

Jeanneau Prestige 42

With this fine 42ft flybridge cruiser, the fancied French builder is taking on Europe's big guns at their own game **REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON**

Jeanneau's Prestige cruisers have come a long way in a short space of time. Launched in 1999, the 36ft flybridge model that got the ball rolling was swiftly followed by a 32ft version, the 34 Open sports cruiser and a 46 flagship. Eminently usable and good value for money, all four have proved popular with UK boaters. But surely the 42ft cruiser you see before you must be the most important of the lot.

By filling the gap between the 36 and 46, Jeanneau has finally taken on the core flybridge market in Europe. So how will it stand up to the best that Britain and Italy can produce?

Design and build

For the 42, Jeanneau has really thought about the boating basics, getting them right with the

minimum of fuss. Decks are accessible and safe, stowage, especially that for the deck, is plentiful and interiors breathe easily. Fully five years of Prestige development have allowed boat No.1 to hit the water planing.

During the development period, Jeanneau and its consultants Michael Peters Yacht Design and Garroni Design first looked at the option of a three-cabin layout. They checked out how British and Italian builders went about their work in terms of design and finish and noted the most popular options requested by owners, with a view to making some of them standard issue.

It was then decided that a two en suite cabin layout was to be the best and, in fact, the only choice, given that Jeanneau's high-output production ideals could not offer an optional tri-cab without a hike in price. The firm freely admits

“At sea the hull behaved superbly, and it was noticeable how few bumps and rattles we felt”

to a healthy respect for the likes of Princess and Sealine and has used British cruising ideas to help shape this boat.

Even with all these courteous nods and references, though, the 42 is above all else a Jeanneau, and existing Prestige owners will feel immediately at home on board. Outside, it is clean and uncluttered, the only visual weight coming from the arrowed section bonded into the side screen along the upperworks. The bow is generously flared and quite rounded, allowing the 13ft 8in beam to carry further forward – and also delivering more space for the forward master cabin.

Behind the scenes, a conventional lay up is reinforced by a balsa composite core to the frames and deck. A GRP liner is then laid over the lower bilge, keeping the finish clean and tidy and also adding extra strength, while the engines bed on to a single-piece skin.

Rather strangely, Jeanneau has decided not to

implement its excellent 'one side wider than the other' asymmetrical side decks. We presume the idea is that a boat of this size and beam can do without them, but the reality is a bit disappointing.

✓✓✓✓✓
No substitute for experience, and this lot now has it

Accommodation

Jeanneau's two, en suite, cabin layout follows the 'galley down' philosophy of the best boats in this class. This leaves the saloon free to wallow in its own sense of comfort, with the new fondness for detail and finish adding a luxurious edge. You'll notice sliding stylish sections by the helm and galley, the striking side windows are framed by cherry wood, and feature rails run along the saloon, finished in a stitched leather effect. They look great and also double up as grabrails to lead you safely through the boat. U-shape saloon

seating offers up snug corners to wedge into when underway. A system of reversible cushions and a corner shelf lets you change from seating to double berth, and the two-seater bench opposite pulls across to fill the gap left by the cherry wood table. As well as the lockers set behind smart cherry cabinets, there is plenty of storage under all the seating.

Square-edged laminate, a dead giveaway of high production-volume cabinetry, has been replaced by something more elegant in most places. Around the boat, the majority of joinery is finished with a fiddle or styled edge, but there are still areas where flat laminate strips are used. These are even more noticeable because of the contrast with the classier finished parts elsewhere, and do result in a slightly bitty finish.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the galley, which is a shame because it is big with plenty of locker and work space. It looks stark and unfinished compared to the saloon you have just walked through, while lockers that lead straight onto the flow-coated hull are not quite the job.

So the 42 does not match the levels of the excellent and (for our money) market-leading Princess 42, but then neither is the price. And there are plenty of other details to get excited about, not least an excellent guest



FACT FILE
Jeanneau
Prestige 42
LOA: 43ft 10in
(13.36m)
PRICE: £273,485
MADE IN: France
POWER: twin
Cummins QSBs

Jeanneau has really thought about boating basics, getting them right with a minimum of fuss



Air apparent: note the light that streams in through the windows. Add that to the comfy, armchair-style seating and the saloon is a pleasant place to sit and chat

cabins. While both cabins are of a good size with large toilet and shower compartments, the guest cabin is one of the best designed you will find on a boat under 50ft.

Why is it so good? Well, a thin GRP membrane lines the deck head, cutting up the side of the boat to release a huge amount of headroom and light by allowing an extra window into the cabin, along with the porthole. As with the master cabin, the stitched vinyl finish finishes the twin berths stylishly. That's not even the best bit: gasp at a starboard berth that slides across on runners to form a proper double bed.

From the brilliant guest cabin there is also an access panel into the main 12V circuit board, the buzz bar and loom and the domestic water and black waste systems; all very neat and tidy. A practical gripped laminate and GRP sole works very well too, but for something more

comfortable when you return from a hard day's cruising, you can select optional snap-in carpet covers.

