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BEST BOATS 2018

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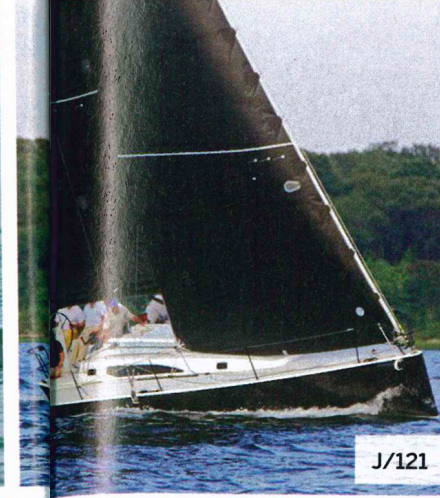
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By Nigel Calder, Adam Cort, Charles J. Doane, Zuzana Prochazka & Tom Dove

BEST BOATS




Hanse 588

If there's one word that sums up the Best Boats Class of 2018, it would have to be "performance." This is most obvious in the simple fact that our panel of judges exercised its editorial prerogative to create an additional third performance category, to accommodate three great new speedsters. However, as any old salt can tell you, there's a lot more to good performance afloat than pure boatspeed. Equally important is the way a boat treats its crew, whether it's resting on the hook in a quiet anchorage or off soundings battling a gale.

A perfect example of this alternative kind of performance can be found aboard the winner in our smaller cruising monohull category, which features a host of innovations aimed at increasing comfort and usability afloat. Similarly, the winners in our two cruising multihull categories combine outstanding handling under sail with outstanding accommodations—no mean feat aboard a boat type in which light weight is critical to performance. Then, of course, there is the winner in our "systems" category, in which performance means being able to store and easily sail the boat even if you happen to live in, say, a postage-stamp-sized loft in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood.

Finally, a special shout-out to the smallest of our performance-category winners. Every now and then a boat comes along that moves the world of sailing forward—think the Hobie 14 or the Laser. Could the Foiling UFO follow in these boats' footsteps? Time will tell. In the meantime, it sure is fun to see this kind of innovation is still alive and well at the cutting edge of naval architecture.



Hanse 588



BEST LARGE MONOHULL 50FT AND ABOVE

Hanse 588

A good thing becomes even better aboard the Hanse 588. An evolution of the successful 545, the Hanse 588 deck and interior incorporate a number of new ideas that serve to take the boat to a whole new level, whether it's underway or on the hook. The result is an outstanding blend of form and function—a kind of a mini-megayacht measuring in at less than 60ft.

There are dozens of different layout variations belowdecks, including an optional crew cabin and up to five guest cabins and five heads, various galley arrangements and a utility room. Larger hull windows and no fewer than 20 deck hatches and skylights let in an abundance of light and fresh air. The master suite forward is not only palatial in appearance, but soundproofed with the help of a rubber door gasket, so that with the door closed a hushed comfort envelopes the owners.

On deck, the twin helm stations are well within reach of the boat's electric winches, with controls for the furling headsail systems and bow and stern thrusters (optional) located on the two superyacht-style pedestals. The sailplan includes a self-tacking jib and a large genoa on separate forestays, making the rig easy to fine tune, no matter what the sailing conditions. Multiple keel and sail options, including the possibility of in-boom furling or Elvstrom FCL 5-Layer laminate sails, complete the picture. The overall look of the flush deck is sleekly elegant, with clear sightlines forward. Practical touches include large secure bulwarks outboard of the side decks and refreshingly tall lifelines.

The cockpit has two tables with a central walkway. Overhead, an optional composite T-top with an integrated, retractable fabric sunroof offers cover when needed, or sun and a clear view of the rig when it's not. There's even an optional outdoor galley with a grill and sink for entertaining in nice weather, and a wide sun pad forward. The redesigned tender garage is integrated with the massive bathing platform to make launching and retrieval a snap. The list of amenities goes on and on aboard this boat, which is as well-conceived as it is gorgeous. yachts.group/hanse/us