

Boat review **Dufour 380 Grand'Large**

# *Distinctly* **DUFOUR**

Words by **Lawrence Schäffler** Photos by **Will Calver**

“...a flat sheer and a plumb stem to optimise the waterline length at 9.89m... a clean, uncluttered profile...”





**Like all the European production yacht builders, Dufour's been busy remodelling its fleet. Replacing the enormously-popular 375 is the 380 Grand'Large (11.19m), a stylishly-presented cruiser with a distinctive interior and scores of easy-living features.**

**W**hen the owner of the new Dufour 380 Grand'Large named his new yacht *Stingray*, it was in honour of his other great love, apart from yachting: classic cars, in particular his rare '63 Chevrolet Stingray.

But the marine variety of stingray also reflects sleek styling, and Dufour injects a distinctive, sleek, elegance into its fleet – interiors infused with contemporary styling; well-balanced proportions and Italian classic elegance.

Ensign Marine, under managing director Norman Gee, acquired the Dufour New Zealand agency four years ago. "We've found the Dufour boats are very easy to sail, very elegant boats on the water and their standard of finish is much higher than average," he says.

The Dufour 380 Grand'Large represents a design collaboration between Italian Umberto Felci and Dufour's design team, but Felci's DNA dominates – particularly belowdecks. They are chic, well-proportioned, clean surfaces, flowing lines, a balanced palette – pure Ferrari.

Compared with her slightly smaller predecessor, the changes to the 380 Grand'Large aren't major – in fact the boats use the same hull. The key differences are a new, full-width drop-down transom, making for a much larger swim platform and easier cockpit-water transition, and

bigger saloon side windows which let in more light.

I like the new drop-down platform, but it has one small drawback. The 375's narrower platform left a transom perch behind each helm, but these have disappeared with the 380, so the helmsperson has to stand or sit sideways on the outboard perches. Depending on your helming style, you might miss the aft seats. On the plus side, the side perches offer a great view of the jib's tell-tales.

Like the 375, the new boat is available in a two or three-cabin layout sharing a bathroom. *Stingray* is the two-cabin option, which makes for an exceptionally comfortable cruiser for two couples.

Belowdecks, Dufour's individuality is most evident. The forepeak's double berth is offset to port; Dufour calls it a pullman berth, and it leaves a wide access corridor down the starboard side. It's more spacious at 227 x 140cm and symmetrical than a conventional V-berth, and yes, there is a built-in leeboard. The aft, starboard cabin's double berth is similarly accommodating.

The two-cabin model delivers two advantages: in place of a third cabin you get a much larger bathroom with a separate shower – check out the lockers hidden behind expansive, mirrored surfaces: very cool. The other advantage is a vast cockpit lazarette, to port. In addition to cockpit access, you can get into the lazarette through a door in the





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shower bulkhead.

But for me the definitive feature of the 380 is its galley with the abundance of wide surfaces. Where most yachts opt for a compact L-shaped or U-shaped galley, this

one is linear and runs the full length of the saloon to starboard. I readily admit to being an unimaginative, one-dimensional chef, but even I get excited by the space.

The galley's pièce de résistance

is its 180-litre, top-loading fridge.

Top-loaders can be a pain when you are trying to find an elusive packet of frozen chicken but Dufour addresses this with three sliding baskets resting on the fridge's top rim. Shifting them

around makes it easy to find and retrieve whatever's on the menu.

Other high-scoring saloon/galley features include the built-in wine locker in the sole and the table's sliding bench seat which is mounted



Unusual features in the interior of the Dufour 380 Grand'Large include the forepeak's double berth offset to port; a large locker under the cockpit, accessed from the bathroom; an under-sole wine cellar





The linear galley on starboard tack provides plenty of room for two chefs; the two-cabin layout allows a large bathroom with separate shower and good stowage

on rails. It's a fixed-size saloon table; ie, no drop-leaf, slightly offset to port. The bench slides out for meals. When it's not in use, it's tucked under the table, leaving a clear passageway and more room for the chef.

Overall, belowdecks is a bright, airy interior, a classic composition dominated by the lustrous moabi timber and crisp white surfaces. Two, long saloon windows set low into the hull offer diners a clear view of the water, like sitting at a waterside café.