Great layout and guest cabin. This firm's best yet

Exterior

Practical, user-friendly touches abound. Almost four feet deep with long clean side access, the bathing platform, for example, makes boarding so easy. It also allows a life raft to be stored within it, close to the water's edge, exactly where it should be. Boarding from the stern shows how R&D has borne fruit; witness the teak decking that covers the platform and the aft-cockpit, a once-optional extra that is now standard issue.

The firm's tradition of making the access up to side decks as easy and safe as possible continues with steps leading up on each side of the cockpit, while handrails along the superstructure make sure you always have a confident grip.

Beneath the cockpit lies a huge lazaret, where the hatchway lifts up on two gas struts. A laminated tray bundles up smaller kit, but there is enough space down here for all sorts of cruising must-haves, fixed or portable. You won't want for stowage space, and you might also want

to keep a tender down here, as the transom design leaves no space for davit posts.

Perhaps more could be made of the cockpit's seating – the singular bench is your only option, but again it does work, offering some fast-access stowage as well as somewhere to park your posterior. If loafing is on your mind, then the flybridge should be your port of call.

From a moulded stairwell the flybridge entranceway sole is recessed down to create maximum depth – and so safety – for your arrival. The freeboard up top is comparatively low, so a grille of stainless steel rails builds it up a bit, ensuring that there is always somewhere to grab on to. Note also the fold-up back rests that ride from the aft sunpad.

This still leaves plenty of space for seating; an L-shape bench runs forward into another layback sunlounger. The wide helm position forward has two adjustable bucket seats, and during sea trials no spray found its way in, suggesting the screen is doing its job.

Practical, but lower spec. And what about your tender?



Clean, easy design runs through the forecabin



With the dinette table removed, the seat base can be slotted in to make a good-size berth



Engine options and access

Cummins common rail diesels have proven popular with many of the world's top yards, and the firm's QSB series runs from 250hp to the 425hp lumps fitted to our test boat. They are, without question, the right engines, which is just as well as they are also the only ones available. Opting for a one-supplier, one-model strategy is a gamble, but if it allows overall pricing to be lowered while providing strong performance, then it's a gamble worth taking.

For complete engine room access, the entire saloon sole can be taken out in sections. Jeanneau has incorporated a dual skin to the floorboards, doubling up on the sound insulation, which explains the boat's quiet running underway. This does make it more of a chore to get at the engines, though, so your best bet for day-to-day checks is to approach via the cockpit lazaret. Lights either side of the engine room bulkhead will aid those early morning visits.

As well as the double skin above, the rest of the bay is well insulated and tidy, with that one-piece tray beneath the engines keeping things clean, and stainless steel fuel tanks mounted outboard.

Even with the battery banks slung along the centreline there is still enough depth to move between the engines.

Hobson's choice, but in this case, it's a good choice



Twin 'bucket' helm seats, plus an adjacent sunpad, make for a supremely sociable flybridge layout



Power to you: engine access on the 42 is not bad



Smart inset windows, but limited sidedecks

Performance and handling

Impressive: those vaunted Cummins 425hp models deliver plenty of torque and enthusiasm to pull through the 3000 rev range. In fact this boat's acceleration matched the get-up-and-go we have experienced on Jeanneau's smaller Volvo Penta-powered siblings, suggesting that hull design as well as horsepower has something to do with the Prestige performance.

Our test days were perfect to challenge this new hull. A swell of around six feet was trying to break into a chop as the wind pushed against the motion of the sea, but from the lower helm we felt as if

we could have gone all day and all night. The hull behaved superbly, as did the interior fit out. It was noticeable how few rattles and bumps came through, even when we were frankly running far too hard for the conditions. Don't tell anyone, but we left the water entirely more than once as the wave heights grew along with our confidence. It is only good structural build that allows a boat to feel this tight.

With no trim tabs supplied as standard it is important that the boat's trim is sound. No problems here: riding up-wind at 24 knots was very

pleasant; 27 knots comfortable. Much more than that, though, and you could spill your tea! Running downwind was a doddle, and we recorded a wave-assisted 37 knots back to port, the boat remaining composed.

It was also noticeable how little the boat leaned into the wind. Normally on a taller flybridge craft you expect some reaction to windage, especially in these conditions, but the Jeanneau remained resolutely stable. Any spray that found its way on board was swept away by two superb marine-grade auto park wipers, keeping the lower helm visibility clear and the skipper confident. A simple



Doubling up as a double: the midship cabin is a major plus point



Both cabins have en suites, and there's plenty of storage and surface space in the galley



BOAT REPORT

JEANNEAU PRESTIGE 42

ut effective console and dash do their bit, too, as ummins' SmartCraft instruments deliver instant economy figures. But the helm seat is one of those benches that is about one and a half bum's wide, which just about allows your nearest and dearest to perch next to you, but never leaves them feeling particularly confident.

