

THE GENTLEMEN'S CLUB

ALLAN WHITING spends a day aboard
Moody's new Classic 41 on Sydney's breezy
Pittwater and is blown away by its nautical
style, high quality and proper performance

Those who feared the worst when Hanse took over the remains of the Moody Yachts business three-years ago can breathe easier now that the Classic line is established with two models thus far: the 45 and the new 41.

Many yacht aficionados were disappointed with the first post-Hanse Moody, the 45 DS. Its openly cubist upperworks and one-level cockpit and cabin, separated by powerboat-style sliding doors, offended some traditionalists. However, students of Bill Dixon's 1990s' Moody designs could see where the Eclipse trend was leading and recognise that the 45DS was an evolutionary move from Dixon, not a revolutionary one imposed by Hanse.

But the sceptics have certainly been silenced by the latest Classic releases

from Moody. It's almost as if the Moody Classic models have been penned to allay the fears of traditionalists. Classic says it all: sweet lines, traditional accents, glowing, rich interior and an ocean-conquering rig and build. Welcome aboard the Moody Classic 41.

ALLAN IN WONDERLAND

The companionway is traditionally narrow and wave-excluding, but clambering through it is an 'Alice through the looking glass' experience. I defy anyone to suppress a "Wow!" when they step onto the cabin sole and blink out their sun blindness.

The test boat's combination of dark leather seat facings and ultra-gloss mahogany woodwork is better appreciated in Michael Ellem's photos than mere words. Quality touches, including polished stainless steel and





The Moody Classic 41, top, is easy to sail and targeted at cruising types but we reckon it will make a respectable and eye-catching club-racer, too. A gimballed stove and front-loading fridge are a couple of the features of the L-shaped galley, above. A sea of teak greets you, stepping aboard the huge drop-down swimplatform (electric operation optional), opposite.

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brass Danish cabin lights abound. However, the Moody Classic 41's superyacht fit and finish somehow isn't reflected in a high price tag.

Six interior layouts are offered, but for the test boat the Windcraft crew opted for what should suit coastal-cruising buyers: a twin-cabin, single-head arrangement. Twin aft cabin, twin head and twin forward-berth layouts can all be accommodated, but single aft-cabin layouts have the most generous bathroom and saloon space.

The head features a separate shower with door and a ventilated wet locker. The saloon incorporates a curved dinette lounge and tub-style seats at either end of the chart table. Given the increasing reliance on electronic navigation aids, today's chart table is more likely to be used as a reading table or boat-office desk.

Cruising compatibility shows in an L-shaped galley that has a gimballed cooktop and oven, top and front-loading fridge and cutting-board-

covered sink.

The cabins are beautifully finished and graced with sensitive-foam mattresses that adapt to the sleeper's shape.

Since this beautiful boat was launched in Europe last year subtle changes have been incorporated: five elliptical Ruttersen cabin ports now grace the low-profile coach house — instead of the initial three — separated by a rectangular pane. The revised layout looks much better to our eyes.

The port areas are traditionally small, but twin Vetus dorade vents and large deck-roof hatches ensure plenty of ventilation and light. The forward hatch is large enough to swallow a gennaker or socked asymmetric spinnaker.

Stepping aboard from astern is simplified by a huge drop-down swimplatform (electric operation optional), and rail gates allow side access. Stainless steel mooring-line fairleads are set into solid



Unlike the modern trend toward light interiors, the Classic 41, top, is distinctly retro with dark-coloured floors, seating, and mahogany cabinetry. Styling even extends to the engraved hubs of the twin steering wheels, above. The teck deck stretches all the way to the bow, right. As a cruiser/racer, there's plenty of room to play in the well proportioned cockpit, opposite top.



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teak coamings and eliminate coaming chafe.

HINT OF HANSE

There's obvious Hanse influence in the mast and rig, but it's all for the good. A high-aspect ratio, twin-spreader mast is deck stepped and rigged with a 9/10 self-tacking, Hanse-trademark jib. The mast has generous pre-bend that can be varied by a tackle-adjustable backstay and mounts a short, mid-sheeted boom with sail bag and lazy jacks.

