

# SEACHANGE

Race off into the sunset, around Australia, to Tasmania and across the Tasman in this Moody 45 Deck Saloon with the works. **DAVID LOCKWOOD** speaks with the footloose owner about his exciting plans



With the wind at your tail or on a reach, you can clock 80nm a day and really get places



**D**ennis McDonald is an avid Sydney sailor who has owned six yachts since 1984. He has sailed in the UK, raced around the Isle of Wight, and the Med', and completed a Hobart. He has owned production yachts, a slippery Bashford 41, and a yet-faster Farr 40 that cost \$75,000-plus to campaign in a year. Then he said enough and bought a Hanse 430e.

The 430e yacht served him well cruising two-up with his partner, a self-tacker and gennaker,

carrying 150lt of fuel and 300lt of water, as far afield as Port Stephens 80nm to the north. But, as is wont to happen when you are having fun at sea, thoughts turned to greater challenges, namely the planned Around Australia Ocean Race and Rally which, for reasons including onerous safety requirements and sponsorship issues, hasn't got off the ground.

Meantime, McDonald had decided the 430e wasn't ideal for the aforesaid race and, with sponsorship from Moody

importers Windcraft, he ordered a 45 Deck Saloon (DS) with the works to sail around the country. That the race is no more doesn't really matter, he says, as he plans to cruise in company with other yachts (possible 30 to 40) come July. And McDonald will tell you he absolutely has the right yacht for extended five-star fast cruising and coastal racing.

Herein is the crux of this story: a feature on a fleet-footed Moody 45DS that, in many ways, rivals a modern luxury cruiser for comforts. By name and nature, the yacht is

indeed *One Step Ahead*. With the wind at your tail or on a reach, you can clock 80nm a day and really get places. All the while you won't be doing it tough on deck, but pressing a few buttons for winches, chartplotters and autopilots reclining in the shade.

Then, when you get to your ultimate destination, there are all the comforts of home. Add some fresh local seafood and a glass of wine and we were bitten. The Moody 45DS no.39 pictured hereabouts, the last one built with an epoxy hull, only served

to reinforce what we said during our glowing test of 45 no.1 back in August 2008. "The 45 Deck Saloon is my yacht of the year, perhaps the past decade, maybe the best production cruiser I've set foot aboard," I wrote then.

Coincidentally, the new owners of that first Moody 45DS known as *Cool Change* have sold their house, moved aboard, and are now gearing to sail around the world. This follows Windcraft proprietor Peter Hrones' 6500nm covering the whole of the east coast of Australia in a cruising

Opposite below: Owner Dennis McDonald (left) at the helm of his new pride and joy shows editor David Lockwood the ropes. Opposite above: Windcraft built the radar targa arch that also doubles as a bimini. Nice, wide pushpit seats (above) are a highlight, and still afford good vision forward.

odyssey in a year with his family aboard this same yacht.

### PERFORMANCE PARAMETERS

Meanwhile, McDonald revels in the friendly rivalry with those new owners of Moody 45DS no.1,

“I don’t like slow boating,” McDonald says, reminding of his ocean racing and Farr 40 past



Forget the go-slow, the Moody 45DS has speed to burn making her a racing yachties ideal cruiser. Cabin top extensions (below left) house the sailing instruments either side. Separate track (bottom left) on the side of the stick helps run up the trysail in no time. For docking and motoring there are bow and sternthrustrer toggles alongside the electronic engine controls.

adding more and more gear to his yacht to create the ultimate shorthanded cruising conveyance. The Yanmar engine is the 110hp model for 8.7kts motor speed, which is hull speed, there’s a Code O asymmetrical gennecker that’s a two-man hoist for tight reaching, and a storm trysail on a separate track for heavy weather.

As for efficiency, at 2200rpm the Yanmar draws 4.1lt/h from the 600lt tank for 7.5kts. Meanwhile, the full sail wardrobe includes Code 0, 1 for light airs, 2 for medium conditions, a storm jib and trysail and the fully battened main with lazy jacks for ease of handling. The stick and sail plan is otherwise standard, but the halyards were replaced with Dyneema to minimise stretching. But we’ll get to the options, which

is where McDonald says the fun really begins.

