear or darken at the twist of a knob.

The stunning interior would mean little if she didn't sail exquisitely too. But nothing of the sort: she is a comfortable and practical cruiser with the attention to detail down below also evident on deck. →





## PERFORMANCE

Conditions for the test in Palma Bay on Mallorca were perfect, a good Force 4 with warm bright sunshine, and the PS 42 relished them, topping out at over 9 knots on a fetch. This boat had the optional 2.15m draught deep-lead keel. A 1.65m draught iron keel is standard with a lead keel of the same draught also an option. She was a joy to sail; only when the apparent wind went over 20 knots did we feel the need to ease the mainsheet, but the grip from the twin, splayed rudders was unflappable. Steering is via Jefa chain and cable, it had a solid feel and reassuring weight to it without being too heavy.

The cockpit is high, and occasionally feels it when going over the raised bridge deck; you feel a little exposed but the addition of grab handles either side would help, as would the sprayhood – if we hadn't taken it off for the photographs.

## DECK LAYOUT

The single bow roller is recessed into the large, shiny, fixed stainless-steel bowsprit. Directly aft is the windlass, the chain drops straight into the bows. Access to the chain locker is via a watertight hatch in the forward bulkhead of the deep bow locker, which itself is accessed via a flush hatch in the foredeck. It was nice to see three guardrails and even nicer to see the end fittings recessed in the pulpit and pushpit so there are no pins to catch crew or sails.

It's an easy step up to the coachroof from the mast, less so further aft. Lines from the mast are led under the 'eyebrows' of the forward-facing saloon

windows, to reappear at the forward end of the cockpit. The rope clutches and Andersen size 40ST winches aren't far enough aft for the helm to have easy access, but on this boat the starboard winch was electric, which made raising the mainsail a doddle.

Andersen size 46ST for the genoa are next to the helm, and the helm is the best place to use them. Electric winches are an option and, with them being far aft, it would be hard not to justify ticking the option box – especially on a yacht this size and price.

Access to the cockpit from deck is just forward of the wheels where there's a good-sized rope locker on each side with a hinged lid to stand on. The binnacle handholds weren't very high, but this will improve when Wauquiez raises the pedestals by 8cm, though I'd still like to see them a little higher.

Deck stowage is good, and there are lockers under both helm seats (port is the gas locker). The liferaft locker is accessed from the fold-down transom, released from inside the deep lazarette locker.

## AT THE HELM

There is seating aft and outboard of twin wheels. It's not the widest of helm spaces, but the pedestals will be moving forward 3cm. I did find the gap between the pedestal and the wheel caught my knuckles, and if she was mine I'd be searching for a spacer to bring the wheel aft a tad. The backstay does cut across the helm seat outboard a little but it can be used to hook an arm around.

## DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

The hull and deck are balsa cored and vacuum infused. The hull's internal grid structure is also vacuum infused and bonded and laminated in place. The trapezium-shaped hull windows are recessed and bonded in from the outside.

The hull has a soft chine aft and while she is beamy aft, the waterline is quite narrow, which should make

her less sticky in light conditions. As she heels, the waterline extends and she'll happily rest comfortably on her chine.

## RIG & SAILPLAN

This boat had the optional Sparcraft painted rig and Park Avenue boom. An anodised mast is standard. The rig comes with Dyform rigging as standard, as does the track on the mast, which makes hoisting it less of a fight. The genoa cars were adjustable from the cockpit and are set against the coachroof. The bowsprit can be used to set an off-wind sail.

## ACCOMMODATION

Coming down the companionway there's a broad, flat handrail which, like others on board, isn't the easiest to get a hand around, though this will be changed. To starboard is an oilskin locker, heated by the engine.

The saloon is raised to take advantage of the high windows. Those sitting aft get a better view. I've long been sold on large windows but, as on the Wauquiez, only when I can look out horizontally at the view rather than just upwards at the sky. The windows feature dimmable glass, with the tint controllable from the light switch panel. Fully tinted, the windows are dark blue and did an excellent job of keeping out the glare and heat of the Balearic sun.

