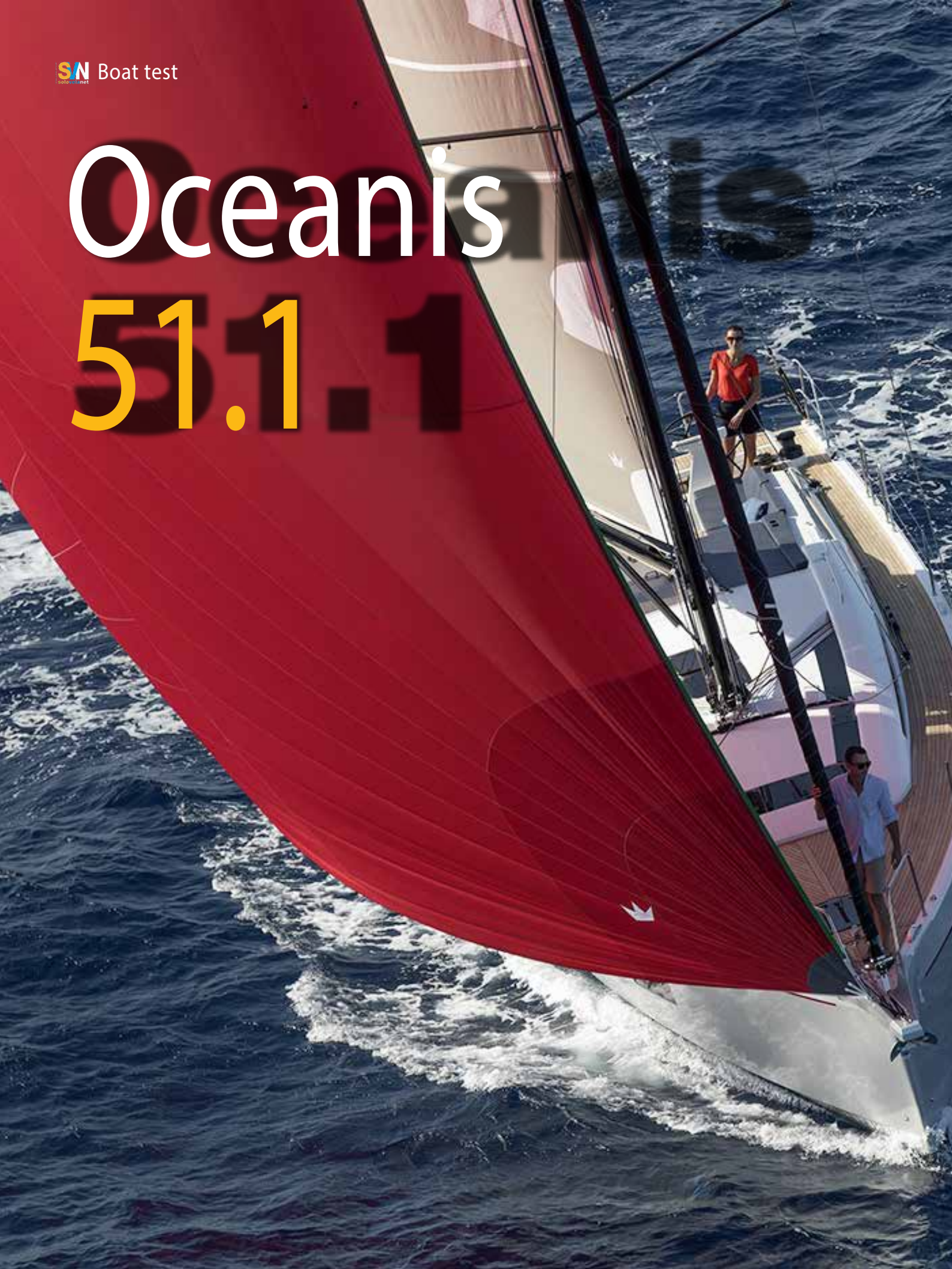


Oceanis

51.1





by Maurizio Anzillotti

The new Oceanis 51.1, that was launched on the market and introduced in 2017 at the Cannes boat show, is the first model of a new generation of boats. As is always the case in a new generation, these models result from a completely revised concept of the boat. Designed by the Berret-Racoupeau couple for the water lines and by the Milanese studio Nautica Design for the deck and the accommodations, this model breaks new ground in internal volumes and external spaces of boats.

