

Production Cruisers 45 to 50 Feet

In the category of the fleet's largest cruisers, we sailed four boats ranging in price from \$365,000 to \$630,000. Three of the boats are imports: the Dehler 47 from Germany, the Grand Soleil 50 from Italy, and the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 49 Deck Saloon from France. The sole domestic boat in this category, the Island Packet 445, was built in Largo, Florida. Two of the boats, the Grand Soleil and the Dehler, could have been classed as "performance cruisers" if enough boats had entered this particular class and size range.

The new **Grand Soleil 50** was an "out-of-the box" entry, sailing for the first time here on the day of the test. In the day's fading light, the largest boat of the contest displayed Italian grace—uncluttered, teaked out, and sporting a beautiful new suit of UK Sailmakers Tape Drive sails. Steve loved the motion of the boat and its expansive decks that could easily accommodate dodger and inflatable, but he missed foot braces in the cockpit and convenient bilge access. "The deck flow was the best of all boats," commented Alvah, though he would've preferred to see a safer pulpit and lifelines higher than 24 inches. Bill called her "fun to sail and pretty." As a boat for experienced owners, the GS 50 hinted at good cruising speed, doing close to seven knots in a dying breeze with a six-foot-eight-inch shoal keel and a fixed three-bladed prop.

The **Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 49 Deck Saloon** is the smaller sibling of the Vitor-



Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 49DS

rio Garroni-styled 54-footer that was introduced last year. Available in two different layouts, each with a cabin that can convert from one large to two small spaces, the version we sailed came with the owner's stateroom aft and two convertible cabins forward. Tom liked the optional generator's installation down low and the watertight collision bulkhead aft of the anchor locker. Alvah found lots of good gear and ideas throughout but wished for better ergonomics at the workstations. Molded toerails and stainless-steel rails around the dorade vents provided safety and a nice touch. However, rubrails and overhead handholds in the cabin were conspicuously absent. Despite a five-foot-seven-inch shoal keel and the roller-furling main, this Sun

Odyssey sailed at more than eight knots on a beam reach in 15 to 20 knots true.

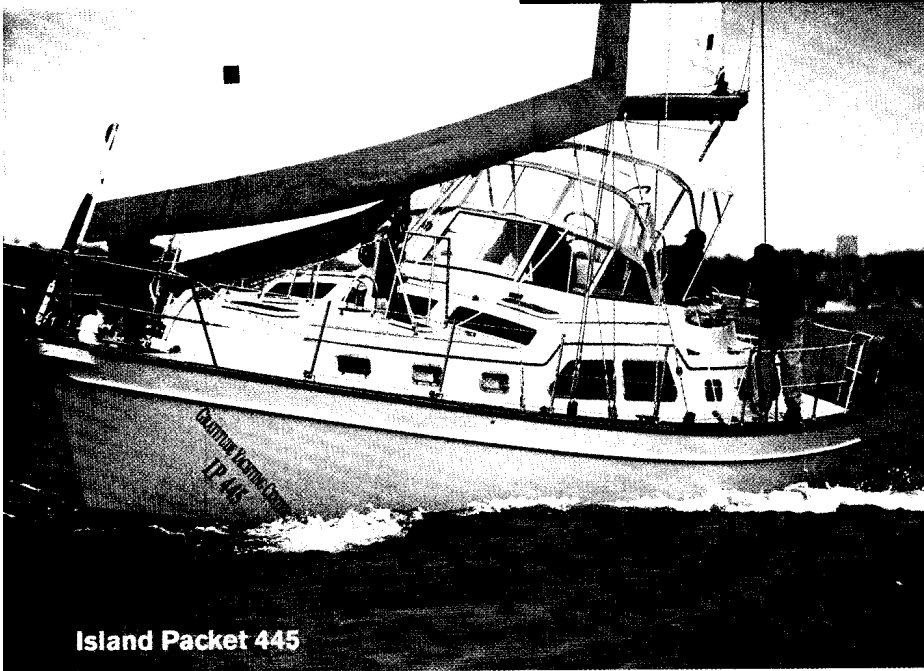
The **Island Packet 445** was presented as a boat that emphasized cruising in comfort and safety to the Bahamas and beyond. The boat continues the Island Packet style and design philosophy that's found such a solid following, and it builds on the center-cockpit ideas that Island Packet first explored in 2002 with its 485. Coincidentally, the 445 was also the only center-cockpit boat in this year's test. Staggering headroom, and near-commercial-size tankage under the cabin sole (260 gallons for water, 160 gallons for fuel, 55 gallons for waste) plus a bulletproof rig with a Hoyt staysail boom and lots of solid gear indicate that designer Bob Johnson intended this boat to ven-

ture far afield. The judges liked the quality of construction material and many of the boat's details that suggest a steady evolution. Particularly remarkable are Island Packet's warranties: three years stem-to-stern, and 10 years on the hull.

Designed by Judel/Vrolijk & Co., the new **Dehler 47** has a performance pedigree and, as the judges found, solid cruise appeal. By company definition, the boat is a performance cruiser leaning toward comfort and luxury. Down below, Tom found lots of lockers, nice seats with stowage underneath, and a wet locker right at the bottom of the companionway. With its drop-down transom flap and zip-away dodger, the boat intrigued the designer in Bill Lee. "I thought it sailed very nicely. It was a mix of good racing and cruising ideas." Steve felt right at home in the cockpit. "It was easy to deal with the traveler and mainsail and all the basic sail controls on the boat. Under power, it performed extremely well." Dehler uses a monocoque construction technique: hull and deck are joined and



Grand Soleil 50



Island Packet 445

laminated while still in their molds, and all systems, tanks, and machinery go in through the hatch afterward—a boon for the owner who keeps the boat long enough to oversee refits later. Alvah commended the quality of workmanship throughout the boat, pointing out such details as the sliding hatch and the captive Lexan boards in the companionway. But he was wary of the hydraulic hideaway anchor, a \$9,500 option. "I found that a bit complex. There are no rollers, no chocks, and no way to anchor the boat unless that works," he said. The \$630,000 price tag makes the Dehler 47 a boat for upscale clients who love to sail. Steve summed up his impressions: "I think it's a big version of a boat that would appeal to me. Sails nicely and handles very well." His colleagues agreed and awarded the Dehler 47 the prize for Best Production Cruiser 45 to 50 feet.

Production Cruisers 45 to 50 Feet

Boat Origin	Telephone Website	LOA LWL	Disp. (lb.) Disp./L*	Sail Area (in sq. ft.)** SA/Disp.***	Price \$/Disp.
Dehler 47	(773) 843-2497	46' 10"	27,500	1227	\$630,000
Import/Germany	http://us.dehler.com	41' 4"	174	21.51	\$22.91
Grand Soleil 50	(888) 479-2248	48' 11"	26,400	1072	\$540,000
Import/Italy	www.mareblu.net	43' 4"	145	19.31	\$20.45
Island Packet 445	(727) 535-6431	45' 9"	32,000	904	\$490,000
Domestic	www.ipy.com	38' 1"	259	14.32	\$15.31
J. Sun Odyssey 49 DS	(410) 280-9400	49' 1"	27,888	928	\$365,000
Import/France	www.jeanneauamerica.com	42' 3"	165	16.11	\$13.09

*(Disp./2,240)/(LWL/100)3

** I/2+PE/2

*** SA/(Disp./64).667