

## BOAT TEST



# DUFOUR 485

Reviewing a yacht can be a difficult task – with so many innovative yacht designs to choose from, it's getting harder to sort the wheat from the chaff.

by Deborah Ratcliffe

**F**irst glances, though often correct, can be misleading, as you really have to look further than just the immediate visual reaction. Unfortunately, 'looks' are now a major consideration in the yachting game and sometimes can sway a prospective purchaser over true sailing attributes with a plethora of 'boy's toys and new fangled gismos!

When asked to review the new Dufour 485 Grand' Large, I leaped at the chance to see if the latest offering

from the design stable of Umberto Felci and Patrick Roseo would live up to the name of its illustrious Grand' Large family. The concept behind the 485 was to build an eye catching cruiser with fast passages in mind, and, to be fitted out, according to the publicity handouts, to the highest specification – so I was interested to see if, indeed, on the 485 'looks' were genuine or a mere mask, and, indeed, were used to optimise performance, safety and comfort.

My first impression was not disappointing - the Dufour 485 is a true classic. On 'looks' alone she is a thoroughbred - sleek, sexy and sophisticated! I was beginning to feel hopeful that, indeed her 'looks' were genuine...

As you glance across the Dufour 485's deck, her line is pure delight with the gently contoured coach roof allowing for safe and easy deck access and wide, uncluttered side decks for safe movement.

The bow, with its sharp plumb drop gives a jaunty racy air; as I further looked into it, this design allows for a fuller underwater profile thus allowing the designer to maximise the size of the interior.

A uniquely planned transom & aft deck, where sun worshippers can relax, doubles up as the perfect platform for divers with all their gear. Cleverly hidden away under the transom platform is a specifically designed locker for the tender and life raft. The test yacht had all teak decks enhancing her elegant personality.

Her 9/10 fractional rig is rather simple & straightforward, however allows for maximum sail-power to push the yacht at sprint speeds rather un-characteristic of a genuine cruiser; the cockpit, pushed further mid-ship, is well designed to allow for effortless sail & rope handling; once more, the test yacht had all-round electric winches which, of

course, made life ever so easy along the way. A retractable bowsprit as standard allows for the spinnaker tack to be worked from the cockpit, as can all running rigging. She has been designed to be sailed short-handed and, with twin steering positions, allows excellent vision for the helm.

Volvo provides the powerhouse for the yacht – a standard 75hp sail drive engine can be upgraded to a 110hp with prop shaft transmission and folding prop. The standard engine on the test boat can maintain an easy 7.5 knots at 2200 rpm, using just 3.8litres per hour. Maximum speed reached under power alone is just over 9 knots at 2800 rpm.

The cockpit is enormous and has vast locker space; a very sensible rope trap just in front of the companionway threshold keeps errant ropes in their place. I loved the sliding companionway hatch design – so clever!

The feeling of spaciousness abounds – with a maximum 4.70m beam this is understandable. Nav instruments are clearly visible and a “basic” complete Raymarine Electronics Pack including a cockpit-mounted E-80 GPS/Plotter comes as standard.

Down below is where you immediately get the ‘wow’ factor! She is big and beautiful. You feel as if you could party all night - in the main saloon you could hold a dance!

The description – ‘spacious accommodation’ – is truly an understatement!

The test yacht had a three-cabin layout with three heads, which should work for most customers, however Dufour also offers a second option with a four cabin - four head layout.

Upon climbing down the companionway steps you immediately see how the stylish (optional) wenge flooring sets the tone: the elegant dark wood is chic and nonchalantly offsets the light, open-plan saloon and seating areas. I noticed little details - the delightful wall lamps and contoured door handles for example that added an extra special touch. You can feel considerable thought has gone into the design, so as to make an aesthetic statement which can work in a seaway.

Aside from a stylish, folding dining table doubling as coffee-snack table with twin rotating centre seats there is an excellent large chart table with space for the indispensable computer. There is ample stowage for charts and ancillary gear with numerous shelves and locker space. The test yacht was fitted with an additional Electronics Plus Pack which, apart from

a Gyro-compensated autopilot, included a second E-120 GPS/Plotter/Radar display fitted in a highly visible manner.

The L-shaped galley would do many a house proud – resilient Corian® worktops incorporate a double sink, and access to a top-opening cool box. A front opening fridge is standard (a dishwasher/washing machine can also be fitted in). Stowage is exceptional – even I who sails with her toaster/coffee maker and microwave would be hard to fill it all up! The cabins are spacious, again with copious stowage and hanging lockers, and a vast semi circular bed in the master suite. The heads are generous, with plenty of room to move around. I liked the elegant sinks and taps. Again, in the two aft cabins, space was not an issue and the en-suite heads well appointed.

Now to the performance under sail: Unfortunately for us, on the test day we had little or no wind. It fluked around, keeping us guessing. Yet we achieved a creditable 5.8 knots in a mere 7 knots of wind. Later we hoisted the spinnaker and you could feel her pick up speed instantly - again the wind was quasi non-existent but she gave us 6 knots with barely 7.4 winds. Even in these light airs you could feel how responsive she was, hands off she virtually sailed herself – a Dufour family trait from my experience! The owner, himself a relative newcomer to the world of sailing, recalled that in normal 15-18 kts of wind she would respond with a constant 7.5 – 8 kts of true speed, not counting of course the initial trials where 10.5 kts were achieved with just over 20 kts of apparent wind...



I say, hopefully better luck next time to whomever wishes to test-sail this model!

Finally I have to say, ‘LOOKS’ certainly do count with the Dufour 485 Grand ‘Large’. They are used to create an aesthetically pleasing yacht, but without compromise to safety, comfort or performance. At 14.73m she is a big yacht, but with the handling ability of a smaller yacht.

She manoeuvres well in confined waters, has a very sea kindly manner and above all is a genuine fast cruiser easily handled by two.

Many thanks to the proud owners of the test boat for sparing the time to allow us to try out their delightful yacht, and to S&D Yachts, local Dufour Yachts dealers, for making this possible.

#### DUFOUR 485 SPECS

LOA	14.73 m
Hull length	14.40 m
Beam	4.70 m
Draft (std)	1.90 m
Draft (optional)	2.25 m
Light displacement	12,280 kg
Cabins	3 - 4
Sail Area	109m <sup>2</sup>
Water capacity	530 L
Fuel capacity	250 L
Prices from	€260,000