Unfolded the saloon table is 1.09m (3ft 4in) long and would be a little tight with six or seven people on board (if the twin double aft cabin is chosen), but in this four/five berth layout it works well.

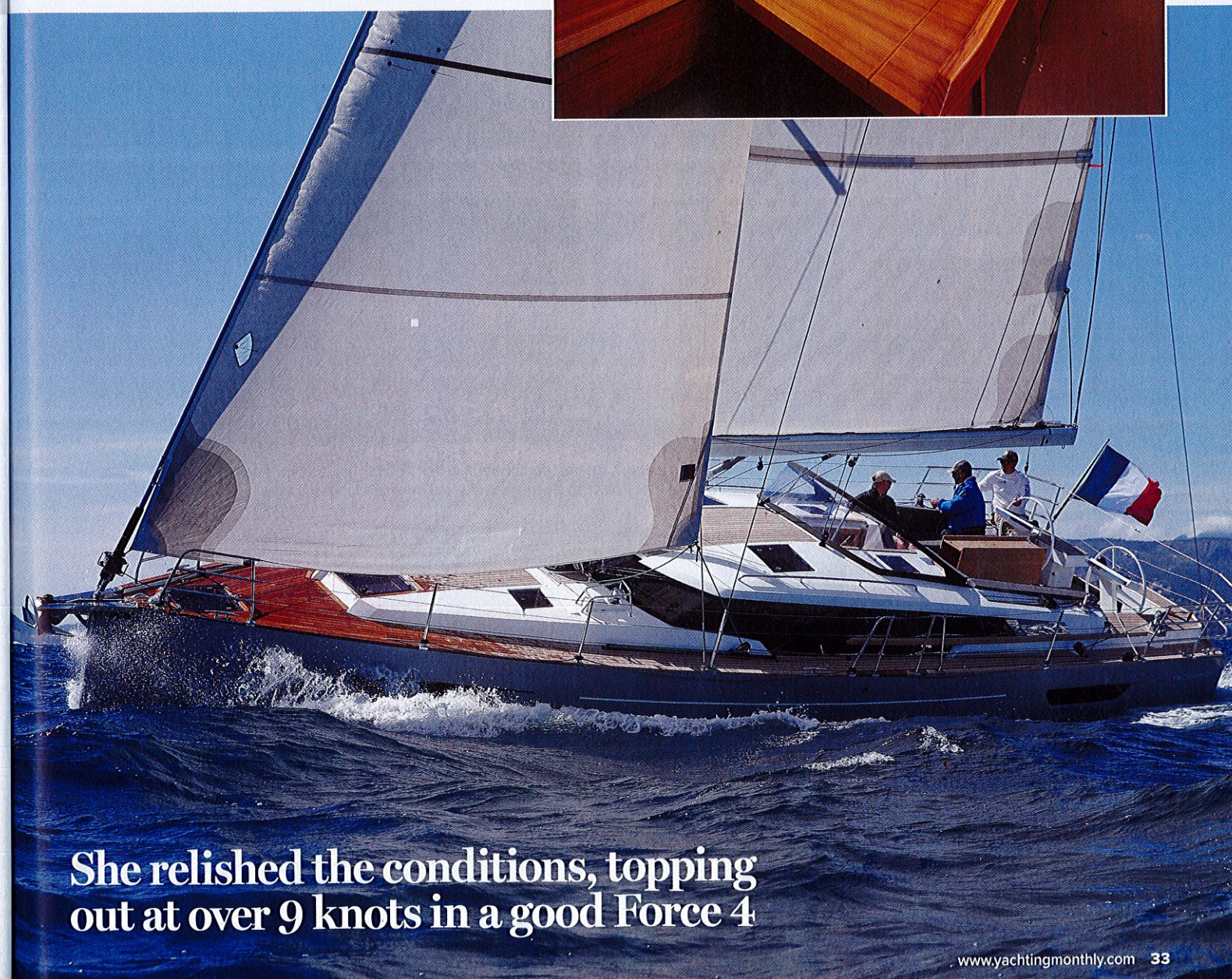
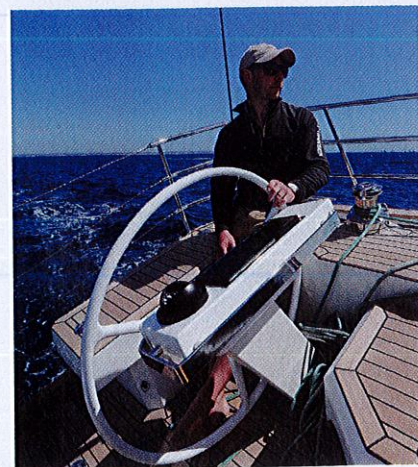
Beneath the C-shaped saloon is two-level stowage; the first under the raised section that goes down to the sole of the galley, then beneath that is more storage that could be used as a technical space for a generator or a watermaker. There's also stowage beneath the seats, in a line of lockers above them, and vast stowage behind the seat backs. Storing things won't be a problem, finding them afterwards may be. There's also a large locker aft of the forward cabin where a washing machine can be fitted.

