

# MOTOR BOAT & YACHTING

THE NEW

# KING

# OF COOL

JEANNEAU'S  
ULTRA CHIC  
DB43



**SIRENA**  
**68**  
FULL  
TEST



THE ULTIMATE  
MODERN TRAWLER?

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# JEANNEAU DB43

*The DB43 ushers in an all-new style of boat for Jeanneau that wades into battle against a raft of high quality competitors. Does twinning a highly versatile cockpit with genuinely usable accommodation give this model the edge?*



It's an intriguing design that comes alive when you see it in the flesh. It's impossible to ignore the sheer breadth of the cockpit

There was an air of inevitability that Beneteau Group would soon add to the throng of big T-top sportsboats on the market but the question remained as to which brand it would use to target the sector. Beneteau (the brand) has a range of sportscruisers in its own stable of course but the group is now in possession of Wellcraft and Scarab, two brands which could feasibly be moulded into an entity to take on the Fjords, Axopars and Pardos of this world.

Ultimately it was Jeanneau that got the nod and in reviving the DB moniker that adorned a range of

sportscruisers in the 1980s, the brand has on its hands an all-new concept that we are promised will sprout larger and smaller models from the same blueprint. Using the Jeanneau brand for this creation makes sense for a number of reasons. The current range is sporadic with everything from 6m Merry Fisher pêche promenades to the more sophisticated NC and Leader ranges but there is nothing like the DB43. The two men behind this project – designer Camillo Garroni and naval architect Michael Peters – both have experience working with Jeanneau and the wider Beneteau family and are tuned to the intricacies and challenges of what is achievable within

INSET: There is quite a big level change between the cockpit and foredeck

BELOW: The terraces increase the width of the cockpit by 6ft (1.83m)



the realms of a mass production environment. What is clear from the outset is that with the might of the Beneteau Group R&D budget behind it and these two well established design names on board, the DB43 was unlikely to arrive at launch undercooked.

It is an intriguing design that really comes alive when you see it in the flesh, especially in the silver hull paint of our test boat (white gel is standard). With the cockpit terraces deployed it looks stubbier and taller than the initial 3D renders suggested it might be but it's impossible to ignore the sheer breadth of the cockpit. With the terraces down the usable living space is increased by a whopping 6ft, taking the overall beam to 18ft 5in (5.63m). The other element of the design that is immediately striking is how tall the topsides are and the generous freeboard, especially at the bow. The reason for this will become clear as we delve deeper into the boat's configuration.

#### NOT JUST A DAY BOAT

How about that cockpit, though? It really is something, especially when kitted out in Premiere trim, which includes the terraces and the super flexible seating arrangement.

Functionality across this main deck is superb, as is deck storage, which doesn't grab headlines as much as folding balconies but is such an important element of what makes a boat easy to live with. Jeanneau wants to disband the notion that boats like this are simply used as large day boats by providing levels of storage and accommodation that make it an comfortable boat to stay on board for extended cruises.

Look no further than the storage options at the stern, where there is a mini tender garage big enough to hold a Seabob or the boat's liferaft and a neat rope locker beneath the aft sun pad. ▶



LEFT: The helm and dinette are well protected by the substantial hard top  
BELOW: The flexibility of the cockpit is one of the DB43's best features



The interior is surprising as it's so much more than the token gesture some boats of this style offer

All of the cockpit benches have deep storage voids within their bases and the partitioned anchor locker is large enough to swallow eight large fenders.

There is also some really clever stuff going on with the cockpit seating. A two-way backrest fitted to the sun pad, allows it to act either as a support when guests are sitting at the dinette or flop forward to create a headrest for full sun-bathing mode. The forward bench has a two-way backrest, too, but it's also mounted on runners so the whole unit slides to either cater for dining or travel. In travel mode the base slides aft and cosies up to the table to create forward-facing seating for up to four people when the boat is on the move. At rest, the whole unit slides towards the wetbar to create the same amount of seating space at the dinette table. The large, attractive teak table is clever, with the usual folding leaf arrangement, but it also has two-way hinges (made from scratch by Jeanneau) that allow the whole top to flip both ways depending on how the bench seating is arranged.

