

Boat Report

# ACM HERITAGE 26

*New in the UK, courtesy of a major French yachtbuilder, is a chirpy four-berth motor cruiser suitable for inland and semi-displacement coastal use.*





**D**ufour, a major name in French boatbuilding, had concentrated on the yachting market until recently, but that all changed with their acquisition of Normandy-based powerboat builders ACM.

The new company, called ACM Dufour, have just brought on stream a couple of pilothouse boats at 26ft and 31ft, with a 36ft flybridge model to follow soon.

We were invited to Dartmouth by their UK South Coast distributors Portway Yacht Sales to try the single-shaftdrive semi-displacement Heritage 26.

### Design & layout

The 26's medium-vee hull comes in a choice of two forms.

Smaller-engined craft which are destined to spend most of their time on inland waterways can be specified with a slight stub of keel, which partially supports the conventional drive arrangement and sterngear.

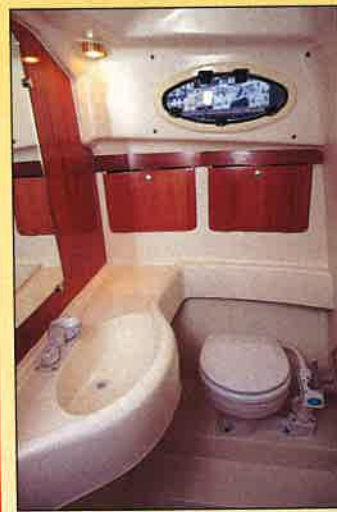
On the other hand the boat we tested had a plain bottom, with a P-bracket fitted as an option; a cone diverts ropes and flotsam from the propeller, which is run in a slight tunnel.

In either case, the underwater sections culminate

### Toilet

Squeezed between the helm console and the forward sleeping area, the WC has good headroom, and adequate space too for showering and ablutions. The moulding incorporates a useful fiddled area next to the basin, and there is stowage outboard for washbags.

An opening port provides ventilation, but why don't the builders fit obscured-glass here?



### Cockpit

The cockpit is well sheltered by the overhang from the wheelhouse/saloon, but this, like the curate's egg, is partly good and partly bad. Whilst it offers protection from the rain, it also does a fairly consummate job of shading you from any sun. A canopy can be supplied to

enclose the area fully if required.

Seating, by way of a pair of clip-in locker/seats, is an optional extra. An alternative is simply to carry a few collapsible director's-style chairs that can be kept in the lazaret and deployed when required, but that means you do not get the benefit of the extra measure of stowage.

The coaming is pleasingly finished with a wood capping, and

couple of lockers in it house the gas bottle stowage and battery switches.

The lazaret, with its good-sized hatch, should have enough capacity to take most of your cruising paraphernalia, even though it already incorporates the water and fuel tanks outboard and the batteries in a box towards the forward end. The steering gear, tucked right aft but still accessible, should not be interfered with by anything stowed here, but it would be good to see some form of grating to keep things clear of the bilge.



### Saloon & galley

A patio type door leads through from the cockpit to the wheelhouse/saloon, which is dominated by a raised dinette to starboard.

In fact the generous size of the dinette makes the walkway past

the sideboard-cum-galley to port rather narrow, so it is difficult to pass through when someone is on culinary duty.

The forward section of the facing dinette seats doubles as a helm seat once the backrest is slid across, and at night the whole arrangement can be folded flat to make a 6ft 4in (1.93m) by

3ft 10in (1.20m) double berth. Cave lockers are set in the base.

The mahogany-finished sideboard incorporates galley facilities by way of a sink, a two-burner gas hob and a fridge. Given this, the wooden countertop and surround should surely have more durable protection if it is not to become work-worn; the hob appears rather exposed too.

Plenty of stowage is provided for galley equipment and other gear in the run of cupboards, although more shelves would help to make full use of the space available.

A large sliding sunroof in the moulded deckhead allows in plenty of light, and there is good visibility right round for skipper and crew. A couple of sections of the side windows can be opened.



### Forward berth

Right forward, beneath the coachroof, is a sleeping area which is simply a curtained-off mattress rather than a separate cabin. That said, it is more than just a cuddy, with plenty of sitting headroom.

Made-up, the berth measures 6ft 4in (1.93m) by up to 5ft 0in (1.52m), although it is restricted in width at its forward end. Removing the small infill allows you to sit and dress in a modicum of privacy.

Large lockers are provided beneath the bunk-bases, and there is also a stowage bin set in the sole.



in a reasonable width of chine to knock back any creeping spray, with a further knuckle running low along the topside to make doubly sure it stays put.