Whether the woodwork is painted or varnished it's

A good-sized chart table lacks stowage space but has room for instrument systems



Unflappable control and positive feel on the helm. A few tweaks will be made to the layout here



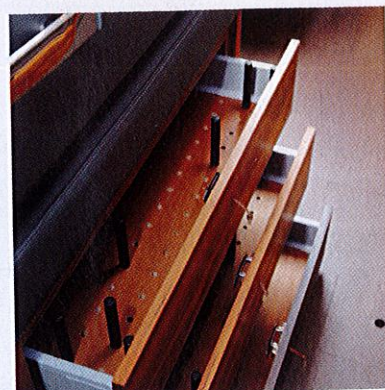
She relished the conditions, topping out at over 9 knots in a good Force 4





The saloon table folds out; the wood is typically well finished

Raised saloon seating gives those inside a great view out. Four or five can sit in comfort, more would be on the cosy side



Drawers under the saloon seating increase stowage for galley items



It's the little touches that count – bespoke light switches and window dimmer



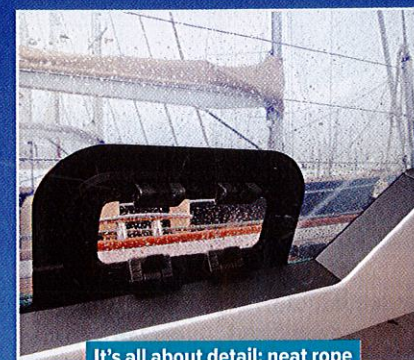
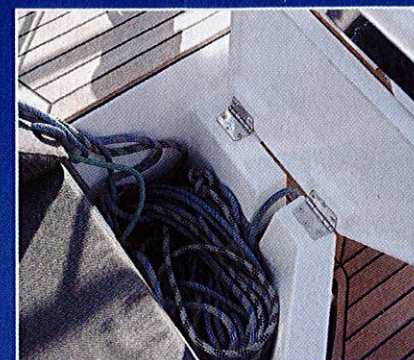
Beautifully comfortable in harbour, the vast double berth in the aft cabin has lee cloths down the middle and at the sides so that it is still a useful place to sleep when at sea. The chaise longue is a great place to sit and read



Large windows, plenty of locker space and bracing against the saloon seating makes the galley pleasant to work in



Access to the reverse-mounted engine is good, with removable panels on all sides



It's all about detail: neat rope bins, deck recesses for loose items and dimmable windows with opening hatches

A fixed windscreen increases protection in the cockpit which could otherwise feel exposed

A narrow aft waterline keeps her wetted area to a minimum in light winds



| POINT OF SAIL | AWA*   | AWS**        | SPEED         |
|---------------|--------|--------------|---------------|
| Close hauled  | 32-36° | 17-20 knots  | 6.7-7.2 knots |
| Fetch         | 60°    | 16-18 knots  | 7.5-9.2 knots |
| Beam reach    | 90°    | 12-14 knots  | 7.5-8.3 knots |
| Broad reach   | 120°   | 9.6-12 knots | 6.5-7.1 knots |
| Run           | 180°   | 10-11 knots  | 5.8-6.4 knots |

\*APPARENT WING ANGLE \*\*APPARENT WIND SPEED



all lovely and smooth and oozes quality. All the lockers and drawers have leather pull strings and while these are neat and novel, because of my experience with leather deck shoelaces, I'd be tempted to replace them with thin rope.