The hull

With 15.80 metres (51,83 ft) length overall and 4.80 (15,74 ft) metres beam, the Oceanis 51.1 is a full 51 feet whose main feature in the forward redan.

Looking at the hull, you will notice its pronounced chine that extends from midships to the bow. Rather than a chine, this is a proper redan that makes the hull remarkably wider above the waterline than it would have been according to the natural design lines.



► Here above, a picture taken during the first day of the sea trial. Click on the picture to watch the video made on the same occasion. Here aside, the forward chine that increases both the internal volume and the deck space in the forward area. Below, the bow of the boat where the chine is clearly visible



As a matter of fact, thanks to this redan, the boat gains width in the lower part of the hull, with a consequent increase in internal volumes.

It must be noted that, with this chine that starts from midships, Beneteau has definitely reversed the dynamics of the chines that have been used so far. They always extended from the stern to midships. Their aim was to create more space in the aft cabins and to improve upwind stability. Over time it has been understood that those who claimed that the stern chine had no stabilizing effect at low speeds were right. Therefore, if a chine was really to be used, it was better to use it in the area where there was more need for volume, i.e. in the dinette and forward. The result of this innovation is remarkable.

► Acknowledgements

This sea test and the related video have been carried out thanks to the collaboration of NSS Charter, whose staff welcomed us in their Beneteau trials base in Cala dei Sardi and provided us with two Oceanis 51.1 yachts in two different versions supplied, support boats and their skippers. Therefore, we are glad to thank this company.





Beneteau trials bas e



To test this boat we went to one of the two Beneteau trials bases managed by NSS Charter. The trials base where we performed our test is located in Marina Cala dei Sardi. The other one is located in Marina Cala dei Medici, in Tuscany. In both marinas there are almost all Beneteau models. Trials bases offer a unique opportunity to test boats before buying them, and attract customers from all over Europe. To book a test, you can directly contact the sales manager of NSS Charter, Ms. Serena Scarinci, by calling +39 32998786669 or emailing the address serena@northsardiniasail.it

► Aside, the boat as seen from aft and following, the boat as seen laterally in a roadstead. The edge and the roll-bar are clearly visible

The forward cabin is huge and the dinette, thanks to the significant increase of volume in the lower portion of the hull, features the couches in a lower position, providing the sensation of an even larger space.

The beam reaches its maximum just before the mast and decreases a few percentage points at the stern. As a consequence the side decks, besides being completely clear thanks to the chainplates of the high shrouds falling down on the outside of the hull and the low ones on the deckhouse, are wide up to the far end of the boat, enabling you to walk quickly up to the aft cleats.

The deck

The deck of the Oceanis 51.1 boasts an attractive design, with several mouldings that lighten her silhouette. In the large and completely clear forward triangle, a big hatch gives access to the sail locker, which may also be converted into a crew cabin. A lovely crew cabin with its own toilet. The forward triangle can accommodate a long cushion with backrest, available as an option and perfect for relaxing in the forward area. The deck is devoid of gear. The running rigging runs down from the mast directly under the cowling and emerges in the cockpit and, in the version equipped with a self-tacking jib, there are not even the tracks and travellers of the genoa sheet. All the halyards and the reefing lines come out of the cowling in front of an array of stoppers which service two Harken winches placed in front of the steering wheels and slightly laterally, so as to enable the owner to sail the boat solo with the help of the autopilot and of the electric halyard winch. On the two big wheelhouse consoles, equipped with handrails, it is possible to install navigation instruments. The single lever engine control is fitted laterally low down, under the side helmsman's seat: a typical position, but not the best choice on a cruise boat like the Oceanis 51.1. If Beneteau had installed the single lever on the side of the binnacle or console, as they had done on the Oceanis 45 of the previous generation of models, harbour manoeuvres would have been much more comfortable (in Beneteau's partial defence it must be said that those oblique binnacles are very nice to see, though not quite suitable to support the single lever). On deck we find several relaxation areas, where it is possible to fit sun cushions.

