

PHOTOS: ROD LEWIS

# X-TRA SPECIAL



ESTABLISHED IN 1979, X-YACHTS WAS CREATED PRIMARILY TO DESIGN AND BUILD IOR YACHTS FOR WORLD CLASS RACING, IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL. TWO DECADES LATER IT DECIDED TO UTILISE ITS EXPERTISE TO BUILD HIGH QUALITY PERFORMANCE CRUISING YACHTS AS WELL. **DUNCAN KENT** SAILED THE NEW XC-38.

The Xcruising (Xc) range was designed for eating up the sea miles in style and comfort, yet they retain the same design and build qualities that X-Yachts' Performance (Xp) designs are renowned for. The first in the family, the Xc 45, was awarded the 2009 European Yacht of the Year the year of its launch. It was soon joined by the Xc 42, then in 2010 the range was further expanded with the introduction of the Xc 50 and the Xc 38

– the latter again taking the 2011 European Yacht of the Year award.

As with her bigger sister ships, the Xc 38 is an aft cockpit design with attractive, classically styled lines that maximise the deck space and give her such a gorgeous profile. The Xc's hull lines are fuller than those of the Xp models and have a deeper V-section forward of the keel for a more comfortable motion on lengthy ocean passages. The larger

hull volume also increases the space available for a more powerful engine, larger tanks and greater battery capacity – enabling them to undertake extended offshore cruises without foregoing those home comforts.

Despite her bluewater cruising credentials the Xc 38 still provides the performance, response and exhilaration under sail that X-Yacht owners have come to expect from any X-Yacht. Her generous fuel and fresh

water tanks are all strategically located – low and central in the yacht for optimum weight distribution. Her greater displacement requires a larger sail area to retain a similar performance to her Xp stablemates and her shallower draft requires a heavier keel bulb to keep her stiff in a blow, but in return this provides a yacht that is more forgiving and more easily controlled by a short-handed, or even single-handed crew. The only real

compromise over her Xp sisters is her sailing performance in very light airs, when her extra displacement and wetted surface understandably takes the edge off her speed.

As with all X-Yachts, the Xc 38's hull is constructed around an immensely strong steel frame that dissipates the loads from her keel-stepped mast and lead/cast iron keel over a large area – saving her hull from possible distortion when her rig is under severe stress.







## ACCOMMODATION

The Xc 38 is only available in a two-cabin layout, with a spacious master cabin forward and a comfortable guest double in the port quarter. The absence of a second aft cabin allows for a luxurious heads and a cavernous cockpit locker instead – usually more popular among the long-term cruising fraternity.

Interior joinery is crafted from Khaya Mahogany veneer, with white laminate on the foremost bulkhead and inside the heads. The workmanship is of the highest standard, with all cabinetry hand assembled and finished by specialist joiners.

Eight portlights and three hatches provide ample natural light and ventilation.

### SALOON (1)

The 2.05m long settees would make ideal sea berths with lee cloths. The port side has a return, allowing six people to dine in comfort around the table, which has a single leaf that folds over the fixed portion to halve its size. The table lacks fiddles when fully open, but there are some on the underside of the leaf that are useful when it is folded up. There is also a drawer, bottle store and deeply fiddled shelf accessible when the leaf is closed.

While there is plenty of accessible locker space, the water tanks and domestic batteries take up all possible stowage beneath the settees. But this minor annoyance is fully understandable when the need to balance out any particularly heavy weights inside the hull is taken into consideration.

Full-length handrails allow you to safely move around below at sea and headroom is good at 1.91m (6ft 3in).

### GALLEY (2)

Her J-shaped galley is spacious, with generous stowage and work surface. The small return makes it easy to operate the cooker under way without the need for a

bum strap, and high fiddles ensure things placed on the worktop don't end up on the sole during a tack. The white Corian worktop is attractive, easy to clean and hardwearing, and the tinted splash panel protects the furniture.

Equipment includes a well insulated, 120ltr top-loading coolbox that can be converted into a deep freezer. Space is provided for an optional front-opening fridge and microwave.

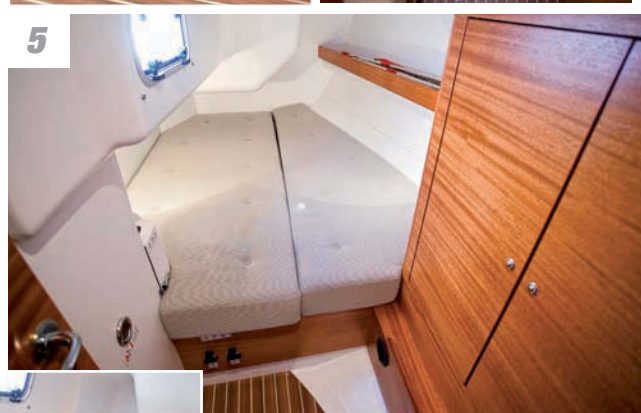
A large opening portlight nearby supplies plenty of ventilation when cooking.

