

# 4 x 45-



**COMET 45**



**GRAND SOLEIL 45**





topsides, a straight sheer line and a low-profile coachroof never sound overly flattering, but the simplicity of such lines have shaped today's modern performance style. A fold-out stainless steel anchor unit and a headsail furling drum set below decks helps to clean up her lines at the bow.

Control lines led back under the deck also reduce the clutter and improve her looks topside and the absence of deep coamings aft keeps the cockpit simple and workable. Here the layout is straightforward, with a pair of sheet primaries and halyard winches in the normal positions. Further aft and close to the helmsman is a pair of mainsheet winches which are also well positioned for the mainsheet trimmer, with a mainsheet track across the cockpit floor; a simple and effective system that gets my vote.

Beyond lie the large-diameter single wheel and dedicated seating for the helmsman. This area is well organised and contributes significantly to the fun of sailing the 45 short-handed. That you can brace yourself properly, tweak or dump the main when you need to and even reach forward to adjust the headsail sheet counts for a great deal when sailing simply for the fun of it.

Add to this a boat that feels beautifully balanced and responsive without being twitchy and to my mind you have the perfect cruiser-racer. Under engine (if you must) she plugs along happily at eight knots and is easy to handle at close quarters despite the lack of prop walk from the sail drive unit.

Our sailing trials were conducted in light

## She feels beautifully balanced and responsive without being twitchy – the perfect cruiser-racer

breezes, which was a shame as I would have liked to see her pressed harder, especially downwind where I suspect her fractional rig would make her manageable but exciting.

Below decks and with no props or make up, you could be forgiven for thinking she looks a little plain. She doesn't appear to explore any new territory when it comes to layout, with a pair of double cabins aft, an owner's double forward and a conventional U-shaped galley to port and a nav station to starboard. But then you notice the details. The owner's cabin is just where I'd like it – forward, away from the noise when moored stern-to and the wet when under way. Perhaps more significant is its size. For a slender 45-footer, this cabin represents an impressive use of space, complemented by a large heads/shower arrangement.

Even more impressively, the after-cabins under the cockpit don't feel restricted by deck height and have plenty of room to change when the cabin door is shut; simple and obvious, perhaps, but often overlooked or compromised aboard other boats.

Under her skin, a galvanised steel subframe similar to those of X-Yachts carries primary loads. Her hull and deck are of foam sandwich construction and the hull remains in the mould for nine days while the main structural components are bonded in.

Her joiner work is built in-house, largely by hand, and finished predominantly in teak. Attention to detail here is generally excellent, with grain matching across locker doors and even gaps throughout. Some end cap veneers felt flimsy and vulnerable, typically on cabin doors, but overall there's little doubt this yard have invested heavily, raised the bar and created a strong identity.

### Conclusions

The 45 is the first of a new range and style of Grand Soleils. She was launched late in 2003 in an almost bashful manner that seems the norm for this Italian yard. A 50ft version is already afloat and next year a 37-footer will join a range that seems destined for success.

Like her launch, the 45 is such a modest and subtle-looking boat she's easy to take for granted. But slip her alongside some of her older sisterships or current models of other manufacturers and she shines.

She may not be the cheapest boat on the block but she sails beautifully, looks superb and represents a change in manufacturing for the yard – a range worth keeping an eye on and a boat that's easy to love. MS Built by: Cantiere del Pardo spa, Via F.lli Lumiere, 34-47100 Forli, Italy. Tel: +39 0543 782404. Fax: +39 0543 782405. [www.grandsoleil.net](http://www.grandsoleil.net)

## Other 45-footers to consider

### Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45

The little sister of Jeanneau's performance cruiser Sun Odyssey 49 launched in 2003, the 45 retains the same sleek performance-orientated looks. Below decks is a standard production boat while on deck the twin wheels and spacious cockpit layout appear to make her a comfortable and secure family boat. Although no specifics have been released, there's a good chance a Sun Fast performance version will follow.

### Solaris 46 SC

Alongside 30 years of building

high-quality cruisers, Cantiere Serigi have also constructed a fleet of out-and-out racers, the one-design Solaris 36. Its success has spurred them on to join the cruiser-racer circus with the stylish Solaris 46sc and 60sc, designed by the team behind the 36, Studio Lostuzzi Yacht Design, and similar to Nautor's Swans 45 and 601 in looks.