#### SOCIABLE SPACE

The wet bar is the focal point of this main deck and the position of the sink and hob/hot plate lead whoever is preparing food to face astern rather than forward so they don't have their back to guests when they are putting lunch together. It's a simple tweak to a well used layout that makes the whole deck feel more sociable and ensures whoever is at the galley is part of the conversation. It's a solid unit with hefty Corian tops, integrated pop-up lights and underneath the counter a pair of Isotherm fridges, drawer storage and an optional ice maker. With such a comprehensive galley on deck it comes as a surprise that as standard there is also a compact galley on the lower deck

with a small sink, oven and some additional storage space. In fact, the whole interior comes as a bit of a surprise because it's so much more than the token gesture that some boats of this style offer on their lower decks. By sacrificing a dinette, the DB43 has two totally private double cabins which, if you have the galley option, share a well proportioned bathroom with separate shower cubicle. In my view the better option is to do away with the galley and have a second identical bathroom in its place, giving guests the privacy of their own cabin and bathroom. Given there is such a well kitted out galley on deck and the option of a set of canvases so you can fully enclose the main deck, then losing the galley on the lower deck doesn't seem much of a sacrifice.

Forward on the lower deck that massive freeboard pays dividends. There's comfortably 6ft 3in headroom across the lobby, forward cabin and bathroom, but the amidships cabin is sitting room only due to the cockpit above. For this reason most owners will likely use the forward cabin as the master as it's so much easier to move around and has superior storage including a full-length hanging wardrobe.

You can stand in the entrance way of the amidships cabin and it has a huge berth with a sofa to port, but once inside the main space it's crouching or sitting room only with just about enough clearance overhead to sit up in bed and read.

#### PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMY

The DB43 is available with two sets of engine options from launch, either triple 350hp Yamaha or Mercury outboards (hello Florida) or what our test boat had (and most European spec boats will have) twin Volvo Penta D6 380s on stern drives. It's likely that larger Volvo diesels will be available in the future but such is the pressure on supply chains Jeanneau was unwilling to commit to anything concrete. Not that it really matters because



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for this type of boat the 380s provide a decent balance between performance and economy, even if the slightly stingy 800-litre fuel capacity limits the range a touch. Day to day the D6 motors are a sweet pairing for the DB43, and the stern drives grant the boat an agility and tenacity that its pod drive and even outboard rivals struggle to compete with. Even with a boat full to capacity and with brimmed fuel and water tanks it eased onto the plane without fuss and topped out at an impressive 33 knots. Twenty-five knots feels like a good cruising speed and, once on the plane, it delivers the best fuel economy as well.

The helm position works really well and one of the DB43's cleverest bits of design is how it manages to feel so open while still providing a huge amount of protection for passengers, especially those in one of the three adjustable helm seats. The windscreen is attached to the hard top, which in turn is connected to the bulwarks. This means the hard top, which has an electric GRP sunroof as an option, provides a good amount of cover for the deck so it's very easy to find shelter from sunshine (or rain). There was probably a temptation to mount the steering wheel in the middle of the dash but by putting it to starboard it allows a single-handed skipper to easily relinquish the controls and dart through the boarding gate to tie alongside. ▶

ABOVE: The DB43 at its best in beach club mode

ie galley can be placed by a cond bathroom an option



ABOVE LEFT: Thanks to the amount of headroom the forward will likely be used as the master MIDDLE: The interior doesn't feel particularly expensive but the design is attractive RIGHT: Useful cubbies flank the bed



Even up wind the ride is remarkably soft and the hull notably composed



admit to being a little apprehensive about how such a slender hull with towering topsides would tackle the fierce, r-sprinkled chop that greeted us on day one of our test. Michael Peters hasn't fostered such a sparkling reputation for this boat. The ride is remarkably soft and even up wind into the teeth of the white horses – with the Trim Assist off and legs tucked right in to dig the sharpest part of the hull into the water. The DB43 took these conditions in its stride. Turn broadside and it's inevitable that those slablike topsides are going to produce some spray but for the most part the ride is notably composed both up and down wind. Something that separates the DB43 from many of its key rivals is that it doesn't have a single-level walkaround main deck. The upside of this is the spacious forward cabin but the downside is it simply doesn't feel as safe to move around as a Fjord or a 40. In fact, there is quite a big step up on to the foredeck and, with relatively low guardrails, you do feel a bit exposed when leaning fenders up there or manning the anchor, especially if the boat is rolling around a bit.

practical stuff like deck storage and boarding gates. It also feels really well sorted out on the water thanks to a soft riding, agile hull and performance that will be more than enough for most people.

Does it feel like the near 1 million boat that it costs as tested with VAT? On deck – yes – but the interior doesn't quite live up to that price point in places, though I ought to point out that this was hull number one and no doubt improvements will be made.

There is a lot to like about the DB43, enough to forgive the slightly awkward styling and cramped amidships cabin but for me it's where this range could lead that is really interesting. A smaller one with a more accessible price point and a larger one with a sleeker profile and even more deck space to play with? Now that's exciting...

