

Command

Jeanneau, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, builds a new boat every two hours. James Jermain casts his eye over its latest performance cruiser with club-racing potential

The Sun Odyssey 36i is typical of the new generation of yachts coming out of the company's recently opened, modern factory at Les Herbiers. It is bigger than the model it replaces, has more internal volume, upgraded fittings, a better inventory and a significantly smaller price tag.

Before its recent modernisation programme, Jeanneau was proud of building boats in a slightly old-fashioned way. Now it boasts of its new automated production line, robot

workforce, infusion moulding and advanced computer-aided design systems. This has reduced the lead time from conception to first production boat from two years to less than 12 months. After the lead designer - in this case Marc Lombard - has drawn the hull lines, an integrated design system, CATIA, allows a team of specialist designers to work simultaneously on all parts of the boat, including the rig, electrical systems, plumbing and interior design. The boat goes straight from computer simulation to production line without

prototypes, mock-ups or models. The factory produces 4,000 boats a year at a rate of one every two hours.

Jeanneau says these changes mean a lighter, stronger, better boat. We went to Levington Marina on the Orwell to find out if that's right. Here we picked up the Performance version of the 36i. This is the equivalent of the old Sun Fast range which is being phased out as a name except for a couple of specialist designs.

Performance models are based on the same



ON TEST
THIS MONTH

P88 50 NOT OUT
FOR JEANNEAU

Jeanneau's factory outputs one boat every two hours. Here's how they do it!



P90 LIVE LIFE TO THE
MAX: MAXI 1100

Jeremy Evans sails a modern classic that 'clearly has more than a touch of class and style'.

performance

hulls and interiors as the standard models but have bigger rigs, deeper keels, Mylar sails, Dyform rigging, a removable furling drum and some upgraded deck gear. The package is designed to give faster, more rewarding cruising rather than turn the boat into a full-on racer, but it should make her reasonably competitive on the club circuit.

We took the 36i out into a blustery North Sea with a moderate sea running. With 22 knots over the deck we put a reef in the main and rolled the genoa down from 135% to about 100%. For a while she stood up to this boldly, ploughing through Harwich Harbour at 6.2 to 6.4 knots and tacking quickly and cleanly through 85° to 90°. The big

wheel gives light and very precise steering upwind. The genoa sheet winches are placed where they can be handled by the helmsman or the crew but the centrally sheeted main can only be managed by the crew.

In the open waters outside the harbour the wind rose to 26 knots, which meant a second reef and more rolls in the genoa. As she became over

pressed she would round up gently but firmly and make it plain she was going no further until properly dressed. The specifications make this look a tender boat, with a ballast ratio of just 27% and an AVS on the low side. But in practice, with the centre of gravity low and a generous beam, she stood up to her canvas well. The long waterline and big rig give her good speed →

SUN ODYSSEY 36i PERFORMANCE

'If it were our money, we'd happily fork out extra for the Performance pack over the standard version'



P94 A HELPING HANDHELD

A fully charged handheld VHF could be a lifesaver. Our group test looks at the latest non-DSC entry-level models



P100 A SNAP DECISION

Extend your anchor with chain links – but read our test before you make a decision you might regret



P104 NEW GEAR

Cockpit cushions, phone condoms, EPIRBs and more emerge from VM's monthly sack of gear and gadgets



potential. She is shallow and flat in the bow sections but she didn't slam unduly in the short, steep chop.

Putting the second reef in had little effect on speed or handling and she was again well balanced and light on the helm. But we did sail her a little freer to give us the power to punch through the waves. At 30° to the apparent wind we were making around 6 knots and heeling to 25°. By opening this out a couple of degrees we pushed the speed up to 6.5 knots, reduced the heel by a few degrees and gave ourselves a more comfortable ride.

On a close reach she accelerated swiftly to 7.3 knots and we roared along the coast in fine style. However, the very precise steering now became a little twitchy and when we freed off further to a broad reach we were having to work quite hard to keep a straight course.

There is no doubt this is a lively boat but given the conditions she displayed good manners and a liking for being pushed hard. The generous

sail plan should mean light-air performance is equally rewarding. With remotely adjustable genoa cars, a powerful backstay adjuster and rigid kicker she is easily tuned without being excessively complicated. The Harken winches and Lewmar deck gear are generously specified and make light work of handling the extra sail area. For gentle family cruising the extra simplicity, smaller rig and lighter loads of the standard model will have their advantages but any cruising owner with red blood in his veins will consider the £5,700 Performance upgrade money well spent.