### Dufour 44

If you can overlook occasional cheap finishing below, Dufour's 44 is a sound and attractive cruiser that will turn heads in the marina, then turn a few more on the water. She continues the positive and

promising advances of the 40 and the 34 and should prove a popular model for those looking for a keenly priced, capable performance cruiser.

### Poncin 44

The Poncin 44 is a difficult boat to figure out, largely because of her looks. A sleek, low-profile deck line and a high aspect ratio rig suggest a boat designed more as a cruiser-racer, but her ease of handling and conservative interior suggest she is indeed very much a cruiser.

### Centurion 45

She's a smart, intelligent and refined cruiser with a hull form and

pedigree that have combined to produce a formidable racer. Apart from her slightly quirky interior, the Centurion 45 is proof that a decent racer and cruiser is still possible without making big compromises.

### Swan 45

In a league of her own, Nautor's ground-breaking one-design has inspired many others to jump on the bandwagon. She's the most expensive in the group by far, but with this boat you're buying into a scene as well as a world-famous brand. The 45's selection as the middle boat in the next Admiral's Cup should also boost interest.



# FOOTERS



**SALONA 45**



**BÉNÉTEAU FIRST 44.7**

**Four of a kind in the crowded and exciting 45ft market: Matthew Sheahan gets to grips with a pair of Italian lookers and Mike Kopman checks out Bénéteau's First 44.7 plus a newcomer from Croatia that might well poach orders from the French giant**

Choice is possibly the most over-used word in the modern politician's vocabulary. But while its use in politics raises many a sceptical eyebrow, the boat-buying public can rest assured that in their field it is entirely legitimate – such is the variety among the latest crop of 45-footers that if you tried to see and sail every option you might notch up the sort of air miles that could've paid for one.

Every self-respecting yard in Europe seems to have a 45-footer on its books. Some like the Dufour 44, Wauquiez 45 and X-46 have been around for over a year. Others like the Jeanneau Sun Fast 45 and Solaris 46SC will slip into the water for the first time in a few months.

What makes the scene so exciting is that most of the new breed of performance cruisers aren't Euro-bland plastic clones but seriously sexy boats. Some feature innovative interiors; others boast price tags that make you question their builders' aptitude with a currency convertor; and some have the looks, handling and rating you'll want to show off on the racecourse.

To make things more difficult, the purely analytical approach to decision-making just won't wash with these boats – style has entered the equation. Consider the new Comet 45 from

Comar. From a practical point of view, her coamings are too low, the cockpit is too shallow and there are precious few grabrails on deck. But she looks – and is – fantastic to the point where you find yourself forgiving her on most counts.

In a similar vein is Cantiere del Pardo's Grand Soleil 45 – although more practical on deck than the Comet, one of her strengths in the broader market is simply that she looks great and doesn't cost the earth.

It's the Bénéteau's interior that'll help to open wallets during this season's boat shows. As Mike Kopman enthuses: 'Going below is like entering a modern apartment.' Get her under way in a breeze and feel her helm and the deal is likely to be sealed.

The wild card of the bunch this month is the largely unknown Salona 45, arguably the tamest of the group in looks, but which handles well and will seduce you with her touch under way.

If you don't want to be tempted by four of the best, look away now.

## Salona 45

You'd be forgiven for not expecting much from a plastic manufacturing company's first stab at yacht-building. Croatian firm AD Plastics are more used to injection-moulding