Moving down two steps to the forward cabin, you're greeted by a bright and modern white cabin with LED strip lights and down lights. A fiddled teak shelf runs forward from the leather-clad hanging and shelved lockers outboard. While these have automatic lighting, they were quite small, but they will be getting bigger. I wasn't keen on the leather handles, but Wauquiez was keen to point out it's a small yard and it can make alterations for its owners. There are also two drawers under the bed for more stowage. However, easy-to-access stowage wasn't as impressive as it is in other areas on board and would be even less with the optional fuel or watertank.

With so little visible wood, you have to go through to the ensuite head with separate shower before Wauquiez can show off its carpentry skills again.

Going aft past the chart table and down a couple more steps is the full-beam aft cabin, ventilation is excellent, with three large opening portlights on the three sides of the cockpit moulding and two smaller hatches hidden behind the stainless-steel trim in the coachroof. There is locker stowage outboard on both sides and the starboard side also has a small but comfortable chaise longue, which makes a peaceful place to sit with a book. Both forward and aft berths

can be raised to access the stowage beneath and will be held open with gas struts.

There is great detailing throughout: brushed aluminium light switches and plug surrounds all have the Wauquiez 'W' engraved on them and the large white hull sides are broken up with a black inlay. The light switches are small stainless-steel retro-styled toggle switches that give a positive click and are arranged so the top switches operate the ceiling lights. While the lower switch operates the floor light, the saloon lights are dimmable with push switches.

The ensuite in the aft cabin is a good size and the shower compartment particularly has a good height

**ABOVE:** A touchscreen to control all the systems is standard. The iPad Pro comes as part of the electronics package

**RIGHT:** The heads includes a separate shower compartment

to it and also benefits from the dimmable windows.

Forward and aft, berth cushions are split and lee cloths, and the eyes to secure them, are standard. In the aft cabin they run centrally and down the sides.

#### CHART TABLE

The seat for the chart table is only 37cm (1ft 2in) wide and feels precarious. Lose the backrest cushion and you'll gain an extra 8cm of width. The table is nicely finished and stretches outboard, giving a width of 87cm (2ft 10in), while fore to aft it's 41cm (1ft 4in). Sadly you don't get a view but with the electronics package, you do get a 12.9in Apple iPad Pro integrated to the yacht's electronics. There's stowage next to the seat, and lockers for instruments and systems outboard, including the Scheiber touchscreen display for controlling the yacht's systems – it can be manually overridden if required.

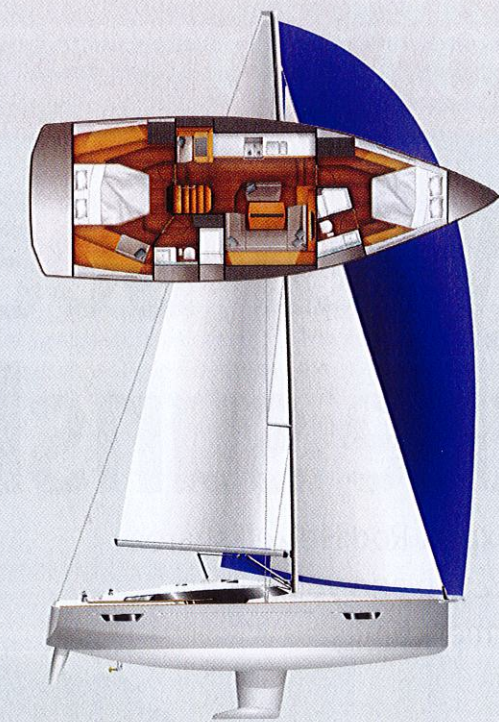
Stowage inside the table is a bit small and the lid isn't easy to open as there's no groove or finger hole.