ON DECK

The cockpit is large with comfortable seating for three or four crew but the helmsman's seating is too low and divided into three – a central seat and two wing seats. While these give good vision under the genoa or along the windward deck, they are not very comfortable. The side decks are wide enough but the teak toe rail and stanchions are set well inboard. Wooden grab handles along the

coachroof are effective if a little shallow.

The sternhead has a massive combined anchor stowage channel and mooring line roller. The former extends several inches to keep the anchor clear of the near-plumb stem. The six cleats are a good size but we did not like the closed fairleads, which are small and not easy to use.

BELOW DECKS

The interior design of the 36i is very similar to the 35 and incorporates the latter's sliding chart table which adds a certain amount of flexibility to the saloon. There is full headroom to the forward bulkhead, plenty of light from large windows and hatches and ventilators. The teak veneered joinery is neater and better finished than on the 35 but there is an inescapable feeling that it has been assembled from a kit of parts – which is exactly what has happened.

The 36i is available in two or three sleeping cabin format. Our test boat had the twin after

»» BELOW DECKS



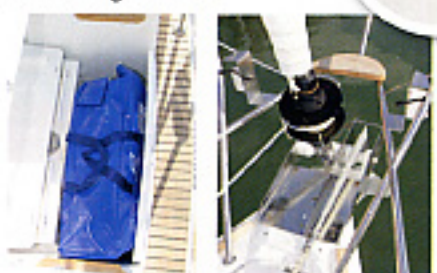
LEFT and BELOW: The chart table slides forward over the seats and back out of the way when in harbour



ABOVE and ABOVE RIGHT: Our test boat had the twin after-cabins option, which reduces cockpit stowage and removes the shower stall from the heads



ABOVE: The cockpit seats up to four crew. **RIGHT:** Grab handles on the coachroof. **BELOW:** Good stowage and mooring line roller



INSET RIGHT: The joinery is neater and better finished... but it is assembled from a kit of parts. **RIGHT:** The saloon dinette can be converted into a double bunk. **FAR RIGHT:** The saloon table's extension leaf is a bit floppy



UNDER POWER

The 29hp Yanmar 3YM is neatly installed with good access all round. The conventional prop exits through a short supporting skeg and a P bracket and is fitted with a folding prop. It will drive the boat at a comfortable cruising speed of around 7 knots when it is quiet and vibration free. Even flat out at 7.8 knots noise levels are lower than average. Handling is typical for a boat of this type. She turns a little over a length ahead and about two lengths astern. We found her easy enough to control when berthing in a cross wind although we found the folding prop had rather less bite than some.



cabins, which reduces cockpit storage and removes the shower stall from the heads. In other respects the two models are identical. The saloon dinette is large enough to convert into a double bunk but the table is a bit wobbly.

Opposite, the chart table has two positions – pushed forward over the end of the settee it can be used conventionally but in harbour it can be slid out of the way. At night, an infill turns the settee into a bunk. The system reduces the amount of stowage round the navigation area but there is sufficient bulkhead space for a reasonable array of instruments. Stowage in the rest of the saloon is adequate but not generous. The grab rails are very shallow, difficult to get hold of and would benefit from a redesign. Below the sole is a deep bilge with a moulded sump cleverly protected by a mesh upstand so that the bilge pump is less likely to get blocked.

The galley is larger than that in the 35 with more work surface, a large cool box, two sinks and good, plain stowage. There is a shortage of good grab handles in this part of the boat as well.

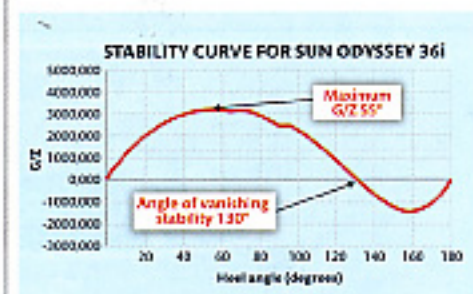
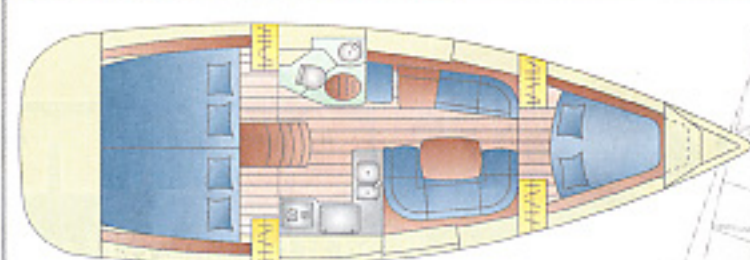
The two after cabins have bunks 1.98m long and 1.45m wide (6ft 6in by 4ft 9in), a small hanging locker and a long shelf. The forecabin has reduced headroom but it is still 1.80m (just under 6ft) and the bunk is a generous 1.98m long by 1.57m wide (6ft 6in by 5ft 2in).