The hull comes in a super-smart blue colour scheme as standard, setting off the ivory white of the superstructure.

The accommodation comprises a wheelhouse/saloon where the seating converts into a berth, a curtained-off forward sleeping area, a galley and toilet/shower compartment.

For boats intended mainly river and estuary use, Yanmar's four-cylinder 1.8lt engine is offered in its 75hp rating. For coastal work you can specify the 100hp version, as installed in our test boat, or a 150hp unit.

Dufour market their boats in a number of price levels, according

to the level of fit-out required. The Heritage 26 we tested was a Level 2 model, which meant it came with a full electronics package, a bow-thruster and trim tabs.

### Performance & handling

Even with no keel, the hull has good directional stability, whether at slow or semi-displacement speeds, with no recourse to the wheel necessary. To our mind, apart from the extra protection a keel would afford in case of grounding, there is no clear advantage in having one.

On the other side of the coin, when you turn the wheel the 26 turns almost in its own length, with the twin-lever throttle arrangement working well.

With its sizeable rudder, bow-thruster and good all-round visibility from the helm, this is certainly a neat, manoeuvrable package for inland cruising.

Open the Yanmar up to 3000-3300rpm, on the other hand, and you can jog along at 12-14 knots in coastal waters without straining anything — least of all your pocket, given consumption figures which mean an average of around 4.5mpg.

Again the hull responds easily once helm is applied, powering round with just a slight inward turn, but it is equally happy to motor straight without fuss. The boat cut through the short popple we experienced without bother or slamming, and gamely pushed through any larger slop we could find, with the chine doing a good job of deflecting spray.

Throttling up further, we measured a top speed of 15.5 knots at 3600rpm. But the Heritage really finds its niche back at the 3200rpm mark, where both crew and boat will be happy to sit for the couple of hours it will take to cover 30 miles; you can expect noise levels

### Bathing platform

Boarding is a simple business, with the bathing platform extending to the full width of the boat and a central walk-through to the cockpit. Coaming-mounted grabrails lend a helping hand.

Teak decking on the platform is an extra, whilst the shower is a standard fitment.

The transom gate itself comprises a slide-in wooden infill rather than a hinged door. This and the bathing ladder can be stowed away in the cockpit lazaret.



### Decks

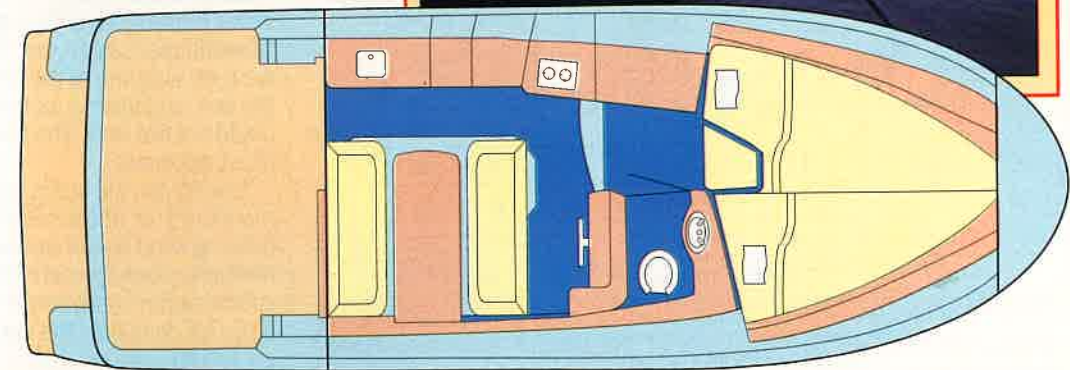
A step and a handhold are provided on each side of the boat, at the break of the cockpit, making it an easy hop up from ashore onto the side decks.

These are on the narrow side aft, at 5.5in (14cm), but open up as they run forward, averaging out at around 8in (20cm). A handrail running along the superstructure makes up for the rather low guardrails outboard, and the wood capping of the cockpit

coaming continues forward to serve as a toerail.

There is plenty of space on the foredeck, where an electric windlass is part of the boat's Level 2 specification, with a small hatch just adjacent allowing you to check on the chain. The effective non-slip decking here covers the coachroof as well.

Mooring hardware consists of 8in (20cm) cleats at the bow and on each quarter, the latter helpfully located for Mediterranean-style stern-to mooring, plus a smaller pair amidships.





## Helm

The helm fascia, with a compass on top, seems unnecessarily tall, especially since there is plenty of space adjacent to the wheel for the Level 2 instrumentation package that includes a VHF, a Bidata log/sounder, an autopilot and a GPS/plotter. In fact, the reason is to allow extra headroom in the toilet compartment, which is located just forward at the lower level.