### NAVSTATION (3)

Opposite the galley is a good size, forward-facing navigation station and chart table with limited space for charts inside and room for instrumentation above, as well as a comprehensive electrical switch panel. Four handy drawers in the upstand provide ample storage for charting tools and the bosun's stores and there's more stowage for bulkier items in the hollow seat.

### FORECABIN (4)

Her large forecabin is clearly intended for the owner and has over 6ft (1.85m) of standing headroom floor area for dressing. The sizeable (2.06m L x 2.06m>0.81m W) V-berth boasts two fully-sprung mattresses on a battened bunk base, together with loads of wardrobe



space, a vast bin beneath the berth and numerous other lockers and shelves – all provided to give you 'home from home' comfort levels.

### AFT CABIN (5)

The aft berth offers a generous 2.06m L x 1.57m>0.95m W double berth, which is supplied with dual-density foam rather than sprung mattresses, but it does share the battened bunk design of the forecabin for increased air circulation. Headroom is good at 1.91m (6ft

3in) and there's enough elbowroom to get changed with ease. Ample light and fresh air is supplied by two opening ports – one inboard and one above.

### HEADS (6)

Although the heads/shower compartment is very roomy and has a separate shower area, the latter is immediately as you step inside, so you have to step on a wet floor to get to the loo when someone has had a shower.

## ON DECK



### DECKS (1)

The decks are well organised, clear and uncluttered. All her sail control lines are protected beneath deck covers and hatches are all flush-mounted. Teak is standard.

Her slightly raked transom gives her a classic look and permits davits to be fitted for quick and easy tender launching. An optional stern anchor locker also allows you to lower and deploy a kedge with up to 50m of rode.

Her foredeck is very tidy thanks to the headsail furling line being fed under the coachroof and a heavy-duty bowsprit with rod bobstays take the twin anchor rollers well forward of her stern, while also providing a substantial tack point for a cruising chute. The anchor locker is partitioned – the forward section providing chain stowage, the after bin for fender and warp stowage. An electric windlass is standard.

### COCKPIT (2)

Twin wheels offer easy access aft and separation between the helms and the main cockpit. The transom gate hinges down horizontal, forming a smallish bathing platform, with shower and telescopic boarding ladder. Lowering the platform also reveals stowage for a six-person life raft under the cockpit sole.

Three cockpit lockers provide plenty of stowage for inflatables, sails, lines, fenders and other common cruising equipment.

The washboards drop down into a recess beneath the deck, which keeps them out of the way, and the sturdy drop-leaf cockpit table provides good physical



### SAILS AND RIG (3)

The Xc 38's 9/10ths fractional sail plan has been developed with long distance cruising in mind. In standard form she has a tapered aluminium mast with twin swept spreaders and supported by discontinuous rod rigging and a bifurcated, adjustable backstay. Her chain plates divert the rig tension stresses directly onto the steel hull frame, rather than onto the hull sides.

All sail handling lines are fed back through Spinlock XCS clutches to Andersen 40ST winches on the coachroof (one of which is electric), while her one-piece mainsheet leads to dedicated 40ST winches within easy reach of each helm. The mainsheet track is on the coachroof, which isn't ideal for quick adjustment to the traveler, however it does keep the cockpit clearer and safer when cruising. For halyards and sail control lines, a dedicated rope locker is integrated into the cockpit sole just by the companionway, to keep it tidier.

She comes as standard with a fully battened mainsail and conventional slab reefing, including single-piece reefing lines led back to cockpit. Alternatively a Pro-Furl in-boom furling mainsail system can be offered as an option.

The regular headsail is a 106 per cent genoa on a Pro-Furl headsail furler, but a larger, overlapping genoa (140 per cent) can be ordered, or even a 94 per cent self-tacking jib for those who frequently sail short-handed or just like to tack up narrow rivers and channels! »





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## UNDER WAY

### CLOSE-HAULED (1)

We had typical April weather on our test sail – scattered showers with sunny intervals and a WNW wind varying from 2-14kn. Our boat had the standard sail wardrobe plus an asymmetric chute.

Her Joffa steering is light but instantly responsive and she tracks on rails – staying on course with little or no effort thanks to her deep appendages. She pointed happily right up to some 33° off the apparent wind and in 12kn of apparent wind gave us a fairly steady 6.4kn boat speed. Pinched tight she gave a tacking angle of 78°, but freed off to around 36° she picked up speed and fell into a hands-free groove, sailing herself until a strong gust lifted her out.

Her twin wheels mean the helmsman always has an excellent view forward from the high side and footrests help you sit outboard to a degree.

### REACHING

Bearing away to a close reach brought her speed up to 7kn+ in 14kn apparent, but little else changed. She still required only a very light hand on the wheel, although there was always enough feedback to let you know what was happening below the water.

At one point I felt she needed the larger overlapping genoa to take her up to hull speed, but it wasn't long before a gust

had me thinking otherwise. Her sail plan is pretty generous, even with the 106 per cent headsail, but one might be tempted to opt for the larger sail for lighter winds.