“I’ve got four goals in mind,” says McDonald. “To sail to Lord Howe [as a shakedown], cruise the west coast of Tasmania, to sail around New Zealand, and sail around Australia.” But there are no plans to do it tough, wrestle with sails, or loll about in a cruising clunker that doesn’t sail well.

Despite all the good gear, the Moody 45DS has proven swift. The yacht displaces 13,500kg, hits 7.1kts at 120° in the cruising groove with 15kts of wind, although Hrones hit 14.1kts during his travels. On a reach, with the main and jib flying, you can expect 9.2kts with 15 to 20kts true wind, but she’ll also go to windward and 38° to 40° doing 7

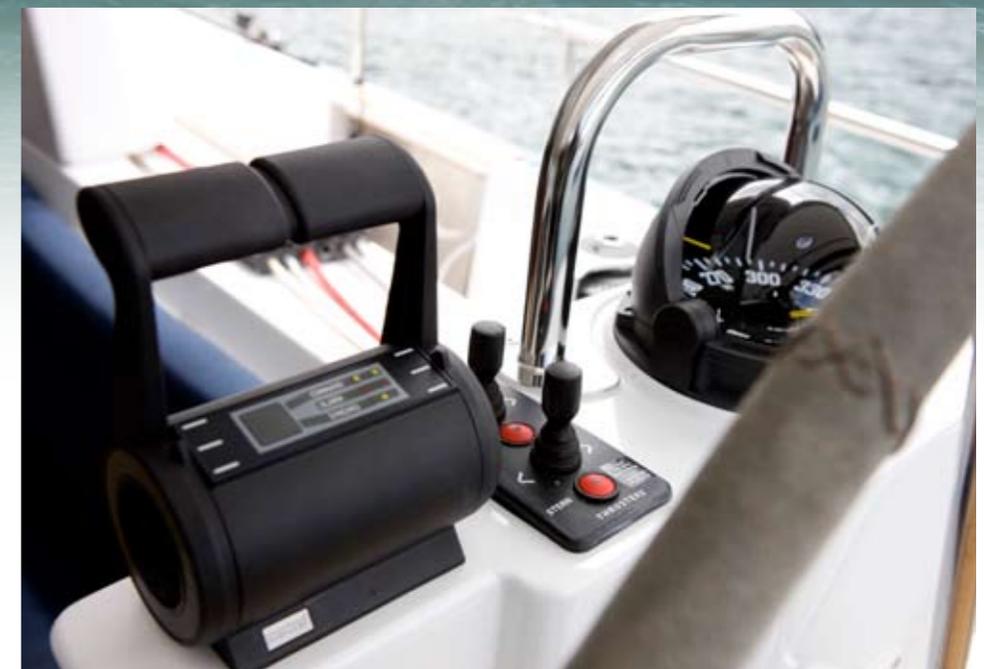
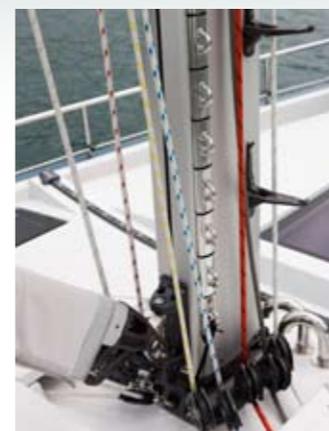
to 7.2kts in 12 to 15kts true.

The high-volume Moody 45DS’s performance stems in part from the fact that, like all good yachts, she has a long waterline length of almost 43ft of her 45ft LOA. She has a big-boat feel, too, with balanced rack-and-pinion steering, and twin rudders. I also note 7.5kts at 45° to 50° as we head down Pittwater, 8.7kts as we bare away before a gybe, and 7.6kts at 60°, all in 10 to 12kts true wind.

“I don’t like slow boating,” McDonald says, reminding of his ocean racing and Farr 40 past.