This is all well and good, but the helmsman's eyeline is rather obstructed, and ideally either the fascia needs a couple of inches lopped off it or the seat-base should

be jacked up a similar amount. Unusually, twin-lever throttles are fitted as standard, set on a return to the skipper's right hand, with the main electrical breaker/switchpanel

located on the adjacent run of coaming.

A single self-parking wiper serves the helm side of the two-part windscreen.



## Engine room

With the table removed, the rest of the raised platform of the dinette lifts on gas struts to reveal the enginebay.

There is plenty of room to starboard of the engine to climb down and carry out day-to-day checks or fuller servicing. All the ancillaries which need regular maintenance are conveniently sited on this side, although it would still have been useful if the builders had made provision for a further hatch in the saloon sole so that the other side of the unit could be got at more easily.

The fuel/water separator and raw-water strainer are accessible on the fore and aft bulkheads respectively, while the belts and circulating pumps on the engine have just sufficient clearance

forward. There is even plenty of room to locate a few storage bins outboard of the power-unit.

All in all the installation appears well found and is tidily executed, and the compartment is lined with single-layer foam insulation.

Evident down here is the stiffening

arrangement of stringers, among the chunkiest we have seen on this size of craft.

The bilge is serviced both by a submersible pump, accessible through a hatch located beside the helm, and by a manual unit mounted in the cockpit.



in the wheelhouse to remain under 80dB(A), which is fair.

Overall the boat is nicely balanced and not sensitive to people moving around. We found no real need to use the trim tabs, but they could be useful in heftier head-seas or crosswinds.

## Conclusions

As a chirpy but businesslike single-shaftdrive craft with a full wheelhouse, the Heritage 26 is bound to attract a lot of interest in the UK when it makes its public debut at the Southampton Boat

Show in September. Its 31ft sister will be worth a look, too.

The smaller boat, certainly, is a well-conceived cruiser, offering weekending accommodation for up to four adults, with longer sorties perhaps feasible for a young family — the cabin cruiser brought right up to date?

Some tweaking of the galley arrangement might be beneficial, as well as a slight paring of the width of the dinette to create a wider thoroughfare through the wheelhouse/saloon, but the boat we tried was one of the first off the line, and there is nothing we could not live with. The fit-out is most adequate.

Underway, the hull is well mannered for economical cruising. And if you need any further encouragement, the basic specification costs some £10,000 less than the version we tested. □

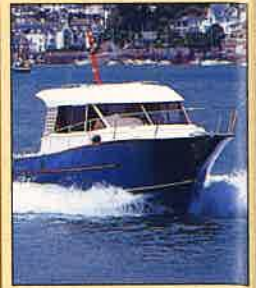
## ACM HERITAGE 26

PERFORMANCE & CONSUMPTION							SOUND LEVELS dB(A)	
rpm	knots#	gph†	lph†	mpg†	range*	trim	saloon	cockpit
2000	6.6	—	—	—	—	—	72	78
2500	7.9	1.6	7	4.94	172	—	74	79
3000	11.7	2.4	11	4.88	170	—	75	80
3300	14.0	3.2	15	4.38	153	—	78	82
3500	15.0	3.7	17	4.05	142	—	80	83
3600	15.5	4.2	19	3.69	129	—	80	84

# Measured by radar gun. † Calculated from engine manufacturers' figures. \* Allows 20% margin.

CONDITIONS ~ wind southwesterly Force 2-3, sea slight

LOAD ~ fuel 100%, water 100%, crew 3



### BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

### DIMENSIONS

#### LOA

26ft 3in (7.99m)

#### HULL LENGTH

25ft 3in (7.49m)

#### BEAM

8ft 4in (2.59m)

#### DRAUGHT

2ft 3in (0.70m)

#### AIR DRAUGHT

8ft 6in (2.60m)

#### DISPLACEMENT

2.2 tonnes

#### FUEL CAPACITY

44gal (200lt)

#### WATER CAPACITY

17gal (75lt)

#### ENGINES

single Yanmar 4JH2-UTE

4cyl 1.8lt diesel

100hp at 3600rpm

#### PRICE

£51,673 ex VAT as tested with Level 2 fit-out

### SUPPLIERS

Portway Yacht Sales,  
Dart Marine Park, Steamer  
Quay, Totnes, Devon  
TQ9 5AL.  
Tel: 01803 866622.

### BUILDERS

ACM Dufour,  
16 Rue du Pont de Pierre,  
14390 Cabourg, France.  
Tel: (33) 2 31 28 17 17.