► The Oceanis 51.1 sailing upwind. The photograph shows a First Line version, the sportiest configuration for this boat. Features of the First Line: a) no roll-bar; b) the oversized mast and the deeper and T-shaped keel (the draft reaches 2.80 m. - 9,2 ft)



► On top, the relaxation area in front of the mast. Aside, a close-up view of the working area of this boat, with the two oblique binnacles and the central table in its Luxury version

The rings at the base of the stanchions are certainly noteworthy. They function as eyebolts and are very handy when you need to tie something, such as a tender, on deck, or to grapple a snatch block.

Cockpit and equipment

In the cockpit, that is inspired by that of sailing superyachts, the guest area is clearly separated from the working area. The cockpit portion where benches are located is devoid of manoeuvring gear. The two L-shaped couches located here are generously sized, and so thick that they can also be used as sun cushions. On the deckhouse, next to the companionway, where it was usual to find the winches that serviced the leading blocks, there are now two very comfortable single sun cushions with a folding backrest (the same, removable, can be used on the forward triangle or in other relaxation areas). In the centre of the cockpit we find a substantial table with two fold-down wings which, when open, make room enough to accommodate ten people for lunch or dinner. The large compartment under the table is very convenient for storing the liferaft so that, if needed, it can be tossed overboard easily and without much effort. The photographs of the table that accompany this report always show the Luxury version which is available as an option, but we

the shipyard d



Bénéteau is the biggest shipyard of the group of the same name, that has an annual turnover of around one billion euros. The group includes several shipyards that deal with sailing yachts, Jeanneau, CNB, Lagoon. The two major yacht builders are Bénéteau and Jeanneau, and specifically Bénéteau is the innovative and so

- somewhat extroverted soul, while Je
- anneau is the slightly more traditional
- soul of the group. Since a few years,
- both these shipyards have also been
- producing motor boats. Because of
- their size, they are on a very different
- level than all other shipyards. Consi
- der, for example, that the production
- of Bénéteau is counted in thousands
- of units, while that of Dufour does not
- reach 400 boats per year.

The first consequence of this disparity consists in the research and development possibilities of Bénéteau. The most important range on which the shipyard is mostly focused is that of Oceanis models. These are comfortable and easy to sail cruise boats. In addition, there is the First range that is currently being relaunched. Ocean Yachts is a brand new range. In 2016 the builder introduced the Ocean Yacht 62, the first model that should be followed by two larger yachts.



► The Oceanis 51.1

also took care to publish a photo of the standard version that we took at the Paris Boat Show. This standard version, that in our opinion is pretty too, is also suitable for storing the liferaft in its centre.

The working area is around the wheelhouses. Each wheel is serviced by two helmsman's seats: one at the stern, with a large locker underneath (where the gas cylinders are stored) and one aside. In front of the wheels we find the two winches, one per wheel. In the layout that we tested, which includes the self-tacking jib, the helmsman may sail the boat solo.

The layout equipped with the traditional genoa features two more winches fitted astern, that service the headsail sheets. In this case, the tracks of the sheet traveller are also fitted on deck (the self-tacking jib does not need sheet winches).

At the far end of the stern, the large bathing platform is lowered electrically.

When lowered, it also reveals a useful step that makes it easier to descend. On the other hand, in our opinion the platform is a bit too high on the water (about 50-60 centimetres from the sea surface - 18 - 22 inches). The bathing ladder is also impractical because it is not integrated into the platform and must be fitted out each time the transom is opened to use the bathing platform.