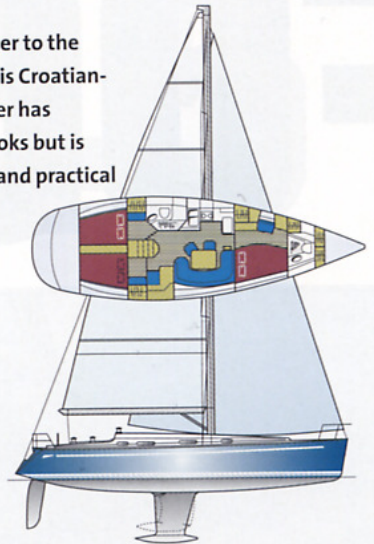
All photos Malcolm White



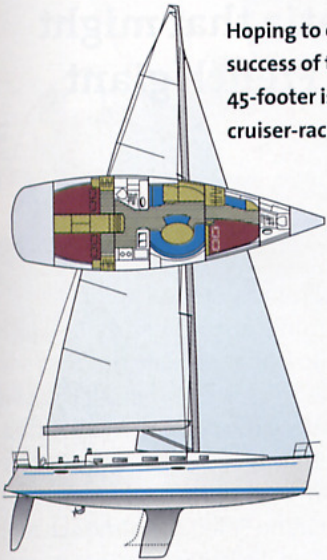


**SALONA 45**

A newcomer to the market, this Croatian-built cruiser has modest looks but is well built and practical



Hoping to emulate the success of the 40.7, this 45-footer is aimed at the cruiser-racer market



**BÉNÉTEAU FIRST 44.7**

automotive components than building boats, but having turned their attentions to the water they're not doing a bad job of it.

The Salona 45, like the Salona 40, was designed by J&J Designs, the team behind most of Bavaria's offerings. Outwardly she's good-looking but nothing extraordinary; well proportioned, with short, modern overhangs, a fine hull and a bit of flare in the topsides. Her Sparcraft Performance rig is a three-spreader, seven-eighths job supported by discontinuous wire (rod is available as an option) and a slight sweep on the spreaders does away with running backstays. The deck is safe and easy to move about on, with long runs of stainless grabrail, a chunky teak toe rail and shrouds well inboard.

But look closer and the details hint at a slightly more exclusive boat: stanchion bases are neatly recessed into the teak; there are six stainless steel cleats; and neat custom-made roller fairleads guide mooring

warps at the bow. The bow roller itself is removable for racing but is also solid enough to take cruising duties seriously.

Below decks, both the three- and four-cabin layouts feature two heads compartments, one in the bows en suite to the forward owner's cabin. Almost throughout cherry is used, fitted in situ, and below decks is well-ventilated and bright thanks to a large skylight incorporated into the sliding companionway hatch.

A six-seater, U-shaped settee in the saloon is bolstered by a two-seat movable island settee on the centreline. Behind is a linear galley, where you'd probably end up using sink and stove covers to extend rather average counter space. Space is reasonable at the nav station for electronics and charts, assuming you can remain perched on a small seat to use them, something which could become irritating at sea. Aft are two double cabins, a little stark in appearance

but spacious and light, with three opening hatches each and reasonable storage.

Engine access is a mechanic's dream – not only from the front and top via the companionway, but also on both sides and from behind – and an industrial engine room light is indicative of Salona's determination to do things properly.

Although disappointing in places, joinery is generally on a par with many other production boats, the difference here being it's all hand-built. AD admit they lack "finesse" in interiors, but we nosed into hull 29 for our interior shots and its finishing was smarter than that of our test boats, hulls two and nine; most shortcomings had been corrected and there were no gaps or shortcuts you wouldn't find on other boats. Clearly Salona boats are improving.

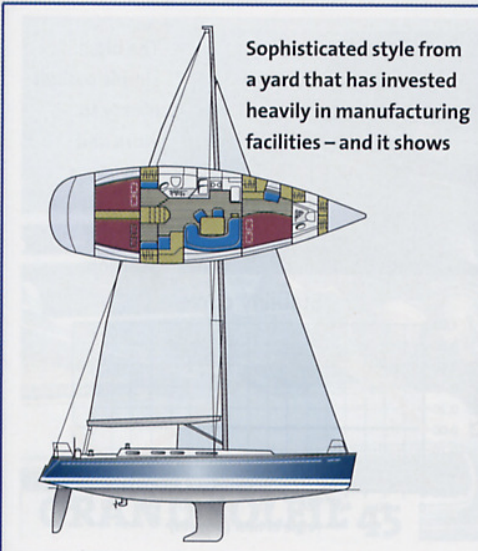
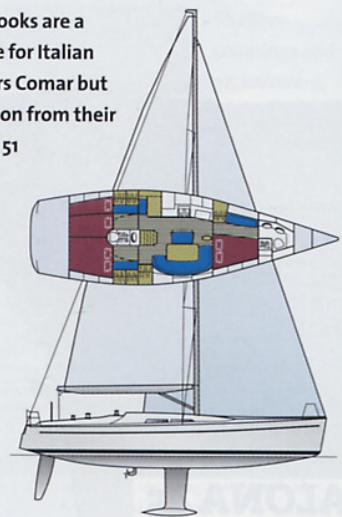
In the cockpit, a removable helmsman's seat transom box opens up (and lightens) the boat for racing. A cover means you can