### EYES AND EARS

As with any good cruising boat, there are four main requirements: water, fuel, power and refrigeration. To which you





**[SNAPSHOT]**

**Moody 45DS – Five-star cruising**

Trade-a-Boat has been wowed by the Moody 45DS since the moment we first set foot aboard in 2008 on the very first model. Since then, more than 40 of the \$800,000-plus Deck Saloon yachts from the pen of English designer Bill Dixon have been built, bought and sold. Of course, German yard Hanse owns Moody these days and that's proven a good thing. With fresh backing, Dixon has been able to realise his designer dreams.

Indeed, the Moody 45DS floats our boat because of its design nous. The big yacht ticks all the boxes for comfort and style, is a wonderful indoor/outdoor liveaboard, while the pilothouse lets you steer and tack indoors. There's a clever self-stow anchor, full bulwarks for child and crew safety, foldout boarding steps and swimplatform, and the big cockpit can seat 12 in the shade.

The beautiful saloon has panorama windows and an aft galley, with all the mod cons including generator and air-con. Down below there's a spacious three-cabin layout. In one of the two upmarket bathrooms you'll find a separate owner's shower stall.

Forget about doing it tough, this is the future of comfort yachting. Yet despite everything including the kitchen sinks, she's surprisingly agile for such a big yacht, even in light to moderate airs. And there's great local support for what is a famous badge on the world sailing stage. Finally, she only heels so far and, to that end, offers almost cat-like stability coveted by many sailing families.

Right (clockwise from bottom left): Lockwood, Windcraft owner Peter Hrones, Windcraft's Moody man Bob Vinks and McDonald sit back for some al fresco dining at the accommodating cockpit table. Photos below right (clockwise from left): Clever use of cabinetry spread the appliances in non-galley areas; rosemary is a tough coastal herb; Flush-fitting switches and panels are neatly grouped for all onboard electrics; One Step Ahead's saloon nav station.

can add today's demands for long-range communications. To this end, the Moody has a Raymarine fixed VHF and two Icom handhelds, a FleetBroadband 150 satphone from Inmarsat, plus a handheld Thuraya satphone, sat and digi TV with Foxtel ("for the rugby"), Ericsson W35 Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. With this spread of comms and capability, McDonald says he's covered around Australia and doesn't need long-range HF radio.

Speaking of electronics, there is also Raymarine HD radar, AIS transmitters and receivers, an E120 with sonar in the cockpit and E90 at the nav station, an autopilot with waterproof remote for roaming, and Vetus electronic shifts at three separate stations as the engine controls. Unlike some so-called Deck Saloon yachts, the Moody 45DS can actually be sailed and motored from its upper saloon when the going gets rough or, conversely, you want to cruise on a calm day back indoors with the air-con running. Spiffing.

The custom stainless steel work was completed in-house by Windcraft and to an impressive standard, including radar targa arch, an integrated bimini, and binnacle box for the E120. Suffice to say, the yacht has a seriously salty feel, a combination of utility and intent, a lot of gear, but with uncluttered decks. Indoors, there are all the comforts of home.

On the appliance front we noted Panasonic microwave oven, Dometic dishwasher, Miele washer/dryer (aft of the engine room), and Spectra Newport 400 watermaker with 70lt/h capacity. The Panda 6kVa factory-installed generator also takes care of the air-conditioning. But with a 3500W Victron inverter, you can run the fridges and AV on silent ship.

A nice touch, the (cast-alloy) Baby Weber barbecue — it's



**FEATURE**



Beaming owner Dennis McDonald reckons he has the right yacht to take on the tough bluewater expeditions he has planned for the Moody 45DS.

Buoys (inflatable dan buoys), handheld VHF radios, a full blown medical kit, while the crew has SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) and first-aid qualifications. Then come the spares, back-up anchoring gear, and the tome of manuals (also stored digitally) accessible at short notice. See what we mean by geared up to sail around Australia.

Yet the yacht comes standard with teak decks, stainless steel anchor chain and folding anchor system, electric winches, bowthrusters, cockpit cushions and more. Among the factory options were the sternthruster and generator. All told, cruise or race-around-Australia ready, the Moody 45DS *One Step Ahead* cost about \$950,000. That's impressive when you compare the inventory with a similarly loaded \$1 million cruiser like a Riviera 43 or Maritimo 440. That said, you can still buy a pretty handy Moody 45DS for about \$800,000 sail away.