The roll-bar

The Oceanis 51.1 is available either with or without the roll-bar. In the former layout the mainsheet clew is fixed above the roll-bar, in the latter it is on the deckhouse just forward of the companionway. The layout without the roll-bar is certainly more stylish, but the one with the roll-bar is handier. This acts as a support both for the mainsail blocks and for the awnings that, using the roll bar as a support, can be larger and kept open even in strong winds.

Because of the roll-bar, the boom is very high and it is necessary to climb some steps in order to work on the mainsail.

With this detail in mind, you should assess carefully whether it is advisable to fit a battened mainsail, that would require work at the mast and on the boom when being lowered. In the layout without the roll-bar, the boom remains unfortunately at the same height as the layout with the roll-bar.

Sea test

We put to sea from Cala dei Sardi marina, which is one of the two Bénéteau European trial bases managed

► The cockpit of the Oceanis 51.1 is particularly large, so there is room for everyone and places are divided between the crew, i.e. those who take care of the manoeuvres, and the guests, who just want to relax in the sun



by the NSS Yachting group (that until recently was the North Sardinia Sail group). The second trial base is located in Marina Cala de' Medici, in Tuscany. As it often happens here in Sardinia, the mistral blew robustly, reaching peaks of 20 knots. The boat we tested was purchased by a German customer, set up in a charter layout and placed into a management program. She is equipped with a self-tacking jib and a mainsail furler with the sheet clew fixed on the roll-bar. In the first phase of the test, with about 7-8 knots of wind, the sail area, very small (91 square metres - 979 sq/ft) because of the self-tacking jib and the furling mainsail, affected the performance of the boat and caused her to struggle in finding a good pace. As the wind rose, those small sails turned from a drawback into a positive advantage, enabling the boat to enhance her sailing capabilities.

With 13 knots of true wind, the boat already performed so well as to reach and exceed 9 knots upwind when the wind exceeded 15 knots.

With balanced sails, the rudder is soft and responsive. When the wind speed exceeded 20 knots, the main-sail won on the jib, often causing the boat to broach until we reduced canvas to find a new balance point and so brought peace of mind back on board. With balanced sails the boat, thanks to her straight edges, bends moderately and keeps the course well.

- In the centre, the First Line boat sailing with a gennaker. Here above, the inflatable liferaft stored in the locker under the table



► In questa fotografia si vede lo spigolo sullo scafo di questa nuova generazione di Oceanis



Management program S



The boat we tested was purchased by a German customer and placed into a management program. A management program, in this case the one offered by the NSS Charter, allows you to buy the boat paying half price, or even less, and share her use with NSS Charter for the duration of the contract. NSS Charter also takes on all maintenance and mooring expenses, with the exception of insurance. In this way your savings are even higher. For information about NSS Charter management programs, you are welcome to contact the NSS Charter sales manager, Ms. Serena Scarinci, directly at +39 32998786669 or via e-mail at: serena@northsardiniasail.it

► On top, the Oceanis 51.1 (roll-bar layout) at anchor. The long chine on the hull, extending from midships to the bow, stands out clearly

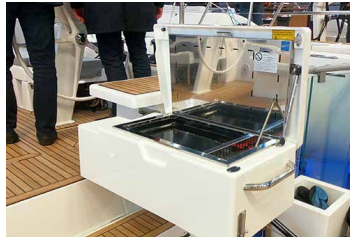
A remarkable advantage is that the winches are placed slightly to the side and closer to the steering wheel than is usually the case. This enables the helmsman to use the winch handle to haul in even while seated. In the boat that we tested, one of the two winches (the one on the starboard side) was electric, and we consider the cost of this option almost mandatory for those who wish to sail without much effort. With electric winches, the effort required to sail this boat is very low.

If you want to keep the self-tacking jib and the furling mainsail, it is advisable to choose sails with vertical battens that significantly increase the sail area and performance under light winds. It would be a great idea to add either a Parasail or a code 0.

The Parasail, that is more elastic, may be used on points of sail ranging from dead downwind to close-hauled and with 5 to 25 knots of wind, whereas the cheaper code 0 will allow you to sail very well with light winds, increasing the small sail area of the layout with self-tacking jib.