Control lines lead to forward cockpit winches and sheets can be fed to those, or to aft-set winches that are within easy reach of the helmsperson. With additional clutches specified at the forward winches, the boat can be setup for forward sheet control, aft sheet control, or a combination of both — perfect for short-handed cruising.

Another Hanse influence shows in a pair of leather-clad wheels,

between which is a wide walkway. The helmsperson has a choice of fat coaming perches or broad bin-top seats. A curved stainless 'towel rail' splits the cockpit, serving as a useful handhold and foot brace, as well as the base for a drop-side table and a chartplotter swivel.

Modern yachtbuilding techniques have been incorporated in the Classic construction, but traditional durability is the target. Sandwich construction is used throughout, with foam core below the waterline and balsa above, including the deck moulding. The gelcoat is isophthalic and the first layer of laminate is vinylester. Under the cabin sole is a massive ladder-frame strengthening structure, with individual pockets for the huge keel bolts.

A GOOD BLOW

Many boat tests are done in light air, but for this evaluation we were

[MOODY MEN]

The two key people in Moody's rebirth are designer, Bill Dixon and Hanse boss, Michael Schmidt. Bill Dixon was born into a boating family business and scored a dream start to his designing career with legendary naval architect, Angus Primrose. After his mentor was lost during a Transatlantic race in 1980, Bill Dixon kept the business going and was supported by Moody Yachts. His first commissions were the 1981-year Moody 27 and 41, and since then he's drawn the lines of many more.

Schmidt was born in 1948, into a war-ravaged Germany and became obsessed with sailing from a very early age. He still prizes a sailing medal he won at age 10. Schmidt ran a Grand Banks brokerage and built and repaired yachts while competing in as many sailing events as he could, including skippering one of the Admiral's Cup winning German-team yachts in 1985. His big business break came in 1990 when he bought into a dilapidated boat yard in the former East Germany, progressively converting it into today's Hanse factory.



sufficient to produce 7kts-plus into the stiff breeze.

The brand-new, tri-radial, cruise-laminate North main went up the stick with ease, thanks to a shortish foot that reduces bulk and 46AST Lewmar halyard winches; then the self-tacking jib rolled out eagerly. We trimmed both for upwind beating, decided we were a tad overdone and checked out the single-line reefing system. In-mast furling is optional, but the slab-reef went in easily enough and flattened the main nicely.

With a reef snugged in tight, the Moody 41 cut through the choppy water, with the speedo showing 7kts at around 45° true. The breeze backed off to 15 to 20kts, so we shook out the reef and continued climbing to windward. The speedo registered 8kts, which we felt was also a tad optimistic. The Moody 41 polar graphs would have us around a half-knot slower in this weight of breeze.

On the wind, the boat felt very stiff

Below decks, the Classic is beautifully appointed and finished in the Moody tradition

blessed with 20kts of nor'wester, with puffs to 25kts: ideal for checking out an oceangoing yacht, especially as this one was fitted with an optional shallow-draft keel that we thought might compromise stiffness.

A bowthruster is another option, but

the test boat didn't have one. Instead, it was fitted with a folding three-blade prop in place of the standard two-blader, and we found that the larger prop area gave sufficient 'bite' to handle tight manoeuvring out of a snug berth. Engine power was

Like the rest of the interior, the head, above left, incorporates high-gloss joinery. Forepeak cabin's wardrobe, below, harkens back to a bygone age. Hanse, Moody's parent company, shows its influence in the mast and rigging, right.



HIGHS

- › Wow-factor above and below decks
- › Traditional appointments
- › Excellent value for money
- › Ease of handling
- › Good performance

LOWS

- › Small jib compromises square-running performance



[MOODY BLUES]

England's MoodyYachts has a pedigree that dates back to 1827 and, while the brand continues proudly today, the ownership, like so much of Britain's industry, is in continental Europe.

In April 2007, ownership of the famous brand crossed the Channel, into the hands of Hanse Yachts, which almost immediately began producing Moody Yachts in Greifswald, Germany.

After five generations of family ownership, MoodyYachts and its historic Swanwick, River Hamble site, had already been sold to Premier Marinas in December 2005.