As it was, we merely reached down Pittwater, pulled up a mooring, and shot the breeze with McDonald, Hrones and crew. By any measure, it was a quasi cruise. But with lunch in the shade under the clever rollout cockpit canopy, and nice comfortable seats, the Moody 45DS impressed again. And we still haven't tested the beds in the three-cabin and two-bathroom layout.

"It's like a race-bred 70m<sup>2</sup> apartment," McDonald says as we stroll the broad walkaround decks with solid bulwarks and stainless steel rails, waltz through the capacious cockpit with its table capable of seating six in comfort, and then lounge in the deck saloon for coffee from the Nespresso machine.

"We cruise fast, cruise in comfort, and in this Deck Saloon I can cruise with just my partner. There is no demarcation because something is too heavy. And there's someone to do the food along the way," he chuckles. Throwing new branches, even the rosemary in the little herb pot behind the window fronting the galley seems happy aboard. ⚓

big enough to roast a whole chicken — sits in a custom-made stainless steel tray on the cockpit table and is fed by its own 4kg gas bottle. An extra two 8kg gas bottles power the gimballed gas stove/oven/grill indoors. Oh, and there are handholds everywhere.

As for refrigeration, the standard 130lt top-and-bottom number plus a freezer drawer and cockpit drinks fridge will suffice, says McDonald, because "the longest time between ports is three weeks". And he's getting a Cryovac unit and a 12kg-per-day icemaker...

**TOP END TINNY**  
Thankfully, the Moody 45DS isn't short on storage space. In the stern garage is a 3.1m Avon RIB with 9.8hp Tohatsu outboard but a 3.7m tinnie was to be fitted, we're told, and on custom stainless steel davits. Apparently, one needs a tinnie in Top End croc country. At the pointy end was a lightweight (29kg) Ocean Safety six-person liferaft in a carbon-fibre box. Speaking of safety, there were personal and boat EPIRBs, Jon

**HIGHS**

- › Ticks the boxes for comfort and style
- › A wonderful indoor/outdoor liveaboard
- › Internal pilothouse lets you steer and tack from indoors
- › Clever self-stow anchor
- › Full bulwarks for safety
- › Smart foldout boarding steps and swimplatform
- › Cockpit can seat 12
- › Beautiful saloon with panorama windows and aft galley
- › All the mod cons including generator and air-con
- › Spacious three-cabin layout
- › Two upmarket bathrooms and a separate shower stall
- › The future of yachting, with great design lines
- › She's surprisingly agile for such a big yacht in light to moderate airs
- › Great local support
- › Famous badge on the world stage

**LOWS**

- › Big-ticket item and no established re-sale market, yet
- › You will need a wide pen outside your house to berth this baby, though not as wide as a cat
- › Two-pack painted hull shows the scrapes
- › A handrail in the saloon roof would be, err, handy
- › Not everyone will like the modern lines

**Facts & figures**

MOODY 45DS 'ONE STEP AHEAD'

OPTIONS FITTED

Upgraded 110hp engine, painted hull, electric cockpit roof, three-position electronic Vetus engine controls, Panda 6kVa generator, Victron 3500W inverter, battery upgrade, bow and stern thrusters, electric Tecma head, air-con, Raymarine electronics package, sat comms including FleetBroadband 150 from Inmarsat, satphone, sat and digi TV with Foxtel, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, plus custom stainless steel work completed in-house by Windcraft, Panasonic microwave oven, Dometic dishwasher, Miele washer/dryer (aft of the engineroom), and Spectra Newport 400 watermaker with 70lt/h capacity. Baby Weber fed by a 4kg gas bottle, extra two 8kg gas bottles for the gimballed gas stove/oven/grill, Cryovac unit and a 12kg-per-day icemaker. In the stern garage is a 3.1m Avon RIB with 9.8hp Tohatsu outboard but a 3.7m tinnie was to be fitted on custom stainless steel davits. At the pointy end is a lightweight 29kg Ocean Safety liferaft in a carbon-fibre box. There were also personal and boat EPIRBs, Jon Buoys (inflatable dan buoys), handheld VHF radios, a full blown medical kit, while the crew have SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) and first-aid qualifications. Then come the spares, back-up anchoring gear, and the tome of manuals accessible at short notice.