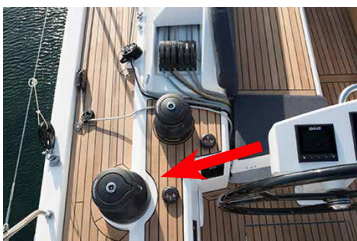
Optionals

The aft grill is an interesting option. It is a cooking plate concealed under an additional seat, identical to those in the stern. This one can rotate and be moved to the bathing platform.



The table shown in all photographs accompanying this report is optional. The standard table supplied with the boat is this one. This can accommodate the liferaft in its centre too.

The stern davits, one of the best-selling options, are actually highly inadvisable. Hanging the dinghy on the stern davits means placing a remarkable weight at the end of the boat and making her less stable



This is the second winch to be fitted in case you request a 105% genoa. Located not in front, but on the side of the helmsman's seat, it is particularly easy to handle for the person who sails the boat

The opening porthole facing the cockpit seat is an indispensable option. Without it, there would be no air circulation in the cabin. This porthole, together with the standard one that opens up to the cockpit flooring, provides a good current of air.



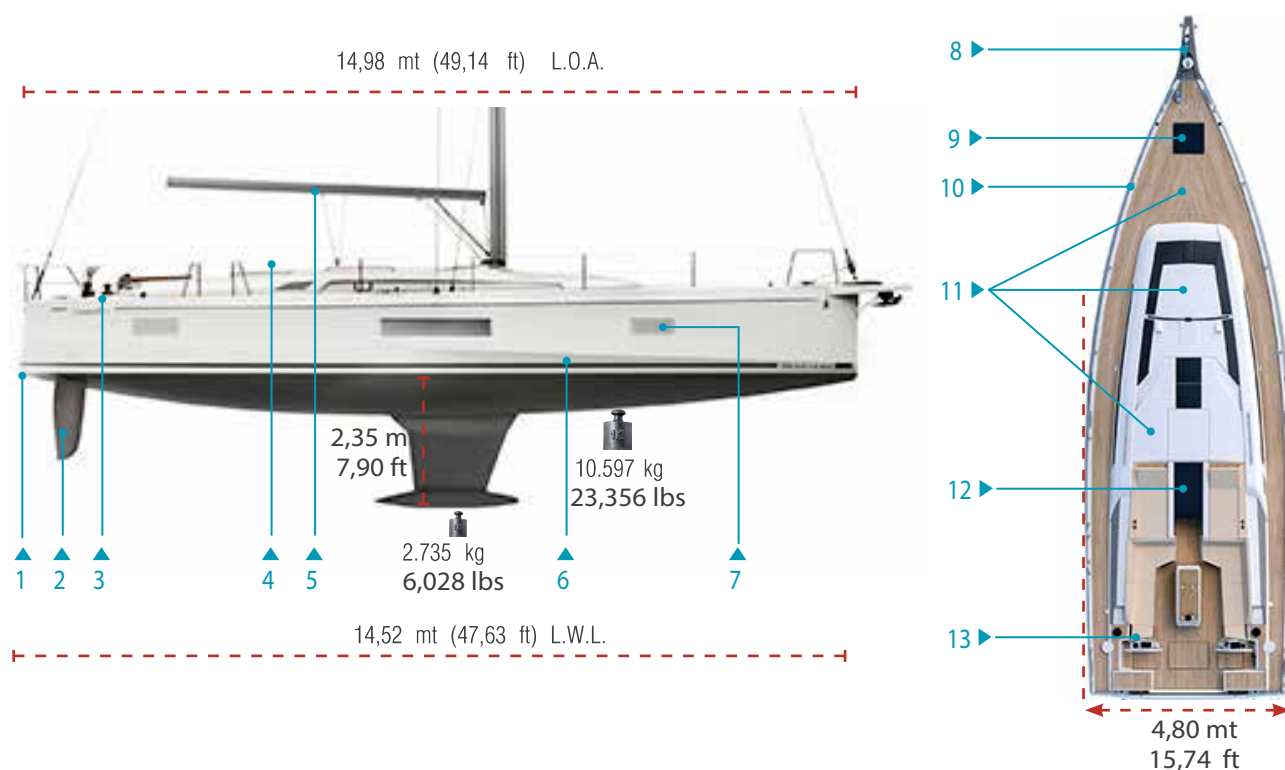
Other indispensable options are the sun cushions with folding backrest, to be placed near the companionway. They may also be accommodated on the forward triangle.