The Wallas Nautica diesel heater also illustrates Dufour's commitment to service. Installed by the owner, the heater has four outlets: forepeak, saloon, bathroom and cockpit. Where installation might have been a nightmare; ie, cutting ducting holes through inaccessible bulkheads and running cabling, Dufour's removed the pain by pre-cutting the holes. Even better, the builders left a draw-

wire in situ to help run the ducting and cables.

#### TOP SIDES

Like most of the European production yachts, the 380 sports a flat sheer and a plumb stem to optimise the waterline length at 9.89m. It's a clean, uncluttered profile, with the expanse of white broken by the new, larger side windows set into the cabin top. Classic car aficionados might notice that the vessel's name, *Stingray*, carries the same typeface as that of the legendary marque.

Twin helms facilitate the flow of traffic through the cockpit to the swim platform past a fixed, drop-leaf table. The easy access is enhanced by the Raymarine chartplotter; it sits out of the way, under the aft end of the table, on a nifty bracket. At anchor, it's hidden and doesn't encroach on table space. In sailing mode you slide

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The Raymarine chartplotter on its nifty bracket under the cockpit table; a generous anchor well allows easy anchoring and tidy foredeck

it out and pivot it to face whichever helm you're using.

"The boats are set up for single-handed sailing to a huge degree," Gee says. "For most people who are buying yachts, it's just Mum and Dad.

"The designs are very beamy and the boats are meant to be sailed more upright and be much more stable."

All halyards and reefing lines feed through clutches to a pair of Lewmar 40 companionway winches. With a Lewmar 40 winch at arm's length from each helm, jib trimming is easy for shorthanded sailing, but adjusting the mainsheet and traveller, mounted just forward of the dodger, will require some help. Alternatively, if you're fussy about trimming, you could engage the Raymarine auto-helm and do it yourself.

Up front, the deck area is clean

and open, thanks to the windlass mounted within the chain locker – neat and tidy. The owner's altered the bow roller to give the anchor more swinging room and protect the plumb bow.

## PERFORMANCE

The 380 meets all the prerequisites in the performance equation. In addition to the generous waterline length, she's fairly lightweight at 7060kg and carries a deep, 1.9m fin keel and 1850kg bulb and a semi-elliptical spade rudder.

Balancing that is a Sparcraft 9/10ths fractional rig with two, swept-back spreaders. The fully-battened mainsail with slab-reefing and two pennants is complemented by a slightly overlapping, 110% genoa on an above-deck furler.





The drop-down transom and twin helms create a spacious play area at the stern

It makes for a modest sail plan of 67m<sup>2</sup>, easy to control and ideal for relaxed cruising. My only grumble is the non-adjustable, twin backstay set-up – they tend to catch your head if you like standing at the helm, even for an average-height chap like me.

While not electrifying, performance isn't bad. She took off at a sustained 8–9 knots on a broad reach in a 20-knot south-westerly, and clawed upwind at around 7–7.5 knots. I couldn't get her to point much higher than about 38 degrees, though I suspect that will improve with experimenting and tweaking. Super-light on the helm, she's responsive and tacks with alacrity.

A 30hp Volvo with saildrive provides the grunt for motoring. The Volvo drives a twin-bladed

folding prop to push the boat at 7–8 knots in flat water at cruising revs of 2400rpm. She handles smoothly under power and is particularly responsive in reverse.

This boat is the owner's second Dufour. After five years his previous boat, a 325, had become a little cramped for his preferred mode of two-couple sailing.

With its twin-pane rear window, the '63 Chev Stingray is exclusive and distinctive – a bit like Dufour's 380.

### DUFOUR 380 Grand'Large

- **loa** 11.19m
- **beam** 3.85m
- **waterline length** 9.89m
- **displacement** 7060kg
- **standard draft** 1.90m
- **keel weight** J1850kg
- **fuel** 200 litres
- **water** 380 litres
- **sail area** 67m<sup>2</sup>
- **main** 32m<sup>2</sup>
- **genoa** 35m<sup>2</sup>
- **I** 13.35m
- **J** 3.85m
- **P** 12.35m
- **price as tested** \$295,000
- **designer** Umberto Felci
- **NZ agent** Norman Gee of Ensign Marine



The Dufour 380 Grand'Large has a two and a three-cabin option; the two-cabin version allows a more spacious bathroom with separate shower

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