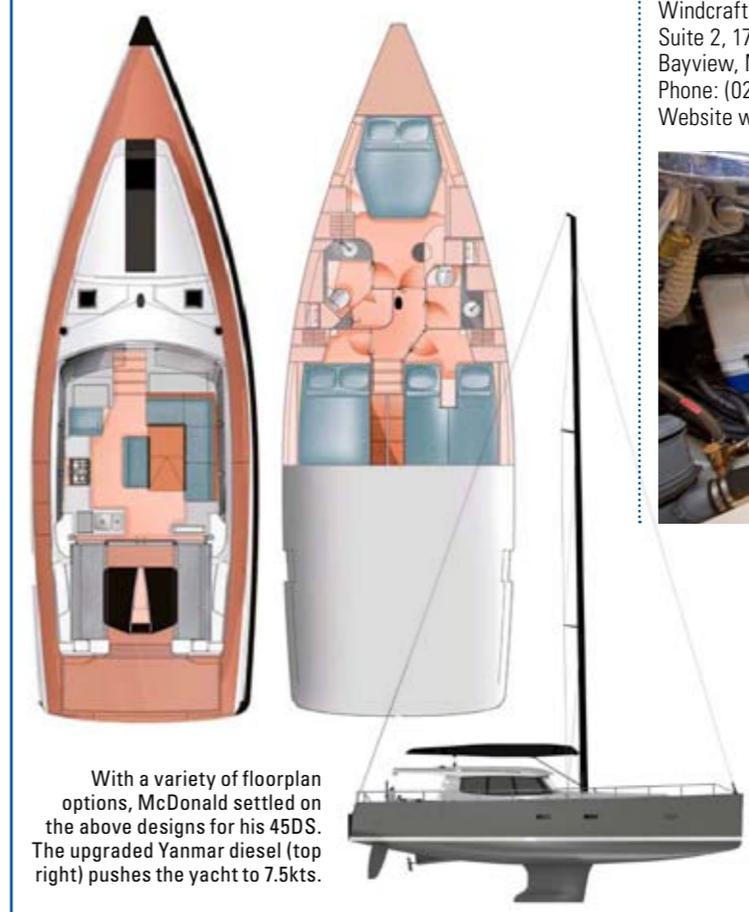
PRICE AS TESTED

Final pricing of the Moody 45DS with all the options for liveaboard long-haul ocean racing and cruising was about **\$950,000**

PRICED FROM

You can still buy a Moody 45DS for about **\$800,000** sail-away

LAYOUT



With a variety of floorplan options, McDonald settled on the above designs for his 45DS. The upgraded Yanmar diesel (top right) pushes the yacht to 7.5kts.

GENERAL

**MATERIAL:** Composite vacuum-bagged hull using SP Systems epoxy  
**TYPE:** Monohull  
**HULL LENGTH:** 13.72m  
**WATERLINE LENGTH:** 12.93m  
**BEAM:** 4.57m  
**DRAFT:** 1.99m (standard deep-draft)  
**DISPLACEMENT:** 13,600kg (dry)  
**BALLAST:** 4300kg (lead)

CAPACITIES

**BERTHS:** 6 +1  
**FUEL:** 600lt  
**WATER:** 800lt  
**FRIDGE:** 130lt

ENGINE

**MAKE/MODEL:** Yanmar 4JH4TXI  
**TYPE:** Four-cylinder diesel inboard  
**RATED HP:** 110  
**DRIVE:** Shaft  
**PROP:** Folding Gori

SAIL AREA

**TOTAL:** 114.5m<sup>2</sup>  
**I:** 18.5m<sup>2</sup>  
**J:** 5.22m<sup>2</sup>  
**P:** 18.4m<sup>2</sup>  
**E:** 6m<sup>2</sup>

IMPORTED AND SUPPLIED BY

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