Points of view

L'analisi Oceanis

51.1



ADV

The models of the Oceanis range can be viewed and tested at the Beneteau trials bases run by **NSS** in Sardinia and Tuscany.

If you wish to book a test, click **HERE** to write a message to the trials base

1 ► Bathing platform

Very large bathing platform. It opens quickly electrical ly, but is slightly high on the water

2 ► Twin rudder blades

Two well angled rudder blades for maximum efficiency in close-hauled sailing

3 ► Winches moved aft

The winches have been moved aft of where they used to be, and are located almost beside the helmsman

4 ► Roll-bar

The roll-bar can be fitted or not. The advantages consist in higher and better supported awnings. Mainsheet point on the roll-bar instead of on the deckhouse

5 ► High boom

The boom is rather high in order to make the roll-bar easier to place. With a high boom the deck is more usable, but working on the mainsail is more tiring. We recommend the furling mainsail.

6 ► Hull chine

The hull chine is very pronounced just after midships and widens the hull, providing greater volume inside and more space on the deck

7 ► Hull windows

Hull windows are larger than those of the previous generation of models and give the boat plenty of light

8 ► The dolphin striker

The dolphin striker is optional. It is designed to keep the anchor at a distance from the stem post.

9 ► Skipper's cabin

It is rare to find such a well thought out skipper's cabin in such a small space. This can be replaced by a huge sail locker.

10 ► The toerail

The toerail is integrated into the hull, it is part of the mould

11 ► Relaxation areas

The deck is designed with three large relaxation areas in order to create several spaces where to stay during the day, for better privacy on board

12 ► Long companionway

The extra long companionway allows to fit a very sloping descent stair that makes it possible to descend safely facing forward, using the handrails located on the sides

13 ► Working areas

The deckhouse and deck are devoid of manoeuvring gear. Lines run under the cowling and are brought back to the cockpit, and in the deckhouse there are no winches, thus allowing the creation of new relaxation areas.

The Roll-bar



In 2011 Beneteau launches three Oceanis models: the 41, the 45 and the 48. Those three boats, that bring a substantial change into the appearance of the Oceanis range, are very wide, much wider than the previous generation, and feature huge aft platforms, but most notably they are equipped with a roll-bar, a fibreglass arch that rises above the companionway. Sailboaters, especially those from southern Europe, usually grumble at a roll-bar, but then they start to observe and examine it, and in the end many of them become convinced: the roll-bar is a great convenience. The advantages offered by this item are basically two: a) the main sheet block is no longer located in the middle of the cockpit walking surface, where it would hinder movement in the cockpit itself b) if the boat is fitted with a roll-bar, spray hoods and biminis rest on it, so they can be bigger, and what is more, they are much more resistant under strong winds. For these new models, Beneteau lets owners choose between having a roll-bar or not, thus making everyone happy.

Details

The chain well is very deep and sloping, allowing to have on board even 80 - 100 metres of chain that can be launched without having to break the build-up.



