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For video of the Hanse 315 visit sailmagazine.com/videos



twin helms help maximize cockpit space

large flush-deck hatches

trademark Hanse self-tacking jib

HANSE 315

A small but mighty cruiser from Germany by Zuzana Prochazka

The baby of the Hanse 5 series, the 315, looks surprisingly serious at the dock. She's got an almost predatory look, even compared to any 50-footers that might be in the area—which seems funny until she gets out on the water and kicks some booty. Between her easy-sailing rig that cuts down on tacking drama and her excellent balance, this boat seems to say, "Step aside Google, Tesla and GM with your self-driving cars, I'm a self-driving boat."

CONSTRUCTION

It's harder to build a small boat than a big one, because you have to try and pack all the same amenities and decent sailing characteristics into a tiny platform. However, this entry-level Hanse, which replaces the older 325, does an admirable job of doing both, thanks in large part to the efforts of the Judel/Vrolijk design team.

The hull is solid and hand-laid, with the outer skins of the laminate saturated in vinyl ester to protect against osmotic blisters. The deck is cored in balsa, in the interest of lowering the boat's center of gravity. At the deck joint there is a built-in lip at the gunwale for better footing when heeled.

The L-shaped keel is available in two drafts, 6ft 1in or 4ft 5in. The deck-stepped mast is tapered, has double sweptback spreaders and carries Elvstrom FCL (Fast Cruising Laminate) sails. The rig, vang and traveler are all from Seldén, which dominates the European production boat market.

The beauty of Hanse rigs is the self-tacking jib that makes shorthanded sailing a snap. The 315 comes with a self-tacking 98 percent jib on a Furlex above-deck furler and a curved sheet track just ahead of the mast. There is an option to add jib tracks on the side decks and a 105 percent overlapping jib, but since the shrouds are far outboard, the sheeting angles would suffer without adding much to the sail area. Besides, why ruin such a great self-managing setup and add to the cost?

ON DECK

I must admit that twin helms on a boat of this size seemed a bit of an affectation until I stepped aboard. Although there is a bit of a pinch point between the wheels

and the table, it's still easier to get around the cockpit with twin helms than it would be with one oversized one or with the tiller that comes standard. Besides, the Danish carbon wheels by Jefa will make any weekend warrior feel like a rock star.

Like her bigger sisters, the 315 has a manually controlled drop-down transom that extends the cockpit and provides a nice swim platform at anchor. A chart-plotter and instruments from B&G are at the port wheel, and the Lewmar primary winches are easy to reach from the helms. Two more winches along with two arrays of Spinlock rope clutches manage the halyards and single-line reefing on the cabintop. Some thought went into the split backstay, which is designed to allow taller helmspersons to stand up and drive on either side without snagging their hair on the wire.

Side boarding gates are optional, because Europeans tend to Med-moor, but for the North American market they will be popular. There is also a shortage of cup

Without anyone touching the wheel, the boat tracked perfectly even as she kept up her speed

holders in the cockpit—in fact, there are none. On the plus side, there are two nice amidship cleats, and with the exception of optional teak slatting in the cockpit, the whole deck is blissfully free of teak trim for low maintenance.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Aside from the fabric and wood finish options, the 315 is fairly standard below, with a two-cabin and single head layout. The only real variation is the V-berth configuration, where you can opt to lose the bulkhead and have an open full berth with a small luggage table to starboard, or enclose the small cabin and have a seat with additional shelves that fold out to create single or double elongated berth. This is a tight space, perfect for kids or guests, with the master stateroom and its large athwartship bed aft, below the cockpit.

The saloon gets good light from an overhead deck hatch and large fixed ports in the cabintop. The saloon table separates two straight settees, with a seat for a small aft-facing nav station to port. The L-shaped galley is to starboard with a single circular sink near the centerline, a Waeco top-loading refrigerator and a two-burner Eno stove/oven combination. The black quartz countertops add a rich feel. In all, it's a small galley, but one that lacks nothing to create worthy meals on a weekend cruise.

The single head, with a sink and Jabsco toilet, is to port. Although there is no separate shower stall, the head is roomy. A nice feature is the civilized companionway with steps that allow you to walk, rather than climb below. The standard interior finish is

a satin mahogany with optional choices of light Italian oak or warm American cherry.

UNDER SAIL

Flat water but fluky winds met us at the dock on the Chesapeake for a test that would clearly be a relaxing sail at best. However, soon we were blessed with random puffs of 8 to 12 knots apparent wind, and the 315 came to life, reaching 5.8 knots at a 45-degree wind angle and 6 knots at 60 degrees. Using both hands to take notes, I suddenly realized the boat was driving herself. From then on, without anyone touching the wheel, the boat tracked perfectly even as she kept up her speed. As if that wasn't enough, at one point the 315 suddenly dipped down a few degrees, dodged a crab pot and then came back up on course. The joke became that crab-pot dodging was an upgrade. Even without this "upgrade," it was clear the boat barely needed anyone aboard.

Not wanting to look like slackers enjoying the sunshine and an easy sail, we tacked through 80 degrees and fell off onto a broad reach, maintaining a speed of 5.3 knots at a 120-degree apparent wind angle. Throughout, the helm was light and responsive. Given her good manners, this will be a perfect boat for young families just getting into the sport or experienced sailors looking to downsize to a no-fuss cruiser. With the ease of the self-tacking jib, singlehanders will be tempted to head out for short afternoon sails even if the crew can't make it.

UNDER POWER

European spec sheets have the engine listed as a 12hp diesel. Our test boat was equipped with an optional, fuel-sipping 18hp Volvo that kicked up to 6.9 knots of speed at 3,000 rpm. It's a small engine, but

Specifications



LOA	31ft 6in	LWL	28ft 5in	BEAM	11ft
DRAFT	6ft 1in (std); 4ft 5in (shoal)				
DISPLACEMENT	10,361lb				
BALLAST	3,306lb (std); 3,637 (shoal)				
SAIL AREA	506ft ²				
AIR DRAFT	47ft				
FUEL/WATER (GAL)	26/60				
ENGINE	12hp Volvo				
BALLAST RATIO	32%				
SA/D RATIO	17				
D/L RATIO	200				
DESIGNER	judel/vrolijk				
BUILDER	Hanse, Greifswald, Germany, hanseyachts.com				
US DISTRIBUTOR	Hanse North and South America, Newburyport, MA, 978-239-6568, dbrophy@hanseyachts.com				
PRICE	\$125,000 (sailaway)				

The Details: The Hanse 315's saloon is bathed in natural light thanks to well-placed ports



there's plenty of power to push a boat that displaces 10,361lb.

CONCLUSION

There are now seven models in the very successful Hanse 5 series, ranging from 31ft to 57ft with a 67-footer on the drawing board. Hanse is developing its dealer network around the world and is leveraging economies of scale in its state-of-the-art production facility in Greifswald, Germany. This all translates into reasonable pricing. The base on the 315 is just under \$98,000, the sailaway package is \$125,000, and fully loaded, you could spend up to \$150,000. Either way, it's a lot of boat for the money, especially when you consider the self-driving fun factor. ♦