

# TESTED: SAFFIER SE 37

HOW DOES THE BOLD COCKPIT LAYOUT OF THIS DAZZLING NEW 'LOUNGE' DAYSAILER DESIGN WORK?

**L**ooking for a pair of trainers for fashion, road and cross-country running? They don't exist. Or a bilge keeler that will take to the ground, sleep eight and go to windward like a witch? No chance. We have to make compromises when buying new products. If we expect them to do all things we end up with something only partially fit for our needs.

Fully appreciating how you spend your time afloat is crucial in determining the type of boat that will best suit your needs. Saffier has cornered the

daysailing market with its attractive, easy-to-handle and well-built small yachts, perfectly fit for their purpose.

This new SE 37 Lounge, a veritable supercar of the sea, is an uncompromising luxury daysailer. By that I mean it is not pretending to do all things for all sailors. There are no cabins and there is no accommodation abaft the companionway. It is purely and simply a daysailer, and it offers space, comfort and performance in an innovative design that remains easy for one person to sail fast. >

## FACTS

Test editor **TOBY HODGES**

- ▶ **Where we tested:** IJmuiden, The Netherlands.
- ▶ **Wind:** 6-18 knots offshore breeze.
- ▶ **Model:** number one, with laminate sails and self-tacking jib, carbon mast and bowsprit.

Photos by Bertel Kolthof



Feel on the helm is akin to that of a compact sports yacht despite forward position



- 1 The optional 1m fixed bowsprit with textile dolphin striker sports a gennaker furler. There is also an option for an anchor roller that rotates out of the anchor locker.
- 2 Two reversible winches manage all sailing functions, including the German mainsheet, which is led under deck aft from the boom along with the running rigging.
- 3 The powder-coated black stainless steel stanchions and Dyneema lifelines combine form and function.
- 4 The backstay is on a cascade system and led neatly under deck.
- 5 The traveller is mounted across the aft deck, controlled via cam cleats at the helm (although sunbed cushions need to be removed for this).

When the Hennevanger brothers began to branch out their father's IJmuiden-based boatbuilding business to include pretty little dayboats in the 1990s, little could they have imagined that, by 2018, they would be the world's biggest daysailer brand and that they'd be launching a 37ft luxury model.

Despite its rise in popularity, Saffier still only expected to sell a couple of SE 37s a year – yet six have already been sold since its January show debut.

For a real appreciation of the SE 37 you need to see how it is built, the processes, investment and fresh mentality the yard has put in place to ensure quality control. More on that later – first, I was itching to find out if the performance matched the flashy, novel design.

### What's a Lounge?

Have you spotted the design irregularity? The central position of the twin wheels is a first at this size and suggests this is a boat that is all about the enjoyment on the helm. To my eye, using a combination of a fixed windscreen with the wheels

just behind it also gives the Saffier an exciting, sporty roadster look.

The SE 37 has much more of a performance shape than past Saffier models, with a particularly flat run to its aft sections. The beam is carried all the way aft to help generate enormous cockpit space. It's called a 'Lounge' because a 'cockpit' is not the right word for an area this large and free of lines, says Dennis Hennevanger.

Hennevanger's confidence in his boats is infectious. He is always ready and willing to go sailing and will take his boats out in anything, especially in the high winds and waves typically found around the entrance to IJmuiden.

In 2014, during European Yacht of the Year trials in Italy, the SE 33 was the only boat to leave the harbour in big breeze and swell, despite being among a fleet of much larger cruising yachts. The gennaker still went up and although we had a lively time trying to clock top speeds, it was yet another demonstration of the robust build quality and ease of sailing a Saffier.

**Classy and uncluttered – Saffier SE 37 is great fun to sail in a breeze**



### A quick blast

Hennevanger is an action man, Mr Energetic. He had cast off and started hoisting the main in the marina before I'd had a chance to finish stowing my bag below. It was the start of a commanding demonstration of how quick and easy it is to take these boats out for a short spin.

Our haste to get into open water was rewarded with ideal sailing conditions to suit this type of boat, with flat water and 8-16 knots of offshore breeze for our morning sail. And there was even some swell around the harbour entrance, enough to feel the boat's motion going into the waves, and to help us surf into double figures.

Saffiers have always been easy to sail solo, but would that still be the case at this size, I wondered?

Four discreet buttons on the coamings control the two reversible Harken winches. Together with a bank of six clutches each side, this makes it simple to control the boat single-handedly from the helm – once you have figured out which button does what and which winch

best suits the main and jib sheets. It takes a bit of getting used to, but would soon become second nature.