The reefing lines coming down from the boom and the halyards coming from the mast, together with the sheets of the mainsail circuit, are immediately concealed under the cowling in order to keep the deckhouse clear

This is one of the few boats where the crew cabin is worthy of its name. Here the skipper finds a cot with large lockers underneath, a toilet, a sink and many shelves



► Keels

shallow keel	1,92 m	3.604 kg	6,2 ft	7,945 lbs
standard	2,36 m	3.396 kg	7,7 ft	7,486 lbs
First line	2,80 m	3.198 kg	9,1 ft	7,050 lbs



► Standard sail plan

Furling main sail	45,0 m	147,6 ft
Self-tacking jib	46,1 m	151,2 ft
Code 0	138,0 m	452,7 ft

Rig	Standard	
I	18,32 m	60,1 ft
J	6,3 m	20,6 ft
P	17,47 m	57,3 ft
E	5,50 m	18,0 ft

► First line sail plan


Main sail	63,0 m	206,2 ft
Genoa	72,0 m	236,2 ft

Rig	First Line	
I	19,82 m	65,0 ft
J	6,3 m	20,6 ft
P	19,20 m	62,9 ft
E	5,50 m	18,0 ft



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" ... if I imagine living on a
boat, I choose this one... "

John Banks, visitor of Annapolis 2019 boat show





- On top, the dinette with the double aft cabins at the bottom. In the left, one of the boats we tested with two forward cabins. Down, the L-shaped seat located opposite the dining table and the chart table

↓ Accommodations

When you enter the boat you will find very large and airy spaces, much larger than what you are used to seeing on similar-sized boats. This is mostly due to the remarkable width of this boat. Her maximum beam is 4.80 metres. Consider, for example, that the Sun Odyssey 490 has a waterline length of 14.00 metres, compared to the 14.98 metres of the Oceanis 51.1, and a maximum beam of 4.39 metres compared to the 4.80 of the Oceanis: this makes a huge difference. The greater width is also enhanced by the effect of the redan, that adds volume in the lower part of the boat allowing it to be better exploited.

The interior layout is original. The C-shaped galley, located to port, is enveloping and equipped with large worktops, many cabinets and several drawers. There are two refrigerators: a traditional top-loading one, and a stainless steel one with a vertical door. Forward of this, the big L-shaped couch is very unique because it features a chaise longue on the short arm of the L.

► You might be interested in reading



The barber hauler
Let's find out what the barber hauler is and what it is used for



► Aside, a view of the C-shaped galley. In the centre, the dining table which, as you can see, is distant from the opposite couch and contributes to creating a lounge atmosphere. Below, the galley as a whole



Together with a traditional C-shaped couch resting on the starboard side and with a big table in front, this couch and the chaise longue create a convivial area offering a peculiar view of the dinette. In such an environment you feel that it would also be pleasant to sit and talk with friends, while the more traditional dinettes are considered suitable almost exclusively for having meals. On the other hand, it should be noted that the couch on the port side, which ends in front of the chart table, is too far from the dining table to accommodate diners. It should also be pointed out that the chaise longue is equipped with a mechanism (supplied as standard) to modify the cushion layout and turn into a lounging seat. In the dinette it is also good to find points of support almost everywhere, as well as two large and sturdy stainless steel handrails on the ceiling. Two more handrails that we consider noteworthy are those that make up the grab rail of the companionway stair. With a very wide corner, this stair makes it possible to descend facing forward, with the safety provided by the two handrails.





► The forward cabin of the owner's version: its size is considerably bigger than what we generally find in a 51-footer



► Here above, one of the two twin forward cabins of the charter layout. Aside, a detail of the owner's cabin. Below, one of the aft heads

The cabin layout varies according to the chosen version. In the 3 cabin and 3 head version the forward cabin is very spacious and fully enjoys the redan effect. This cabin is equipped with two heads, one for the toilet and one for the shower cubicle.

In the versions with four or more cabins, the two twin forward cabins are also particularly spacious if compared to what is found in competitor boats. Instead of the two heads of the owner's version, here we find two complete and separate bathrooms, one for each cabin. Moving aft, we find a pair of large twin cabins. They are equipped with big berths extending from side to side, several cabinets to store your belongings, a large wardrobe, two portholes and a hull window. The two portholes are opening, but unfortunately they are on the same vertical line, and this somewhat affects their capability of creating a current of air. In the four-cabin version, each of the aft cabins has its own head. In the five-cabin version, on the other hand, the head of the starboard aft cabin has been removed to make room for a fifth cabin with bunk berths.