### DOWNWIND (2)

We first tried a broad reach with white sails, but as if by magic the wind suddenly disappeared and the smaller genoa did little to power us along. Black clouds loomed overhead, but we opted for the asymmetric nevertheless. As if on cue, the moment we'd un-snuffed the chute the wind returned, giving us a perfect downwind sail and returning 8.4kn through the water for some 14kn of true wind. As before, she behaved impeccably, sticking doggedly to her course – even when pushed up nearly onto a close reach.

### UNDER POWER

We had the 40hp Volvo with the three-bladed folding prop. Her agility in a tight marina was impressive and she turned in her own length. Astern she picked up quickly

and was equally predictable. Personally, I can't see why you'd opt for a bow thruster, but apparently many do.

Cruising speed under power was around 7.2kn at 2,200rpm, with max speed of 8.6kn flat out at 2,800rpm. We motorsailed under mainsail only for a brief period, with just 1,800rpm giving us a steady 6kn close reaching into a 12kn breeze.

### CONCLUSION

The Xc 38 is a stunning looking yacht with an obvious racing pedigree that has been cleverly tailored to suit the long-term cruising fraternity. Her performance is exhilarating and precise under sail, but careful tweaking has made her an equally stable and comfortable live-aboard yacht for those that have grown used to quality surroundings and a high level of top spec equipment.

### FOR

- Eye-wateringly beautiful
- Breathtaking performance
- Precise, drama-free and easy to handle
- Top quality construction

### AGAINST

- The price (although the standard inventory puts many to shame!)
- Lack of fiddles on the saloon table
- No vent above the galley

SPECIFICATIONS: X-YACHTS XC 38		
LOA	11.58m	38ft 0in
LWL	10.38m	34ft 0in
Beam	3.81m	12ft 6in
Draught (shoal/deep)	1.60/1.98m	5ft 3in/6ft 6in
Displacement	8,700kg	19,180 lb
Ballast	3,650kg	8,046 lb
Sail Area (main/gen/jib)	44.1/36.2/32.1m <sup>2</sup>	475/390/346ft <sup>2</sup>
Fuel	200ltr	44gal
Water	375ltr	83gal
Berths	4/6/8	
Engine/Transmission	40hp Volvo diesel/ Saildrive	
RCD category	A-Ocean	
STIX No.	35.0	
Angle of Vanishing Stability	116°	
Designer Niels Jeppesen/X-Yachts Builder X-Yachts, Denmark <a href="http://www.x-yachts.com">www.x-yachts.com</a> UK main agent X-Yachts GB 023 8045 3377 <a href="http://www.x-yachtsgb.com">www.x-yachtsgb.com</a> Price from £298,000		

## GRAND SOLEIL 39



The Grand Soleil 39's unmistakeable Italian styling gives her the edge with flush decks and hatches, low sleek coachroof and uncluttered side decks. She's an excellent compromise between full-on performance yacht and a comfortable offshore cruiser.

Below she is bright and modern. Layout is straightforward, but spacious, comfortable and practical under sail.

**Builder:** Cantiere del Pardo [www.grandsoleil.net](http://www.grandsoleil.net)

**UK agent:** Key Yachting 023 8045 5669 [www.keyyachting.com](http://www.keyyachting.com)

**Price:** from £223,200

## HALBERG-RASSY 372



The HR 372 is optimized for comfortable and fast family cruising and is wider, shallower and flatter than the centre-cockpit 37's hull. Her mast is also taller and her keel slightly deeper and lighter. Flush hatches and below deck furler and windlass keep decks clear.

Her interior is roomy and bright, with two hatches in the saloon, where the settees are 2m long and make ideal sea berths.

**Builder:** Halberg-Rassy

**UK agent:** Transworld 023 8045 7704 [www.transworldyachts.co.uk](http://www.transworldyachts.co.uk)

**Price:** from £260,000

## ARCONA 370



Arcona's sporty 370 is designed to be sailed by a small crew and, as with the X-Yachts, has an integral steel hull frame to which all the rig loads are taken and dissipated.

The interior of the Arcona 370 is well appointed and the joinery constructed from farmed Khaya Mahogany, with a lacquered satin finish providing a welcoming, warm ambience.

**Builder:** Arcona Yachts, Sweden

**UK agent:** Arcona UK 023 8045 7770 [www.arconayachts.com](http://www.arconayachts.com)

**Price:** from £208,000

## SALONA 38



The Salona 38 is built using the latest technology and high tech materials and is a result of teamwork between external and internal designers, including Olympic and professional sailors, interior designers, suppliers and existing cruising or racing customers. The intention was to build a fast, competitive sailing yacht that can also provide uncompromised comfort and safety while cruising.

**Builder:** Salona Yachts [www.salonayachts.com](http://www.salonayachts.com)

**UK agent:** Wittey Marine 023 8045 8084 [www.witteymarine.com](http://www.witteymarine.com)

**Price:** from £220,000