

CRUISING WORLD

SAILBOATS

The Dufour 390 and 430 Are Ready for Showtime

Two new models in the Grand Large range are ready for their official introduction at the upcoming U.S. Sailboat Show.

By Mark Pillsbury October 3, 2019



The Umberto Felci-designed Dufour 390. Courtesy Dufour Yachts

Two new entries in Dufour Yachts' Grand Large range will make their official North American debuts alongside all the other new sailboats on display at the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, this October 10-14. But unlike many boats that arrive so new that threads fly off the sails the first time they're unfurled for sea trials after the all-sail annual coming out party, this pair of Dufours should be well sorted, having arrived from France this past spring.

Just about the time cherry blossoms were in full bloom, I got to hop aboard the new 390 and its larger sibling, the 430, on a sunny, though not too windy day on Chesapeake Bay. I'll be right up front about saying that I stepped off each with a smile plastered on my face. These boats were fun to sail.

The two new cruising sailboats are part of an Umberto Felci-designed range that stretches from 31 to 63 feet, with 11 models to choose from. As you might imagine, there are common traits found throughout, with the abundance of creature comforts increasing apace with length and beam.

What remains relatively constant, though, are the sailing capabilities, thanks to battened mainsails that are flaked in boom pouches when not in use; slippery chined hulls; sprits for off-wind code zeros and the like; and choices between self-tacking jibs or slightly overlapped genoas, and shoal and performance keels and masts.



Both the boats I boarded in Annapolis featured fold-down swim platforms, twin wheels, cockpit tables with drop-down leaves, and outdoor galleys sporting a grill and sink built into the transom seats.

Below, both boats benefited from three ports in either side of their hulls that, by day, brightened up sleeping cabins and the saloon, and both featured overhead hatches near the mast, whose glass stretched nearly the width of the cabin top.



The Dufour 390 is available with two aft cabins. *Courtesy Dufour Yachts*

The 390 we sailed was configured with a genoa and adjustable fairleads; the 430 with a foredeck track and a self-tending jib. The latter made for easy sailing when tacking hard on the wind, though the genoa provided a little more oomph, I thought, when cracked off on a reach. I think if I were buying either boat, I'd opt for the sprit and an off-wind sail just to keep things lively.

The 390 in Annapolis, priced at \$303,000 and change, featured a pair of aft cabins and two heads, one at the foot of the companionway to port and the other forward in the owner's stateroom. In this version, there's an L-shaped galley opposite the aft head and a large dining table with seating to either side forward in the saloon. Other possible layouts include a sleeping cabin fore and aft (with an athwartships double in the latter), a large storage area aft to port and a larger aft head compartment. It's also possible to have three cabins and three heads, with an inline galley filling the port side of the saloon.



The Dufour 430 is fun to sail, even in light air. *Courtesy Dufour Yachts*

The 430 has options too, and as sailed carried a \$425,000 price tag. The model I jumped on came with the galley forward, with cooking spaces on either side of the centerline. In this configuration, there are two aft cabins, a large head at the foot of the companionway to port, and another forward in the owner's stateroom. The saloon has a dining area to starboard with a pair of seats opposite. The boat is also available with a fourth cabin with bunks, located opposite the aft head; in this version, there's an inline galley to port in the saloon, with a dining table to starboard.



The Dufour 430 features a forward galley. *Courtesy Dufour Yachts*

We sailed the 430 first. As I said, the breeze was light, about 6 knots. Still we cruised along, making about 3 knots, and added a couple more when the wind gusted to a rousing 8. Conditions were better in the afternoon for our sail on the 390, with the breeze closer to 10 and boat speed in the 6-plus-knot range.

It's easy to get any boat moving when it's blowing, but both Dufours demonstrated they could put the lighter conditions to good use too. What more could you ask from a couple of debutantes in waiting?