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INSIDE: **SAXDOR 320 GTC** CANDELA C-8 CC **JOKER CLUBMAN 22** FOCUS POWER 44 **GALEON 375 GTO** ZAR 95 SL **JEANNEAU DB43**

# JEANNEAU DB/43 OB

Mark Featherstone and Jo Moon provide the male and female perspective on one of Jeanneau's proudest new creations – a triple-outboard-powered weekender that offers both family luxury and thrilling performance rolled into one.



The DB series constitutes Jeanneau's vision of what they believe a premium 'weekender' really should be. Designed by the renowned naval architect Camillo Garroni, the DB/43 outboard model we tested recently out of Cannes is a highly modern craft that reflects many contemporary design features popular in the upper echelons of the boating world. Furthermore, it's a craft that delivers in terms of performance as well.

## Transformer

You could say that the DB/43 is something of a 'transformer', thanks to its ability to convert effortlessly into so many different configurations to suit not only the occasion and number of people on board, but also any given location. Its 'party piece', though, could be considered its side terraces, which lower at the touch of a button, thereby increasing the deck area by nearly 2 metres and creating generous swim platforms in the process. Likewise, the seating units orientate to slide fore or aft, while a generous teak table offers three different modes to accommodate intimate al fresco dining for two or family-sized meals for up to eight.

## MY FIRST IMPRESSION UPON TAKING THE WHEEL, WAS THAT OF EXCELLENT, ALL-ROUND VISION.

### At the helm

My first impression upon taking the wheel was one of excellent, all-round vision. The electric retracting coachroof is a particularly likeable feature, and thanks to the drop-down platform at the foot of the pilot seat, the person at the wheel is afforded a full 360 degrees via the retracted roof panel, thereby eliminating all blind spots when close-quarter manoeuvring. The starboard topside deck companionway is immediately to the right of the helm, which is reassuring when coming alongside as you have



1: Plenty of room for entertaining. 2: A sun lover's paradise, this aft bed sits three. 3: The large teak table for dining. 4: The galley is well thought out and can be covered whilst on passage. Note - the retractable lights are a neat feature.

quick access to cleats and the side boarding gate. The latter enables a quick departure onto the pontoon too! Though the cockpit sides can be enclosed with canvas panels, even without these in place, the DB/43's design is such that the cockpit is an area that offers much protection from the elements when underway.

## JEANNEAU HAVE SET OUT TO REDEFINE WHAT A PREMIUM DAYBOAT/ WEEKENDER IS ALL ABOUT.

As for the cockpit seats, these are not only very comfortable but supportive too, courtesy of their fulsome side-bolster design. In addition, the helm seat is complemented by a three-point adjustable steering column. This feature, in turn, aids the easy monitoring of the two Raymarine multifunction display units. Just as in the automotive world, the steering wheel incorporates essential controls, which, with just a flick of the thumb, allows the operator to control the windscreen wipers and other functions with minimum distraction. Ergonomically, the super-modern dash and its displays are ideally configured, and besides the two Raymarine screens providing all the necessary navigation and engine data, a Mercury Skyhook joystick enables effortless manoeuvring in conjunction with a high-powered bow thruster. In fact, we docked the boat in 20 knots of wind on the day of the test and can confirm that the combination of Skyhook and thruster made this business a stress-free affair.

### On deck

Up in the bow, a raised forward deck provides the luxury of a triple sunbed no less, as well as provision for an awning and a detachable table. Flush-mounted/pop-up lights also contribute to the night-time ambience of this al fresco-styled deck area. As for the foredeck's practicalities, the DB/43's anchor system represents excellent engineering and includes a stainless steel plate on the bow



TEST © Tom King



to protect the hull when deploying and retrieving the anchor either using the hand-held control up in the bow or from the cockpit. The large bow locker in this area is sufficiently generous to accommodate a good number of lines and fenders, which helps to keep the necessary items easily accessible.

Moving about on deck, the boat's gunwales are reassuringly solid and of a sensible height too so as to afford a high level of on-board security throughout. Complementing this, a good number of handholds are provided wherever one walks, and those fitted to provide additional security for seated passengers have been tastefully covered for comfort and additional grip.

The boat's wide beam, coupled to its seat configuration aft, gives a fantastic sensation of space, which is further enhanced by its hinged gunwale sections/side terraces. (When lowered, if so required, these open spans can



1: Functions can be chosen at the flick of a thumb 2: Plenty of well thought out storage in the head.