#### GALLEY

Standing in the 2.72m (8ft 11in) long galley, you have an amazing view out of the large coachroof windows in front of you. White-fronted locker stowage runs outboard of the white Corian worksurface, which has curved angles inside the fiddles making it a breeze to keep clean. The twin sinks are also Corian, adding to the quality feel. The stove is locked firmly in place until the crash bar is lifted up and over, allowing it to gimbal fully. There's no top-opening fridge but a double-drawer 210-litre fridge/freezer aft keeps the worktop clear and forward, behind the locker doors, is all stowage. There are also three drawers under the island seat in the saloon, which doubles as bracing for those working the galley.

#### MAINTENANCE

Beneath the companionway steps is the reverse-mounted engine. Under the sole, forward of the steps, is the calorifier and primary fuel filter. Access to the engine is via panels opposite the nav table and via a large removable panel in the owner's cabin. There is also extra access in the owner's heads. Tankage is under the sole – fuel to port, water to starboard. A 200-litre tank for either, under the forward berth, is optional, depending on your priorities.



## WAUQUIEZ PILOT SALOON 42

### THE TEST VERDICT

It was refreshing to see that style can be well executed and practical and that a company will throw convention to the wind to use ideas and systems not on production yachts: monogrammed light switches and plug surrounds, dimmable glass windows and pull toggles instead of latches. Then there is the overall look of the interior and its high build quality; it really does have the wow factor. Add to this her handling, performance and composure on the water and you're left with a modern, spacious cruiser that will eat up the miles.

The sea doesn't care about style, and when it gets rough, the light white hull sides will be the last thing on your mind. But even in such conditions, the 42 should still look after you. There are plenty of handholds and the stowage around the boat, especially in the galley, can be safely accessed without dodging airborne objects from cupboards you've just opened.

### WOULD SHE SUIT YOU AND YOUR CREW?

At first glance it could be easy to think of the 42 as what Americans term a 'dock queen' – she looks nice in her berth, but you'd rattle like a pea in a can at sea. This couldn't be further from the truth; she has style and substance. The modern interior may not be your thing, in which case you can buy a Rustler 42.

Whether you're sailing or in harbour, the 42's interior is practical and, thanks to the large saloon windows, you can be out of the elements and still get a sense of place. She has the space, both living and storage, that would make life on board for extended periods a joy.

The Wauquiez has good build quality, modern styling, she's spacious and practical with easy handling – especially with a self-tacking jib fitted. All boats are inevitably a compromise but the 42 seems to have compromised little in any areas. This makes her a cracking yacht. If you want modern styling and your budget will run to it, this 42ft cruiser is an absolute must.

### PROS

- Smooth and assured handling
- High quality throughout
- Serious and seaworthy boat

### CONS

- Reduced stowage in the forecabin
- Wheel too close to pedestal
- High bridge deck

### FACTS AND FIGURES

**PRICE AS TESTED**  
£474,332 inc VAT

**LOA** 12.9m (42ft 6in)

**HULL LENGTH**  
12.42m (40ft 9in)

**LWL** 12.8m (41ft 1in)

**BEAM** 4.34m (14ft 2in)

**DRAUGHT**  
2.15m (7ft 0.5in)

**DISPLACEMENT**  
11,593kg (25,558lb)

**BALLAST** 3,100kg (6,834lb)

**BALLAST RATIO** 26.7%

**DISPLACEMENT / LENGTH** 197.1

**SAIL AREA** 90.3m<sup>2</sup> (972sqft)

**SA/D RATIO** 17.9

**DIESEL** 415 litres (91.3 gal)

**WATER** 415 litres (91.3 gal)

**ENGINE** 57hp

**TRANSMISSION**  
Saildrive

**RCD CATEGORY** A

**DESIGNER**  
Berret – Racoupeau Yacht Design

**BUILDER**  
Wauquiez Boats

**UK AGENT** Parkstone Bay Yachts

**TEL** 01202 724917

**WEBSITE**  
www.pilot-saloon.com

There is great detailing throughout the PS 42