Sailing from amidships on this size of boat is unusual. The only other boats steered from this far forward are keelboats with tiller extensions, centre-cockpit cruisers and multihulls. Yet this wheel-driven performance yacht cannot be compared to any of those. Despite the length of steering connection needed, it still provides fingertip response. The sensation on the helm is more akin to sailing a compact sports yacht, with only 20ft or so of boat in view ahead. I was quickly hooked.

During our first fetch towards the long stretch of beach south of IJmuiden, we clocked 8.5-9 knots in 10 knots true using the Code 0 furling gennaker. When the breeze picked up another few knots, this increased to a very respectable 9.5 knots.

The ease with which sails can be changed encourages you to do so. As we sailed up and down past the lines of sand dunes, we frequently swapped gennaker for jib and vice versa. In just 30 seconds,

Hennevanger had doused the jib and launched the kite solo. I soon understood how he had already beaten a fully crewed First 40 team during Wednesday evening racing while sailing the SE 37 solo (which must feel pretty cool)!

Manoeuvres rarely called for anything other than a line to be clutched-off and another to be set around a winch. One downside of the helm position is that you can't see the main properly when sitting to leeward. I also think the tail locker openings should be larger, or a second locker be made each side so the tail ends can be divided neatly. On a boat of this aesthetic calibre, there is no place for an untidy mess.

### Addictive helming

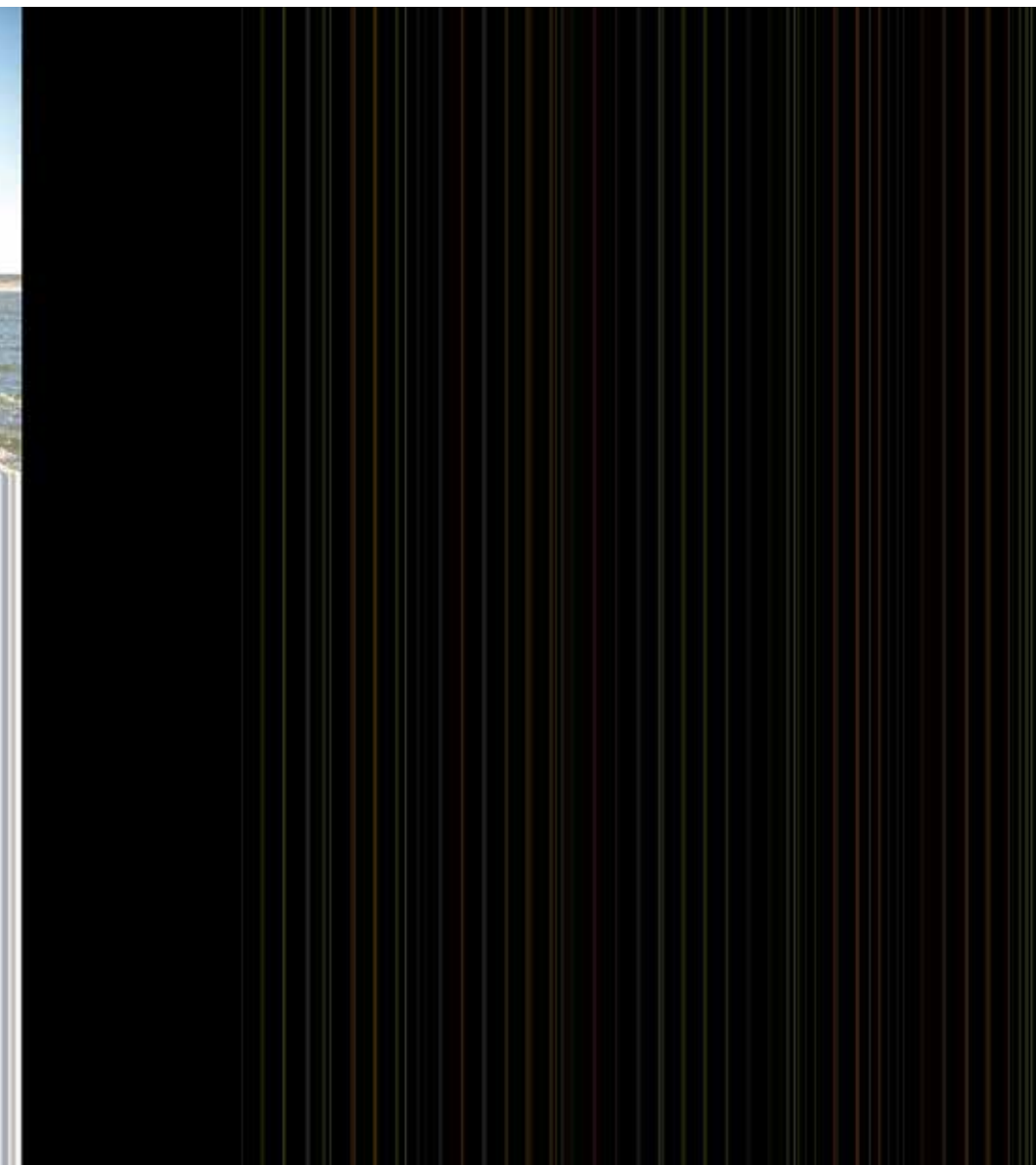
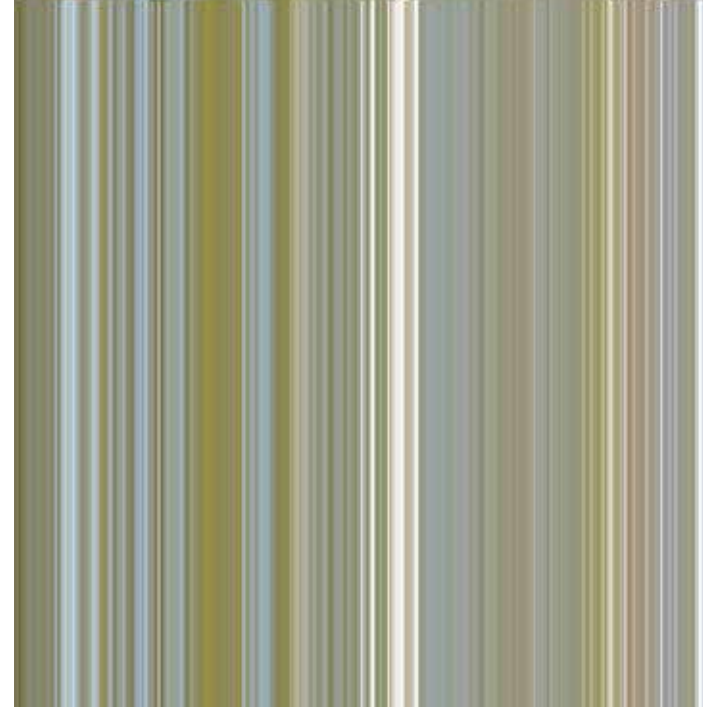
The SE 37 really is a fun boat to sail in both directions.