## SPECIFICATIONS

**Overall Length:** 13.94m  
**Hull Length:** 11.95m  
**Max Beam:** 3.82m  
**Hull Draft:** 0.94m

## CONTACT

[www.jeanneau.com](http://www.jeanneau.com)

## PRICE

Starting at €743,520  
 Boat as tested with 3 x 350hp Mercury V10 Verados €1,119,445



terior images © Tom King

... THE DB/43 SCORES HIGHLY IN TERMS OF ITS ADAPTABILITY, USABILITY AND OUTRIGHT PERFORMANCE.

stanchioned off for additional safety.) With the terraces lowered in particular, entertaining eight to ten people is pretty straightforward on the DB/43.

Another impressive on-deck feature is the cavernous storage capacity concealed beneath the aft seating unit. Accessed upon the unit being raised electronically, the space below is where, in the case of the DB/43 IB, the inboard engine/engines would be housed. At this super-sized underdeck storage area, in addition to the plentiful stowage found within the vessel's seating units, is undoubtedly another benefit of the outboard version. Immediately aft of this unit, the DB/43's open-plan design not only makes accessing the motors and swim platforms straightforward, but also means any shipped water can exit without hindrance. In relation to the latter, additional deck drains are positioned amidships and up forward too.

Accommodation

The cabins on this boat could be described as 'five-star', employing, as they do, white-oak woodwork and leather accents as standard. The configuration of the boat tested featured

Fuelling issues

I was surprised by the DB/43's fuelling arrangement, which is located midships immediately aft of the kitchen island. The fuel hatch is accessed by sliding the bench seats back, which then reveals three fuel caps located right in the centre of the boat, all of which have the potential for spillage and causing damage to the surrounding decking. I was informed that the fuelling hatch couldn't be located in the aft because of the swim platforms, but it will be interesting to see whether a redesign to this element of the boat's anatomy is adopted on future adaptations of the DB/43, because in my view it doesn't work and has the potential to be dangerous too.



Three 350hp Mercury V10 engines won't leave you wanting for more power.

two cabins with a single heads and shower, plus a thoughtful breakfast galley at the foot of the companionway that included a worktop, microwave and small sink. Alternative configurations mean one can exchange the latter for a second heads and shower compartment. But the master cabin is magnificent, with a raised double bed and generous head height, and is beautifully appointed throughout with lots of natural light via its multitude of windows. Exquisitely designed ambient lighting at low and mid level further enhances the feel of this spacious, private sanctuary.

But here's the surprise: the second cabin is bigger still; however, it offers limited head height. Even so, it doesn't suffer from being claustrophobic and, to

FUEL FIGURES

Combined (3 x 350hp)

| RPM  | LPH  |
|------|------|
| 600  | 7    |
| 1000 | 14.5 |
| 1500 | 23.5 |
| 2000 | 40   |
| 2500 | 54   |
| 3000 | 68   |
| 3500 | 90   |
| 4000 | 120  |
| 4500 | 160  |
| 5000 | 220  |

its credit, it possesses not only a large double bed but also a big sofa on the cabin's starboard side. The latter can be exchanged for another single bed if you so prefer. Like the

THE DB'S DEEP-VEE HULL MADE LIGHT OF THE SEAS AND EXECUTED HARD-LOCK TURNS WITH NO CAVITATION OR LOSS OF GRIP AT ANY POINT

master cabin, this area benefits from plenty of natural light, and its tasteful recessed ceiling lighting helps to ensure that the space, like the rest of the interior, is both restful and welcoming.

As for the heads, this is another beautifully appointed space. Easily accessed from both cabins, it boasts generous headroom and a spacious shower cubicle. Features such as the auto-flush WC, its large handbasin and other high-quality fixtures, the discreet design of the storage cupboards, etc. all combine to make this light and airy facility both attractive and functional.

Galley and dining

The galley is an 'island'-styled unit set to the centre of the main deck area and incorporates a sensibly sized preparation area, a freezer and fridge, a sink, a gas plancha and two-burner stove, as well as a good amount of internal storage space. Related to the enjoyment of this area is the thoughtful addition of ventilation vents located behind the helm seats directly facing the galley. The vents provide those cooking on the hot stove with a welcoming, cooling breeze if they so desire. It's a great touch and particularly suited, of course, to those using the craft in hot climates. With the pleasure of evening dining in mind, carefully placed pop-up lighting modules are positioned so as to flood this whole social area with a warm, inviting glow, thereby adding to the special feel and atmosphere of the outside dining experience this boat offers.

