

THURSDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2013 00:00



**Changes to the styling of Bavaria's new 33ft cruising yacht have improved her looks no end, but do the improvements result in a more user-friendly yacht? *Duncan Kent* took her out on a blustery February day to find out.**

The last two yachts I have sailed from the Bavaria stable have been completely different to this German yard's usual run of the mill production cruisers. Since introducing the experts from the renowned Farr Design team, the performance of its yachts has improved markedly. Their appearance, however, hasn't always followed the same upward

trend – until now, that is. The new Vision range looks absolutely up with the most contemporary designs being launched this year, and now it also seems to have pulled it out of the bag for its new small Cruiser, the Bavaria 33C.

A large number of today's budding racers and world-girdling yachtsmen cut their teeth on a Bavaria in their early days – either by thrashing around the Channel with a sailing school or swanning around the Med on a flotilla – so they have proven their durability beyond doubt.

I had the opportunity to sail the new 33 Cruiser last week, when the only choice was between an overcast day with 30kn+ winds and a sunny day with mentions of a F9 in the inshore forecast. We chose the latter, gambling on the fact that, being northerly, it would be offshore and therefore fairly flat.



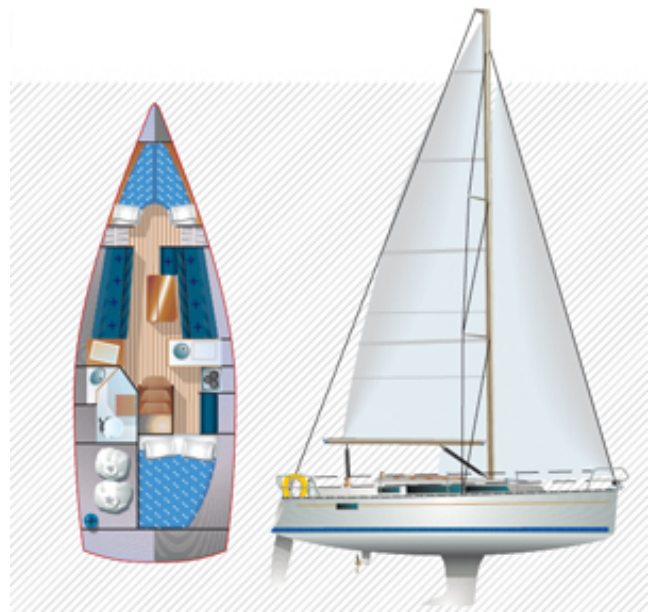
When we got out of the Hamble River and into Southampton Water there were very few other sailing vessels around and suddenly, as a particularly brisk gust tried to rip away our spray hood, 33 feet began to feel rather small.

While I'd be more than happy to set out in my sturdy old Nicholson 32 in these conditions, I wasn't so sure the Bavaria had been designed with the idea of venturing offshore in 35-knot winds in mind – especially as its mainsail has just two reefs available in its standard form.

After just a few minutes and a couple of brisk tacks my earlier concern subsided and I realised that, not only was she easily able to stand up to the heavy gusts, but moreover she was actually revelling in the conditions. At first I scathingly joked about what a nightmare it would be if we had to beat all the way up to the Itchen River, but by the end of the sail I actually wanted to!

## For

- Nicely balanced with a nippy yet nimble performance making her easy to enjoy regardless of the sailing conditions.
- The much improved cockpit layout makes moving about the working area much quicker, safer and easier.
- The interior has been markedly improved and made much more user-friendly for crew trying to get around and live onboard for extended passages and long-term cruising.
- She has the roomiest heads and shower compartment that I have seen on a 33ft boat and there's even a decent wet locker included.



Price from £75,000

## Against

- No mainsheet track means it is not so easy to spill the wind in a strong gust.
- Much of the necessary cruising inventory is only available in special packages so you can often end up buying gear that you don't want or need in order to get something you do need included.