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**VERDICT**

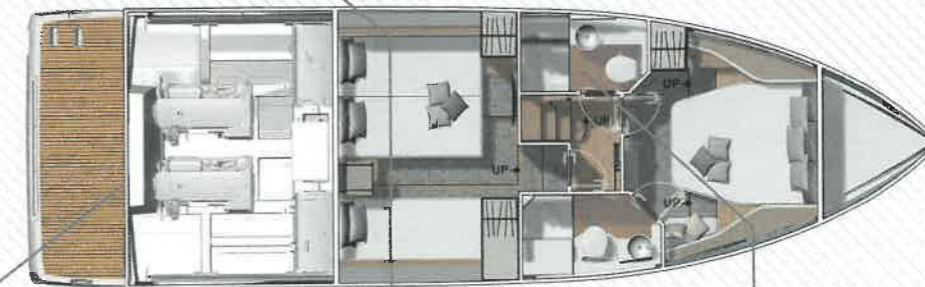
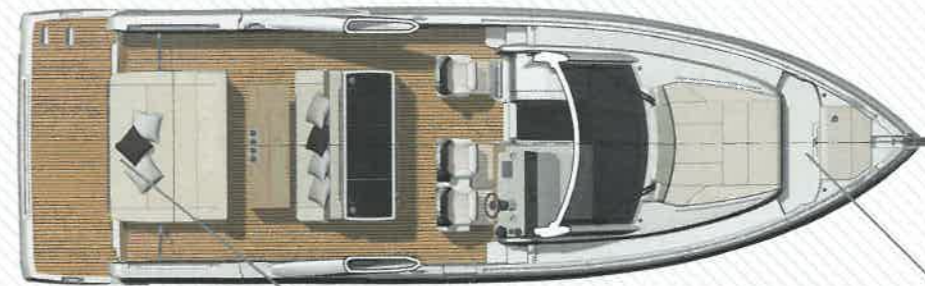
g a little late to the party there was always going to be pressure on the DB43 to perform well out of the box, and on the water there are no complaints. At least the transforming cockpit is a triumph. Jeanneau hasn't lost sight of the boring but



**WINDSCREEN**  
Connecting the top of the screen to the roof protects those at the helm from the breeze

**STORAGE**  
It's good to see a covered storage bin for loose items

**SEATS**  
The three helm chairs look great and have good adjustment



**ENGINE ACCESS**  
The engineroom is tight but daily checks are easy to perform

**STORAGE**  
The aft end of the bed lifts to reveal storage for a Seabob

**SECOND HEADS**  
You can replace the galley with another bathroom

**FOREDECK**  
There is a spot to mount a picnic table at the bow

**TOP SPEED**



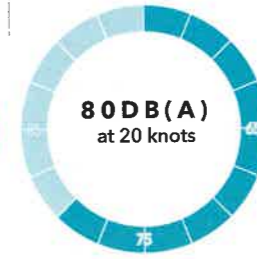
**CONSUMPTION**



**RANGE**



**NOISE**



**PRICE**



**SPECIFICATION**

LOA 42ft 9in (13.03m)  
Beam 12ft 6in (3.82m)  
Draught 3ft 1in (0.94m)  
Displacement 9.8 tonnes  
Fuel capacity 800 litres  
Water capacity 250 litres  
RCD B for 8 people

Designer Garroni Design & Michael Peters

**COSTS & OPTIONS**

Price from €658,680 ex VAT

Electric hard top, Premiere trim level (including cockpit terraces)  
Upgraded Raymarine electronics  
Premium Fusion audio pack, anchoring kit, cockpit canopy set, hydraulic bathing platform, 7.5kW generator, bow thruster, underwater lights

**PERFORMANCE**

Test engines Volvo Penta D6 380. 380hp @ 3,500rpm. 5.5-litre, 6-cylinder diesel

	1,000	1,400	1,800	2,200	2,400	2,800	3,200	3,600
RPM								
Knots	6.0	8.2	9.5	10.8	12.5	18.6	26.5	33.0
Litres per hour	8.5	19.0	36.0	63.0	77.0	106	120	155
Litres per mile	1.42	2.32	3.79	5.83	6.16	5.70	4.53	4.70
Range (NM)	452	276	169	110	104	112	141	137
Noise dB(A)	70	72	75	80	81	82	81	83

Calculated figures based on real-time readings, yours may vary considerably. Figures allow for 20% reserve. All prices ex VAT. 100% fuel, 100% water, 8 crew + safety stores. 20° air temperature, F1 and calm for sea trial.