It's not that you are likely to be flung from your seat on this boat, though. For all the straight-line performance and serene sea-keeping, the steering is very slow to react and a bit of a struggle to wind in. But this is not sportscruiser

territory and slow steering is no hardship when you consider its other fine sea-keeping attributes.

✓✓✓✓✓
Slow to turn, but certainly fast to impress

Specification and value

In the current market, £300,000 is a par price for twin screw flybridge cruisers, but Jeanneau has stolen a march on the competition by putting together a fully specified, modern cruiser for under £290,000, including VAT. Maybe other marques can get near to this price tag, but throw in same size engines and suddenly there is some serious daylight in terms of dough.

Jeanneau claims to have worked in optional extras into the standard specification. And even if the only real bonus seems to be the teak decking, you could tick every box on the options list and still come well under most of the quality competition. Think the Sealine 42/5, available from £301,288. This is a boat that is also interesting to use as a gauge for the Prestige 42's standard spec. The Sealine trumps the Jeanneau with trim tabs, canopies, an anchor and VHF radio all included as standard, plus it also matches up

with a standard fit teak cockpit. But add similar engines and – bang – you're over £314,000.

✓✓✓✓✓
As modern flybridges go, this takes some beating

Verdict

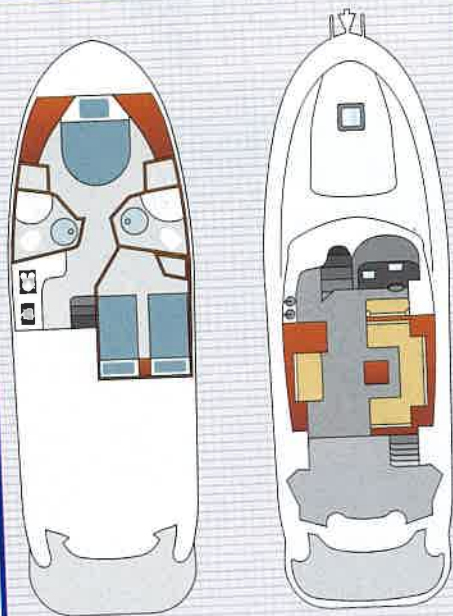
Jeanneau has succeeded in its quest. The 42 is a cruiser that gets all the important bits right; delivering performance, comfort and value for money in equally impressive measures.

9/10

MBM rating



Jeanneau Prestige 42 technical data



specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	Category B
LENGTH OVERALL	43ft 10in (13.38m)
HULL LENGTH	39ft 4in (11.98m)
BEAM	13ft 8in (4.16m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 5in (1.04m)
AIR DRAUGHT	15ft 2in (4.62m)
DISPLACEMENT	11 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	254 imp gal (1158lt)
WATER CAPACITY	114 imp gal (518lt)

accommodation

CABINS	2
BERTHS	4
HEADS	2 (en suite)

performance

Engines	twin Cummins 5.9 QSB						
Configuration	6cyl 5.9lt 425hp @ 3000rpm						
Weather	Force 4, sea state moderate, 7ft swell						
Load	fuel 75%, water 0%, crew 6						
	rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
	1600	10.8	6.8	31	1.58	321	73
	2000	15.6	13.9	63	1.12	228	75
	2200	18.6	16.7	76	1.13	231	75
	2400	22.1	20.2	92	1.09	222	78
	2600	26.4	22.4	102	1.17	238	80
	2800	28	25.5	116	1.09	222	80
	3000	30.6	30	136	1.02	207	82
	3050	31.4	33	150	0.95	192	82

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. Noise readings are in dB(A) and were taken in the saloon.

prices

STANDARD BOAT	£273,485
	With Cummins 425hp
ANCHOR & MOORING KIT	£947
MOORING	£603
BOW THRUSTER 7hp	£4765
TRIM TABS	£1846
COCKPIT CANOPIES	£2168
FLYBRIDGE COVER	£975
HOLDING TANK DIVERTER VALVE	£246
REMOVABLE SALOON CARPET	£484
FLYBRIDGE FRIDGE	£551

BOAT AS TESTED £286,343

ENQUIRIES Southern Motorboats, Tel: 01489 565444, or Walton Marine Sales, Tel: 01273 670707. www.jeanneau.fr

the rivals



FAIRLINE PHANTOM 40
From **£300,800**
With a Volvo Penta D6 370hp. The Fairline's awesome handling is matched by build quality and strong styling, both outside and in.
Tel: 01832 273661
www.fairline.com



PRINCESS 42
From **£299,035**
Unrivalled all-round ability means it is simply the best-designed cruiser in this market. The 430hp option starts at £314,700.
Tel: 01752 600 657
www.princess.co.uk



SEALINE 42/5
From **£301,288**
Again with the Volvo Penta D6 370hp, but this is the only boat to offer a three-cabin option. Canny Sealine offers strong on-board specification too.
Tel: 01562 749100
www.sealine.com