



# 1972 Dufour Arpege 30

By Paul Trammell

Cover: Sobrius anchored in the Bahamas.

The Dufour Arpege is a masthead sloop designed by Michel Dufour and built by Dufour Yachts in La Rochelle, France. The Arpege was considered innovative for its day and was a very successful sailboat that popularized the Dufour brand. Over 1500 were built between 1966 and 1976. The Arpege is today known as a classic and is universally loved by its owners. There is an active owners group and an annual Arpege regatta in La Rochelle, France. It is difficult to find anything negative said about this boat, and this was one reason why it ended up on my list, and in my hands.

These were built as ocean-going performance cruisers and have a reputation for being sturdy and able to handle rough seas. But it is not a heavy and slow boat. The Arpege performs well and mine will sail in barely a breath of wind. I was told that mine has already crossed the Atlantic three times, and I hope to add to this number.

The keel is a cast-iron fin with an aft-pointing bulb on the bottom, fit into a stub and is bolted to the hull with 12 bolts. The rudder is hung on a thin skeg and is steered with a tiller.

The draft is 4' 7.25", the beam is just under 10 feet, and the displacement is 7700 pounds. Sail area to displacement is 15.72, and displacement to length is 323. The boats were originally powered by a Volvo diesel engine, but mine has a Yanmar IGM10. With this, I can motor at a maximum of 5 knots in flat water, but 3-4 knots is more typical.

The length overall is 30 feet and the waterline is 22 feet. At this waterline the theoretical hull speed is 6.28 knots. However, *Sobrius*, my 1972 Arpege, regularly sustains 6.5 knots and even hits 7 sometimes. With her overhangs, the waterline obviously increases as she heels.

The reverse-wineglass transom is pinched in and thus the cockpit is narrow, ideal for offshore sailing. Two large drains send water back into the sea via hoses clamped to fiberglass tubes that terminate above the waterline. The rudder-shaft also terminates above the waterline. The cockpit benches are about 6.5 feet, just long and wide enough for most people to lie down in. However, the transom is mounted on the benches, just aft of the center of the cockpit, yet recessed so its top is flush with the bench seats. The two winches are just within reach while holding onto the tiller.

I use a Pelagic autopilot to steer when I am doing something else, like sleeping. The Pelagic is a great unit and consists of three components: the actuator, the power head and

the control unit. The actuator attaches via a pin to a mount that I built from right-angle steel bar and bolted to the cockpit rail. The power head is bolted to the bulkhead inside the cabin, and the control head is mounted in the main bulkhead with the back of the unit inside the cabin and the face on the outside. The Pelagic has proven to be reliable and capable of steering a straighter line than I can in all of the conditions I've yet experienced.

I installed Garhauer adjustable jib cars, which are a pleasure to use. Otherwise, the skipper must go to the leeward rail to adjust the cars, which is inconvenient enough to make one overlook an improperly-trimmed jib.

Slab reefing is performed at the mast, as is raising the sails via winches on both sides of the mast. An anchor locker with two small drains is conveniently shaped to hold the CQR that came with *Sobrius*, but it also perfectly holds my new Vulcan 15, along with 50 feet of 5/16" G4 chain and 300 feet of 1/2" line, with much room to spare. The Vulcan is a pleasure to use and seems to hold the bottom regardless of its composition.

The mast is supported by dual backstays, a headstay, cap shrouds, forward lowers and aft lowers. The cap



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shrouds and lowers terminate at chainplates bolted to the sides of the coach roof. Inside, solid rod extenders transfer the loads of the cap shrouds and the forward lowers to the hull, and the forward bulkhead, respectively. The interior is

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## BOATOWNER'S BOAT REVIEW



Slab reefing is performed at the mast, as is raising the sails via winches on both sides of the mast.

built with a fiberglass liner bonded to the hull, which is about a half inch thick.

Bluewater sailing was obviously on Michel Dufour's mind when he designed the Arpege. A full navigation table sits in front of the starboard quarter berth, opposite the galley. The beam of 9.92 feet is held in the center of the boat, and the inside is quite roomy for a 30-footer. Two quarter-berths lie under the cockpit, two settees serve as berths and two skinny sea-berths lie above the settees. There is no V-berth, but rather a place for sail storage up forward. All six of the berths have storage below. Forward of the salon is a head to starboard and a hanging locker with shelves to port. More storage exists in lockers above the quarter berths and aft of the galley. Below the navigation table, which opens for chart storage, is a cooler. I keep three 55 amp-hour AGM batteries below the starboard quarter berth.

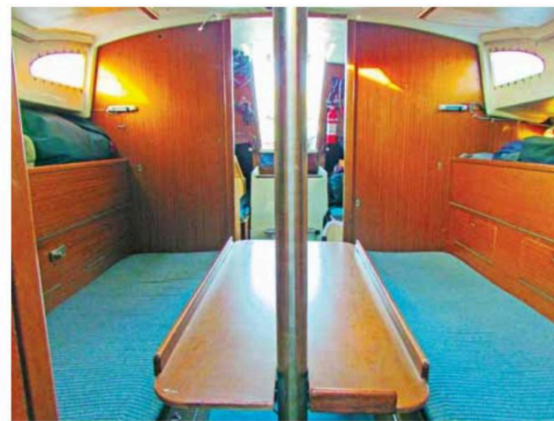
To port is a small galley with a two-burner alcohol stove and a very small, yet double, sink. Two tables are stored

above the quarter berths, one that fits aft of the galley, and one for the center of the salon.