**COMET 45**

Sleek looks are a change for Italian builders Comar but follow on from their Comet 51



Sophisticated style from a yard that has invested heavily in manufacturing facilities – and it shows



**GRAND SOLEIL 45**

fill up the locker without fear of stowed equipment fouling steering gear. Two more lockers are truly cavernous and accessible from hatches in the coaming and cockpit sole; the test boat stowed a generator in one of these and still had space to spare.

On deck with the standard layout, Lewmar 54 primaries are well aft within easy reach of the helmsman, but unfortunately the main is controlled from a coachroof-mounted halyard winch well beyond reach, a little surprising considering the racy mainsheet track on the cockpit sole directly ahead of the steering binnacle. Traveller controls can be reached from the helm, but this isn't a lot of help if you've already got the main tracked right down. Opting for a 'race' deck gear package solves this – high-spec Harken gear replaces the standard Lewmar set-up and a German-style mainsheet system is within easy reach of the helmsman. The swing to this

roundabout is that the primary winches shift to the forward end of the cockpit.

In perfect conditions – a flat sea, blazing sun and 10-12 knots of breeze – the Salona accelerated quickly to nudge seven knots and responded instantly to tweaks of the wheel. Upwind the helm was beautifully balanced, with true finger-light control, and the boat was happy to be left to her own devices for a minute or two. The helm position is not ideal – it's a bit of a stretch when you're sitting out to weather – but a bigger wheel is available, as is a twin-wheel system. Having the primaries close to hand was a joy, but I'd have preferred greater control of the main and would opt for the German-style mainsheet system.

She began to feel a little over-pressed when hit by a few unexpected 20-knot gusts of the *bura* mountain wind, but the test boat had the shallow keel option and deep, stretched sails. The rig remains the same regardless of keel option.

With the cruising chute flying, the helm loaded up a bit as we cracked off and notched up speeds in the mid-eights, but she remained perfectly controlled. Although there was no sea running, the sensitive rudder and easy acceleration implied the 45 would be lots of fun if the swell picked up.

Under power from a quiet, vibration-free 55hp Volvo, the Salona had impeccable manners. A deeper-than-fashionable hull refused to be blown about and the deep rudder gave good control astern, bar the usual sail drive problem of being a bit far from the rudder; shaft drive is an option.

AD Boats reckon serious racers are more likely to opt for the 40-footer but still provide several race options for the 45: a deeper keel (with steel strut and lead bulb); a Navtec hydraulic backstay package; genoa car adjusters; rod and Spectra rigging; carbon pole; lightweight wheel; folding prop; split furling drum; and the forementioned



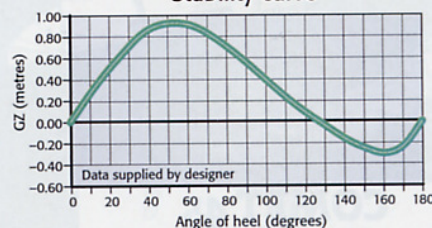


**SALONA 45**



Designed by J&J in Slovenia, her deck layout is simple but practical, with a few refinements

Stability curve

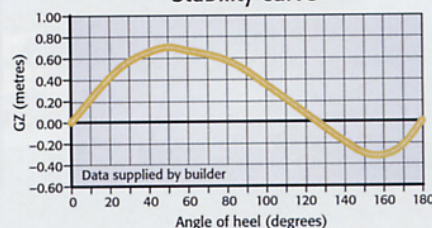


**BÉNÉTEAU FIRST 44.7**



The big, simple cockpit is easy to work and provides a comfortable helming position

Stability curve



deck gear upgrade. A full racing upgrade costs around £25,000, excluding sails.

## Conclusion

Considering the yard's lack of pedigree, the Salona is a pleasant surprise: carefully built, well designed and cleverly thought out. She sails beautifully and looks good, too. Perhaps more enticing is that she is almost a semi-custom yacht thanks to a labour-intensive build and an accommodating yard. Yes, there are some issues with the finish, but they are nothing you won't find on more acclaimed boats. Most appealing is that you're unlikely to sail into an anchorage and find two or three identical boats already there. Whether that is enough to entice buyers remains to be seen.