We averaged 7 knots upwind at around 35°, half a knot more when freed off a little in the puffs. The self-tacking jib made short-tacking back into harbour a delight. Sailing against the tide, we 'slam dunked' it through the tacks to ensure



Above: under-deck sheets exit directly in front of clutches and winch  
Left: adjustable helm foot brace hinges up from the cockpit sole

Right: it's all about entertaining – a large folding table and the 40lt cockpit fridge



the mainsail's roach crossed the backstay. The wind switched to a sea breeze in the afternoon, which allowed for some memorable gennaker rides going with a slight swell.

It was notable how much difference the movement of our weight made. We had been sitting at 9.5 knots, but when the 6ft 2in Hennevanger moved from the aft sunbed to the rail, speed rose regularly over 10 knots, with surfs up to 10.9 knots in around 12 knots true.

Throughout all the manoeuvres the Saffier felt sporty and stiff. Following early sea trials, Hennevanger modified the keel, reducing the ballast and rudder profile because he felt the boat was too stiff. It can still carry a serious amount of canvas however, including a gennaker up to 115m<sup>2</sup> (our Code 0 was 90m<sup>2</sup>).

I gybed the boat single-handed using only the reversible winches – taking it slowly through the gybe, while unwinding one and pulling in on the new working sheet. Together with one hand on the wheel and some close monitoring it really is a simple two-fingered operation – and

it's a technique Hennevanger swears is just as easy to carry out in 20+ knots.

The SE 37 is a boat that makes you reluctant to stop sailing. I happily hogged the helm, sailing right into the tight marina, before dropping the main and reversing 150m into the finger berth. My first day aboard and I'd gained absolute confidence in the boat and its handling.

### Lounge design

The space and comfort of the cockpit cannot be overstated – there is room enough for ten people at a time. The aft deck is a proper relaxation zone, a cushioned terrace on the water, completely clear of sailing systems. It's a real selling point for those looking to take family or friends out to enjoy the simple pleasure of being afloat.

The forward helm position means there is little need for walkthrough cockpit access while under sail, hence a fixed table is a sensible solution that provides a central brace for those seated on the benches. There are also relatively deep cockpit bench lockers, plus an

**Above left: retractable shower concealed under transom flap. Above: clean, uncluttered twin helm positions**

optional fridge drawer and grill below the benches. The side decks have hidden magnetic strips incorporated, which allow backrests to stay in place and be slid forward or aft to suit seated guests.