For additional safety, I bolted a stout pad eye to the cockpit floor and two on the bulkhead on each side of the companionway. These two serve as attachment points for jack lines (flat nylon straps) which run to the bow on either side of the mast. At the bow they are attached to stainless-steel cleats. I clip a tether to these whenever I leave the cockpit. I clip onto the pad eye on the floor while in the cockpit. As a singlehander, staying with the boat is the essence of survival.

The manual bilge pump that came with *Sobrius* discharges into the cockpit, which I am okay with. But the automatic bilge pump was piped into the same hose as the manual bilge pump, and this I did not think was a good idea. I replaced the pump with a larger unit (1100 gallons per hour) and installed a new hose that runs all the way to the stern via the port side, turns 90 degrees inside the stern locker, and empties out a thru-hull fitting I installed on the starboard side, well above the waterline. This way, back-siphoning is nearly impossible (I hope).

My Dufour Arpege is a fun boat to sail, and so far she has been able to perform well in all the conditions in which I've put her. I recently sailed her to The Bahamas from Jacksonville, FL, offshore the whole way and landing in Eleuthera at Spanish Wells. Along the way, we encountered a squall in the Gulf Stream (at night), during which I could not see, and simply pinched into the wind until the squall



The beam of 9.92 feet is held in the center of the boat, and the inside is quite roomy for a 30-footer. Two skinny sea-berths lie above the settees.

passed. The next two days, and many other days sailing between the islands, were in 4- to 6-foot seas. *Sobrius* occasionally shipped water across the deck, some of which found its way inside, setting off the automatic bilge pump at least twice. But she sailed in these conditions just fine and was actually quite fun to helm across the waves. On the way home from Miami, offshore, we encountered a day of 20-25 knots and 5- to 8-foot seas. This was a rough day, but far from unmanageable. We sailed with one reef

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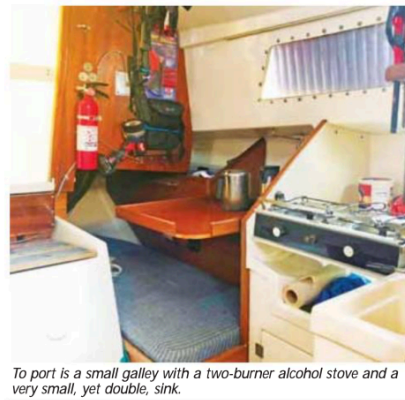


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To port is a small galley with a two-burner alcohol stove and a very small, yet double, sink.

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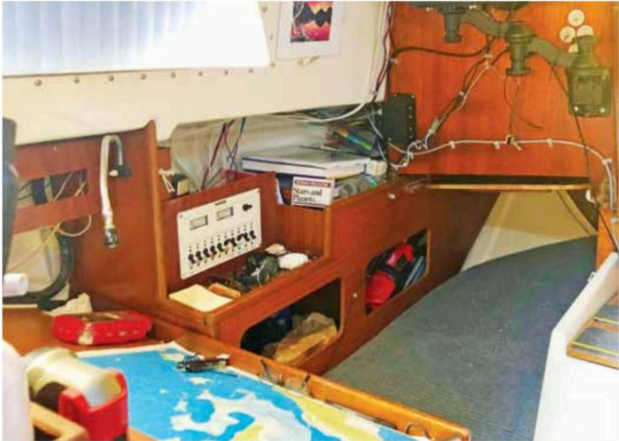
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## BOATOWNER'S BOAT REVIEW



A full navigation table sits in front of the starboard quarter berth, opposite the galley.

and a small working jib and made 5-6 knots.

The strongest winds I have yet sailed her in were 30-35 knots, and with two reefs in the main and the storm jib, we sailed comfortably at 5-6 knots. However, this was in protected water in the lee of an island.

*Sobrius* tracks well enough that I can tie off the tiller with a bungee while on a close reach and leave the helm. I've even slept for 20 minutes while she steered herself like this. I've also rigged sheet-to-tiller successfully with a storm jib, tacked to a deadeye aft of the anchor locker and raised with the spinnaker halyard. The sheet is run through a block on the windward rail, then through another block abeam the tiller, and is tied to the tiller. A shock cord on the lee-

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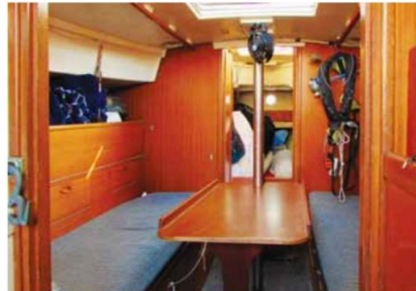
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There is no V-berth, but rather a place for sail storage up forward. All six of the berths have storage below. Forward of the salon is a head to starboard and a hanging locker with shelves to port.

ward side balances the tiller. The setup for off the wind involves poling out the storm jib opposite the larger jib.

Overall, the Arpege is a sturdy, simple and fun-to-sail bluewater cruiser with a fine pedigree. Making the Arpege even more attractive is the fact that they are very inexpensive. Right now on [Yachtworld.com](http://Yachtworld.com), four are listed, priced between \$6,645 and \$23,385. Now go sailing!

*Paul Trammell is the author of Becoming a Sailor, a Singlehand Sailing Adventure and Journey to the Ragged Islands, a Singlehand Sailing Adventure. Both are available at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and [Kobo.com](http://Kobo.com).*