Price-wise she's middle of the road, but the spec includes goodies such as an electric windlass, shore power, refrigeration, hot water and ground tackle as standard.

AD Boats deserve success with this project and if you're seeking a strong, fast 45-footer, she certainly warrants a serious look. MK Designed by: J&J Designs Built by: AD Boats, Matoseva 8, 21210 Solin, Croatia. Tel: +385 21 260 984. Fax: +385 21 260 985. www.adboats.hr

## Bénéteau First 44.7

Bénéteau's Firsts may all be cruiser-racers, but their emphasis differs across the range: the 40.7 leans towards the racecourse, the 47.7 feels happier cruising. The new 44.7 is a closer sister to the 40.7; Bénéteau admit the spec for the creation of the boat was to have a good IRC boat and her racing aspirations are evident. The German mainsheet set-up has jammers each side, so the lazy winch can be freed up, and the vang and foreguy are duplicated to port and starboard, too. Hardware is all top-notch Harken stuff and the standard rig is a Sparcraft, aluminium,

two-spreader tube supported by discontinuous rigging, with options available such as Dyform, rod and a three-spreader section.

And it's not simply the kit. The spacious cockpit has wide, low coamings nicely angled so the mainsheet trimmer and helmsman sit facing in. The big binnacle forms a great rest for the helmsman's feet (although the mainsheet trimmer is a little neglected in this department). Sadly the four cockpit lockers are not removable, a clever feature on the 40.7 that transforms the cockpit for race mode. Neither are they particularly large. But cruising conveniences haven't been forgotten entirely – not many 45ft cruiser-racers boast eight mooring cleats.

Like Bénéteau's other .7 Firsts, the 44.7 is a seriously good-looking boat; nicely proportioned, sleek and modern, but no fashion victim. The decks look carefully and thoughtfully arranged, an impression



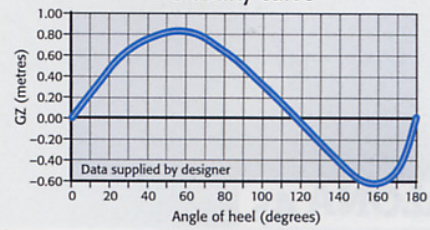


**COMET 45**



Shallow coamings and an awkward helm seating are two of the compromises made in the name of style

Stability curve

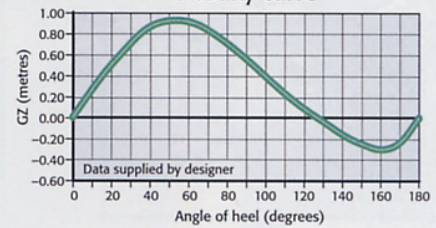


**GRAND SOLEIL 45**



Simpler and less stylish but a more comfortable and practical cockpit layout than that of the Comet

Stability curve



confirmed later under sail. Her slender plumb bow presents a fine entry, with a little hollow and flare, and has a distinctly aggressive knuckle just above the waterline.

When it comes to accommodation, you have to hand it to Bénéteau – they know how to take home comforts to sea. Going below is like entering a modern apartment; all beech wood and cream upholstery, with stippled white moulded head linings and halogen lighting. There is good headroom and proper fiddles, but more grabhandles around the companionway wouldn't go amiss.

Bénéteau offer just one three-cabin, two-head layout, reasoning that this is the most popular of four arrangements on the 47.7, and it's a mixed bag of racing and cruising considerations. An oval saloon layout is not much use for a race crew to crash out on, but an island settee slides out of the way to allow headsails to be dragged through. The galley, tiny for a 45-footer, may be more of a

problem – fine for slopping out simple race tucker, but seriously problematic for grand entertaining. Racing thinking is also evident in a dedicated anchor stowage below the floorboards to keep weight trimmed low.

The heads, though smaller than on a charter-orientated Bénéteau Oceanis, is sufficient and, similarly, the nav station is a little short on table space, but has lots of nooks to stash instruments and books. More curious is a vast sideboard, which provides ample storage but otherwise rather wastes space. You could always use it to supplement the galley or as a standing chart table.