Overall the accommodation is simple but comfortable and practical for day-to-day family cruising. It feels solid and well finished with an open, light feeling. The joinery receives 10 coats of machine-applied varnish to both sides and the end-grain stowage is not brilliant but is no worse than the competition. ⚓

» VERDICT

This boat is a great improvement on the 35 and the fact that it is cheaper makes it a strong competitor in this section of the market. Jeanneau anticipates that around 25 to 30% of 36s will be the Performance model. The standard version makes sense in the charter market, for newcomers to sailing and those who appreciate undemanding family sailing. But if it were our money we would happily fork out the extra for the Performance pack.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



CONSTRUCTION

The hull is a hand-laid laminate, foam-cored above the waterline. Isophthalic resins are used for the gel coat and outer laminates. Resin and glass clothes are pre-cut and weighed giving weight tolerances of less than 25kg. The deck is a resin infusion moulding with foam cores on load

bearing surfaces and solid pads in way of fittings. The hull and deck are bonded and through bolted. Internal joinery is teak-faced ply using fine teak veneers with solid teak trim. The sole boards have hardwearing Formica surfaces with a simulated teak and holly finish.

Price:	£77,116 (inc Performance pack)
LOA	10.69m (35ft)
LWL	9.84m (32ft 3in)
Beam	3.59m (11ft 9in)
Draught	2.10m (6ft 11in)
Displacement	5,700kg (12,566 lb)
Ballast	1,540kg (3,402 lb)
Sail area (inc 100% foretriangle)	59m ² (634sq ft)
Engine	Yanmar 3YM30 29hp diesel with conventional stern gear and folding prop
Fuel	130 lt (28.5 gal)
Water	355 lt (78 gal)
Displ/length ratio	167

Sail area/displ ratio	19
Ballast ratio (%)	27
RCD Category	A
STIX	34.6
Design	Marc Lombard/Jeanneau
Builder	Jeanneau, Les Herbiers, France
UK Agents	East Coast; Clarke and Carter, Tel: 01473 659681 South Coast; Sea Ventures, Tel: 01590 672472 North and Scotland; Euroyachts, Tel: 0141 429 3766

* All prices quoted in YM boat tests are inclusive of VAT

THE RIVALS



BÉNÉTEAU FIRST 36.7

Price	£83,425
LOA	10.68 (35ft)
LWL	9.21m (30ft 3in)
Beam	3.45m (11ft 4in)
Draught	2.20m (7ft 2in)
Displacement	5,870kg (12,914 lb)
Ballast	1,745kg (3,839 lb)
Sail area	66m ² (710sq ft)
Engine	Yanmar 29hp diesel
RCD Category	A
STIX	not supplied
Contact	Bénéteau, France,
Tel	+33(0)2 51 64 20 20



X-37

Price	£137,601
LOA	11.35m (37ft 3in)
LWL	9.79m (32ft 1in)
Beam	3.48m (11ft 5in)
Draught	1.98m (6ft 6in)
Displacement	6,400kg (14,109 lb)
Ballast	2,715kg (5,985 lb)
Sail area	76m ² (830sq ft)
Engine	Yanmar 29hp diesel
RCD Category	A
STIX	not supplied
Contact	X-Yachts (GB) Ltd,
Tel	02380 453377



DUFOUR 34

Price	£74,909
LOA	10.60m (34ft 9in)
LWL	9.13m (30ft)
Beam	3.48m (11ft 5in)
Draught	1.50m (6ft 3in)
Displacement	5,700kg (12,540 lb)
Ballast	1,950kg (4,300 lb)
Sail area	53m ² (570sq ft)
Engine	Volvo 29hp diesel
RCD Category	A
STIX	not supplied
Contact	Portway Yacht Sales
Tel	01803 380506