Conclusion

After experiencing the boat for several days and trying two of them in very different weather conditions,



► Here above, the companionway stair, with its handrail that makes it possible to descend facing forward, and the two twin aft cabins on its sides. Aside, one of the aft cabins with the two portholes aligned vertically. Below, another view of one of the aft cabins



we are now convinced that the Oceanis 51.1 is actually a very innovative model offering an unusual amount of space and volume to owners that are mainly interested in comfort. Beautiful to behold and very easy to sail, the Oceanis 51.1 is the perfect boat for enjoying long holidays in total comfort. As we are dealing with a cruise boat entirely focused on convenience of life on board, we think that the choice of the rig is an essential matter. When choosing the layout and rigging of the boat, bear in mind that the simplest, easiest to use and least tiring rigging is the standard one with the self-tacking jib. To this equipment we recommend adding two electric winches, and a light headsail to increase the small sail area given by the self-tacking jib and mainsail furler. If an extra budget is available, we suggest replacing the standard jib and mainsail with two furling sails with vertical battens, made by a good sailmaker. This choice will make you re-evaluate the pleasure of sailing. Regarding the choice of internal layouts, we can only point out that unlike what we saw on some other boats, on the Oceanis 51.1 the Pullman cabin of the 5-cabin version is rather comfortable. ●

The author



Maurizio Anzillotti, SVN solovlanet's chief editor. He is an experienced skipper and a boat market specialist.





Yes The skipper's cabin is very large, much larger than average



Yes The winches have been set further back, and are now within the helmsman's reach

YES & NOT

No boat is perfect, and each one is the result of a compromise. A journalist's task is to enable the reader to understand this compromise.



NOT With the self-tacking jib and the furling main sail, you need at least 12 knots of wind to sail well



NOT The single lever placed at the bottom makes manoeuvring uncomfortable



Yes All the cabins feature very large wardrobes.



Yes The forward chine gives much more space inside and outside



Yes The inflatable liferaft stowed under the table is a noteworthy safety element



Yes The Pullman cabin is very large and comfortable



NOT Roll-bar supports are unsightly though comfortable to hold on to



NOT The boom is very high, so it would be difficult to handle a battened mainsail and lazy bag

Layout



3 cabins e 2 heads



3 cabins e 3 heads



4 cabins e 4 heads



5 cabins e 3 heads



4 cabins e 2 heads

Technical data

L.O.A.	15,94 m	52,29	ft
Beam	4,80 m	15,74	ft
Draft	2,36 m	7,74	ft
Displacement	13.930 kg	30,710	lbs
Cabins	5/4	5/4	
Heads	2/4	2/4	
Fresh water	440 lt	116,23	US.gal.
Fuel tank	200 lt	52,83	US gal.
Engine	80 hp	80	hp
Sail area	91 mq	979,51	sq/ft
Design	B.R./Nauta		
Price	291.000 €		
Ce certificate	A13/B14/C16		

The competition



Hanse 508

L.O.A.	15,55 m	51,0 ft
Beam.	4,75 m	15,5 ft
Displ.	15.100 kg	33,289 lbs
Sail-area.	118 mq	1,270 sq/ft
Engine	80 hp	80 hp
Draft	2,40 m	7,8 ft
Price	274.900€	
Design	Vrolijk	



Bavaria 50

L.O.A.	15,99 m	52,2 ft
Beam.	5,05 m	16,5 ft
Displ.	15.490 kg	34,149 lbs
Sail-area.	135 mq	1,453 sq/ft
Engine	80 hp	80 hp
Draft	2,30	7,4 ft
Price	284.000€	
Design	Cossutti	



Dufour 530

L.O.A.	16,35	53,6 ft
Beam.	4,99	16,3 ft
Displ.	17.774	39,184 lbs
Sail-area.	119 mq	1,280 sq/ft
Engine	75 hp	80 hp
Draft	2,3 m	7,4 ft
Price	300.000€	
Design	Felci	

Prices are exclusive of VAT

Importer



NSS charter
<https://www.nsscharter.com/>



Beneteau trials bases

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