Forward, a master cabin highlights the cruiser side of the 44.7's split-personality, with a spacious double bunk in a proper stateroom cabin. Right in the eyes of the boat, a second heads is small but useable, albeit probably only at anchor or, while under way, for those with a marksman's aim.

Where the 44.7 excels is upwind in a blow.

In 30 knots of apparent wind, we stormed along under full main (tracked right down) and a small Solent jib. Our tall-rig, deep-keel test boat had plenty of power and bite and we trucked through the heavy swell at a steady 8.5 knots, topping 9 knots at times.

Despite a deep main – we had no cunningham and a barely functional outhaul – and no rail meat, she stayed on her feet fairly easily. The big wheel was well balanced for power and response and the helm position was good if a bit crouched at high angles of heel. The low binnacle also felt like it should offer something to grab to prevent moving crew clutching the wheel.

A modest beam at the transom meant the 44.7's deep rudder continued to work even at high angles of heel. When she eventually span out it took a bit of time to settle her back in the groove, but this is probably a function of high-aspect foils and is to be expected from a race-oriented hull; ▶▶





**SALONA 45**



A hand-built interior that holds few surprises in layout but is generally well finished

### Stowage

Forecabin		3.5	
Saloon		4.5	
Galley		2.5	Stowage = 18.09% Total = 3.76m <sup>3</sup>
Head		3.0	
After cabin		4.5	
Nav. area		1.0	



The 44.7 is in typical Bénéteau style – simple but with a glitzy finish



**BÉNÉTEAU FIRST 44.7**

### Stowage

Forecabin		5.0	
Saloon		4.5	
Galley		2.0	Stowage = 16.10% Total = 3.17m <sup>3</sup>
Head		1.5	
After cabin		2.5	
Nav. area		1.0	

...stone of deck gorillas on the rail and a flat main would've improved her manners.

Beam reaching, we easily pushed into double figures and although we didn't put a kite up, the boat gives the impression of just wanting to go, yet that big wheel always keeps you feeling in full control.

Thanks to a narrow chord keel, you can spin her around in a boat length under power and she's well mannered astern. The down side is that her shallow hull can get blown about a bit, especially at the bows.

## Conclusion

There's little doubt you could have a lot of fun hurling the 44.7 around the racecourse. A rating of 1.115 IRC seems to do her a favour and she's got the style, space and amenities for a good post-race party, too.

But could you cruise her? Short term, yes. The interior is comfortable and, being easily driven, the 44.7 is easy to handle, although

you'd probably find yourself reefing early. However, that tiny galley and small heads may grate with some members of the family after a few nights aboard. What might soften hard hearts is the £118,505 price tag; she's a lot of boat for the money and can be used in both her intended roles without guilt. MK  
Designed by: Bruce Farr  
Built by: Bénéteau, ZI des Mares, 85270 St Hilaire de Riez, France. Tel: +33 251 60 50 00. Fax: +33 251 55 89 10. www.beneteau.com

## Comet 45

Alloy wheels, low-profile tyres, mesh grating in the bonnet air intake and perhaps even a modest body kit to show off slightly lowered suspension – what is the point for the everyday motorist? The tyres make the ride hard, alloy wheels are costly to replace when you scrape them and a mesh grill collects flies quicker than a cowpat in summer.

Yet despite the long list of disadvantages, the motoring public loves looks and is prepared to sacrifice all manner of practical aspects for a car that turns heads and feels right. So was I when it came to the Comet 45.

I managed to turn a blind eye to an uncomfortable leeward helming position where the sharp edge of the cockpit coamings cuts into your backside and numbs your upper thighs. I ignored the need for Jodie Kidd's long legs to stand any chance of staying in touch with the cockpit sole when helming to weather.

I looked the other way when it came to assessing the height of the cockpit coamings and tried to think of something else when I couldn't find any grabhandles on deck or around the companionway hatch area. The challenge to see the positive became even tougher when it came to going down below and clambering over the Eighties-style bridge deck aft of the companionway hatch.