Premier and now Hanse ensured that design continuity was preserved by retention of designer Bill Dixon, who has been penning Moody lines since 1981. Bill Dixon has remained at his base in Swanwick Marina. The Moody brand is one of the best-known names in the marine industry and is well-respected throughout the world for its build quality. On Moody Yachts' old website it used to say: "Performance means being able to sail into challenging seas with unshakable confidence in the seaworthiness and stability of your vessel."

No less a light than Arthur Beiser, author of *The Proper Yacht*, had this to say of MoodyYachts, while lamenting the demise of many traditional builders: "A few excellent series builders, such as Nautor and Oyster, are still with us, but their gold-plated sliver of the market is tiny and a less exalted, but a larger and still respectable niche is occupied by firms such as Hallberg-Rassy and Moody."

Michael Schmidt, owner of Hanse Yachts, is well aware of the MoodyYachts' reputation and plans to preserve it.




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and, while we scored the odd splash on deck, the leeward rail never looked like getting dunked. Big puffs meant we were temporarily overpowered, but the Moody responded by gently climbing up into the breeze if the main wasn't eased quickly enough. Tacking was as simple as it gets: just turn the wheel!

However, windward performance is largely semantic, because we know gentlefolk don't bash into the breeze, so having gained all the height we wanted we bore away on a series of reaches, chucking in the odd gybe to test downwind stability and ease of manoeuvring.

Once again, the Moody 41 showed its safe handling characteristics, rounding up without drama in the

puffs if the main wasn't dumped. On a passage we'd have kept it reefed, but for our test it was more fun being slightly overpowered at times. The friendly speedo registered 10kts at one point, where the polar graph suggested we should have been doing 9.5kts, which is impressive for a yacht with a smallish headsail.

A self-tacker, mid-boom sheeting without a traveller and winches placed for shorthanded operation define the Moody Classic 41 as a cruiser, not a racer, but that doesn't mean it wouldn't do well in PHRS club events. For ease of gennaker flying, the Classic 41 comes standard with double bowroller with an integrated stop eye. Classic by name and nature. 

Facts & figures

MOODY CLASSIC 41

RUN DOWN

The Moody Classic 41 enjoys the production-boat savings of a seriously high-volume builder, but with more luxury appointments that would normally be on offer and great cabin layout

flexibility. An easy-to-sail package that appears to be very strongly made, the Classic 41 is targeted at cruising types foremost, but we reckon it will offer respectable club-racing performance, too.

PRICE AS TESTED

\$434,619

OPTIONS FITTED

Teak sidedecks, two rail gates, genoa tracks and cars, windscreen with stainless steel frame and spray hood, three-blade folding propeller, FM radio/CD/MP3 with cockpit speakers, leather saloon upholstery, Icom 505 VHF radio, cockpit seat cushions, traditional clock and barometer, and Simrad IS20 wind gauge

PRICED FROM

\$399,230

GENERAL

MATERIAL: Foam/balsa cored laminate with isophthalic gelcoat and vinyl ester first layer

TYPE: Monohull

LENGTH OVERALL: 12.7m

WATERLINE LENGTH: 10.9m

BEAM: 4m

DRAFT: 2m (standard); 1.65m (optional) iron/lead composite keel

MAST HEIGHT: 16.5m

WEIGHT: 9800kg

CAPACITIES

BERTHS: Two and three double-cabin layouts

FUEL: 140lt

WATER: 320lt

ENGINE

MAKE/MODEL: Yanmar 3JH4

TYPE: Saildrive

RATED HP: 40

SAILS

MAIN: 52m²

JIB: 35m²

GENOA: 52m²

GENNAKER: 117m²

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FINAL REPORT

A slick underwater shape with fine entry and more tapered stern sections than full-on raceboats, makes the Moody Classic 41 sea-kindly and fast when two-sail reaching. That performance is combined with the ease of handling provided by a self-tacking jib and mid-sheeted boom. Below decks the Classic is beautifully appointed and finished in the Moody tradition. With superyacht ambience at production-yacht pricing, the Moody Classic 41 is very appealing.



The Moody Classic 41, left, is a thoroughly modern yacht as evidenced by the pulley blocks, above, and dorades, opposite below, in stainless steel. Unobtrusive cockpit, opposite top, means you can race and entertain and never the twain shall meet.