Stabilisation

Not commonly found on boats of this size is an anti-roll gyro system. Nevertheless, our test boat was fitted with the latest Seakeeper stabilisation technology, and I have to say its effect was profound. When engaged, the



1: The master cabin is spacious with great headroom. 2: The access gates make the open rear deck area safe. 3: Clean, roomy heads. 4: The 2nd cabin is spacious but with restricted headroom.

All interior images © Nicolas Claris



1: Huge storage area under the seating. 2: Comfortable & sturdy cockpit seats feature embossed 'stitching'. 3: Retractable roof allows 360° vision for safer manoeuvring.

Seakeeper's ability to counter the boat's natural tendency to roll was patently clear, and as a result, its capacity to transform the boat's overall comfort and enjoyment was quite apparent – a costly 'extra' admittedly, but exceptional in its effectiveness and a superb addition to any vessel of this type, especially when entertaining or for those prone to seasickness.

### Performance

The DB/43 is hardly of lightweight construction or lay-up, and furthermore, being generous in terms of its fit-out, she represents a pretty solid mass in the water. This, however, aids her offshore seakeeping. And despite her weight, with triple 350hp Mercury outboards strapped to her tail, she's definitely not sluggish! On the contrary, she delivers striking performance, and thanks to the helm's single-lever function, precision throttle control is made super-easy.

Test day saw stiff 20- to 25-knot winds whipping up some pretty lively Mediterranean conditions.

Nevertheless, the DB's deep-vee hull made light of the seas and executed hard-lock turns with no cavitation or loss of grip at any point. The vessel's auto-trim system likewise encouraged confident handling, while at the same time helping to keep the boat at her optimum angle of attack and aiding the hull's agile performance.

Running comfortably between 25 and 27 knots, the DB/43 showed herself to be a capable fast cruiser, even into the demanding head seas we encountered. And with the throttle pushed to the stops, at 40 knots, the three-piece choral roar of those Mercury engines merely affirmed that embedded within this model's DNA there lies a performance craft eager to impress!

### In conclusion

Jeanneau are part of the Beneteau group, the largest manufacturer of recreational boats in the world. They are a huge conglomerate with a veritable army of in-house design and technical experts responsible for outputting some of the largest production runs in the world. When

you buy one of these boats, you're availing yourself of a product that has had huge amounts of input, expertise and experience injected into its concept and completion.

Jeanneau have set out to redefine what a premium dayboat/weekender is all about. In this regard, the DB/43 scores highly in terms of its adaptability, usability and outright performance. Sure, with prices starting at €850,00, there's no two ways about it, this is an expensive boat (the test boat

carries a price tag of just under €1.2 million). But to mitigate the cost, the Beneteau group offer their own marine mortgages, based upon a 30% downpayment and a fixed interest term of 15 years, thereby helping to make the dream of owning one of these craft achievable for many more people. **PBR**

The side boarding gate gives quick and easy access when coming alongside.



## Jo's verdict – the female perspective

Although my skipper runs an egalitarian ship, I do see the galley very much as my domain, and I was delighted by this element of the DB/43's design. In particular, the breakfast galley below is great for making a coffee first thing without having to go up on deck. But the main galley has loads of storage, good-sized drawers and other nice touches that collectively make this facility really work. There are neat channels for cables running from the USB and 220V sockets underneath the galley sink, which allow the doors to close when extra equipment is used on the galley work surface. I loved the tinfoil tray under the plancha too, which makes cleaning up so much easier, and the gas bottle was cleverly located in a pull-down cupboard behind the port

cockpit seats. Neat! From a safety point of view, I felt safe both in the cockpit and aft at speed, and the many handholds were all in the right places. So many craft lack in this area. The access gates onto the rear platform and the stanchions for the swim platform would definitely give those with children aboard much greater assurance.

The upholstery looks and feels luxurious, and all the seats were generously cushioned so as to be very comfortable underway or when reclining. The Silvertex material used is stain- and abrasion-resistant – an important factor in my view for a family boat.

As for the cabins, the decor not only looked great but their design was highly functional too, with lots of storage within the lockers

and under the beds. I would say the DB/43 has the ability to easily accommodate everything a family needs for at least a week aboard. I'm a person who needs their sleep, so the comfortable beds being of such a good size bodes well for me!

It was easy to picture a perfect day at anchor with my teenagers diving off the boat's platforms or enjoying a picnic lunch spread out on the teak table beneath the retractable awning – likewise, relaxing on the huge sunbeds up in the bow reading a book while Mark, my ever-attentive skipper, sits in the cockpit plotting a course to our next dreamy location! Ah yes, I can picture it all, so very easily ...