**COMET 45**



Some clever details make the Comet interior a refreshing change. It's well built, too

**Stowage**

Forecabin		7.5
Saloon		5.0
Galley		2.0
Head		2.5
After cabin		4.5
Nav. area		1.0
		Stowage = 11.12%
		Total = 4.58m <sup>3</sup>



Smooth sophistication in an interior that is well proportioned throughout

**Stowage**

Forecabin		5.5
Saloon		1.0
Galley		3.0
Head		1.5
After cabin		6.0
Nav. area		1.0
		Stowage = 14.16%
		Total = 3.60m <sup>3</sup>



**GRAND SOLEIL 45**

For all of these shortcomings, she's still an exquisitely attractive boat – the prettiest 45-footer I've seen in a long while and a stunner even without optional teak decks. It's her simple blister-style coachroof with modestly recessed rectangular windows that sets the overall style for me. She's surprisingly tall in her topsides forward, with a big sweep in her sheerline making for stacks of freeboard in her bows. She's pretty fine up forwards, too, with the forestay mounted right at the extremity of her bow.

Further aft her freeboard reduces towards a trendy open transom which reveals the shallow and open cockpit. While that might not be ideally suited for family sailing in boisterous Northern European conditions, it would be easy to handle and provide plenty of space for racing crews to move about in comfortably.

Short-tacking would be a breeze for the rail-riding crew because the lack of

grabhandles makes for an easier passage over the coachroof to the other side. Having said that, there's nothing to grab onto when you go in for a spin to weather downwind. To my mind, the issue of grabhandles could and should be addressed.

Elsewhere she's easy to handle, although the mainsheet winches could do with being a bit further aft for cruising and the pit crew has to occupy the awkward bridge deck area.

She scores higher than others in practicalities, however. Her deck is equipped with plenty of folding pad eyes and she has decent mooring cleats with practical midships fairleads along with a healthily sized toe rail. Her rig's easy to manage, too, with a nine-tenths fractional configuration sail plan sporting a 110 per cent overlapping headsail – great for short and easy tacking.

Under way she slips along with ease and is fun to helm. Personally I'd like to see a slightly higher gear ratio on the steering as

the standard arrangement makes her a little tricky to feel and get into the groove quickly and could make for harder work than is necessary downwind in a breeze. But even with these niggles she's still a beautiful boat to sail and gets under your skin in no time.

But the Comet 45 is not simply a dumb good-looker. Beneath her beautiful exterior she exhibits subtle and clever thinking in an interior that is as stylish as it is well-built.

From the minute you step below it's impossible not to be struck by her cherry interior. Clean and chic, the extensive wood finish includes panelling on the inside face of the hull and the coachroof window surrounds. Many of the catches on her locker doors, of which there are plenty, are concealed. Instead of a Corian worktop on the longitudinal galley, there's trendy cherry and her upholstery on the slightly raised saloon seating is a modest plain beige.

Her sleeping accommodation is spacious ▶▶



given the size and type of boat, with a large owner's double forwards and a pair of double-cabins aft which provide plenty of space to move about in and a heads on the centreline between the two cabins, which can be accessed from both sides, hence the bridge deck. Indeed, the only areas wanting were a few hard corners in the forward heads and a lack of liner in the shower area.

Stowage is generally good above and below decks, with a huge forward locker, plenty more abaft the wheel and stowage under the cockpit floor for a liferaft.

Her build is that of a traditionally crafted boat; there are no clever moulding techniques, no fancy liners or innovative structural members. Instead she consists of a straightforward vacuum-bagged sandwich laminate for hull and deck, with all of her structural members laminated into the hull.

Comar are based just outside Rome in facilities that would best be described as traditional, yet the finished product is solidly built, beautifully finished and hand-crafted. In short, a hand-built beauty.

## Conclusions

Base your buying decisions on a practical, analytical approach in which looks are a low priority (if included at all) and the Comet 45 probably won't make the shortlist. Make an exception in this case – take time just to look at her, sail her and relax down below on her. Then, if you must, start ticking the boxes.

Of course, looks aren't everything, but there's something about this boat that kept drawing me back. True, she is the most expensive in this group by a decent margin, but unlike many others she's hand-built throughout and if you have the time and inclination to specify certain practical modifications, the chances are you'd get a beautiful and practical boat.

On the other hand, if you're wary of allowing your heart to rule your head, don't even think about stepping aboard. MS Built by: Comar, Viale Traiano 27, 00054 Fiumicino, Rome. Tel: +39 06 652 2012. Fax: +39 06 6502 9816. e-mail: info@comaryachts.it. www.comaryachts.it Designed by: Studio Vallicelli

## Grand Soleil 45

Old habits die hard and some people will continue to see Cantiere del Pardo's boats as following in the footsteps of Nautor's Swan. However, in recent years the Italian yard have worked hard to carve out their own niche in the cruiser-racer market and have invested heavily in high-end racing to promote their name and learn more about performance. Six custom 42-footers were built for the IMS racing scene last year and five more have been launched this season and an impressive string of results has followed. While export sales director Christophe de Malherbe won't talk about exact costs, it's clear the company's racing doesn't pay for itself in cash terms, but is priceless for its technical feedback.

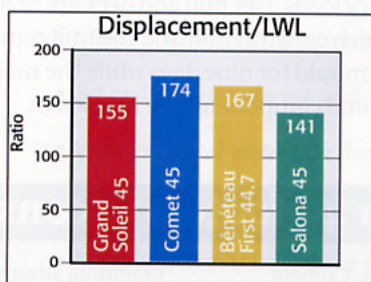
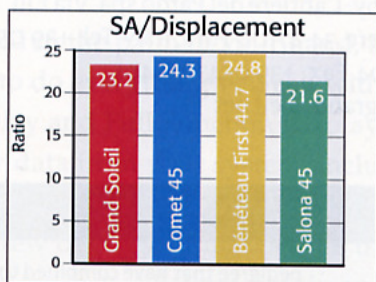
"When you're building boats to race at this kind of level you are constantly looking at every detail with a view to improving overall performance. This process develops a culture that translates over to the cruising division and has paid dividends," he says. "In addition to this, building sophisticated race boats in a tight time frame teaches you a lot and proves to others that you can deliver high-tech products efficiently and quickly."

The new Grand Soleil 45 may be no flat-out racer, but she is a polished product: sleek, modern and very appealing. Designed by Judel/Vrolijk, she has pedigree, too. Furthermore, a look behind the scenes at Cantiere del Pardo's new factory suggests the new style is more than skin deep and confirms the Italians are prepared to put their money where their mouths are by investing in a sophisticated modern yard.

But what of the boat? Plumb ends, slab



## Take time just to look at the Comet 45, to sail her and relax below on her. Then start ticking boxes



### SPECIFICATION

	SALONA 45		COMET 45		BÉNÉTEAU FIRST 44.7		GRAND SOLEIL 45	
LOA	13.54m	44ft 5in	13.80m	45ft 3in	13.36m	43ft 10in	13.90m	45ft 7in
LWL	12.34m	40ft 6in	11.50m	37ft 9in	11.51m	37ft 9in	12.00m	39ft 4in
BEAM (MAX)	4.19m	13ft 9in	4.23m	13ft 11in	3.99m	13ft 1in	4.26m	13ft 12in
DRAUGHT	2.11m	6ft 11in	2.40m	7ft 11in	2.16m	7ft 1in	2.30m	7ft 7in
DISP (LIGHTSHIP)	9,500kg	20,944lb	9,500kg	20,944lb	9,129kg	20,126lb	9,600kg	21,164lb
BALLAST	3,500kg	7,716lb	3,000kg	6,614lb	3,651kg	8,049lb	3,100kg	6,834lb
SAIL AREA (100% FORETRIANGLE)	95.09m <sup>2</sup>	1,024ft <sup>2</sup>	107m <sup>2</sup>	1,149ft <sup>2</sup>	106.59m <sup>2</sup>	1,147ft <sup>2</sup>	103m <sup>2</sup>	1,107ft <sup>2</sup>
BERTHS	6		6		6		6	
ENGINE	Volvo D255		Lombardini		Volvo D255		Yanmar 3JH3E	
POWER	30kW	40hp	37kW	49hp	28kW	38hp	30kW	40hp
WATER	400lt	88gal	430lt	95gal	400lt	88gal	400lt	88gal
FUEL	230lt	51gal	182lt	40gal	200lt	44gal	230lt	51gal
SAIL AREA: DISP	23.2		24.3		24.8		23.2	
DISP: LWL	155		174		167		155	
PRICE (EX VAT)	£156,000		£170,666		£118,505		£156,000	