The shallow aft lockers give access to the steering gear, a Jefa system that uses a mix of rod, chain and wire. My worry was that the length of gear needed might lead to the type of disconnection in sensation typical of centre-cockpit boats. Thankfully, this was not the case with the SE 37.

A ten-year old Saffier 26 in the berth next to us was a testament to why all Saffier owners, or over 300 in the last decade, choose the optional Esthec composite decking – it still looked immaculate. A €25,000 upgrade on the SE 37 it does, however, get a little hot under bare feet.

There were around €100,000 of extras in total fitted on the test boat, including electric winches, carbon mast and laminate sails, which pushed the price up to a hefty €330,000.

That said, pricing is still 20-30% less

than Tofinou – for the same quality declares Hennevanger.

"I'm not saying we're cheap, but I do think it's fair pricing for what we give."

### Business class lounge

The extra-wide companionway helps connect inside and out, with little height difference between the two. The use of carbon reinforcement in the deck also allows Saffier to do away with a central bulkhead, resulting in one long open cabin space, or yet more 'lounge', forward of the companionway.

The tidy 'galley' is in keeping with the luxury daysailer approach, particularly the coffee area complete with slide-out espresso machine and individual pod holders. A double electric hob, drawer-fridge and shallow composite sink complete an area suitable for rustling up light lunches at anchor.

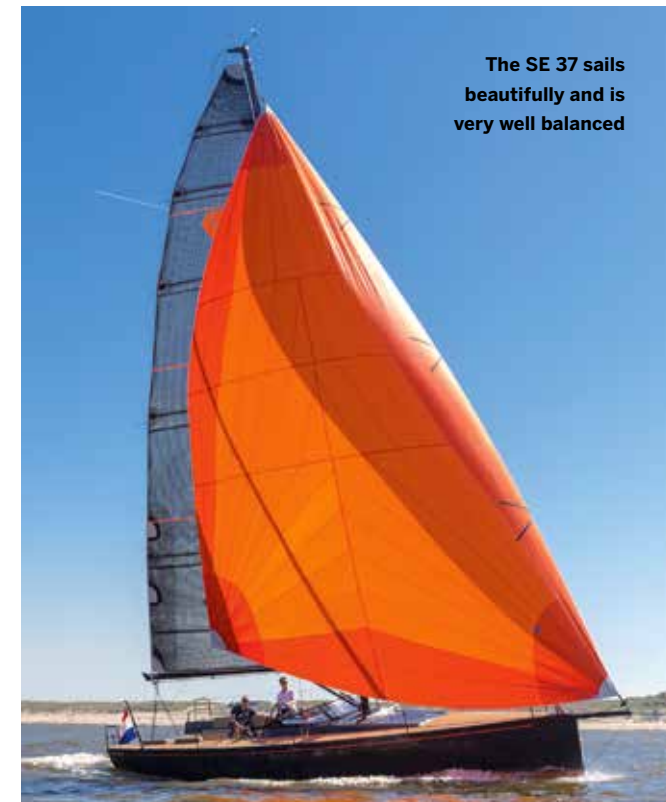
A small switchboard is mounted further outboard and I like the way you can perch on the top companionway step to access this or use the tap. The companionway steps can be removed for

access to a compact engine space and there is washboard stowage to one side.

A proper heads is a critical feature for a daysailer of this type to allow all aboard to enjoy full days afloat in comfort. The SE 37 has that, albeit without standing headroom, and also includes practical stowage and a wet hanging area aft.

The rest of the interior is largely given over to yet more lounge space. The leather-style stitching to the upholstery – the same waterproof material as in the cockpit – is an example of the detailing. The indirect lighting running behind the seating accentuates the length of the boat, while the light oak veneer complements the walnut soles and table.

It is seated headroom only in the saloon, but again this area is designed in a way that is bang-on trend for the purpose of the boat. This means that you could certainly spend a night or two aboard in pleasant weather. And an owner might just do that if they wanted to avoid heading back to their berth for the night. But the main purpose is much more likely to be a chill-out area, with



The SE 37 sails beautifully and is very well balanced



Light oak finishes and indirect lighting create an airy feel

a big vee-berth sofa area and TV on the forward bulkhead, for some downtime or a siesta while at anchor.

### Roots of quality

Saffier is owned and run by brothers Dennis and Dean Hennevanger. Their father Richard, who previously owned a yard in Australia in the 1960s, started the firm in IJmuiden to build fishing boats. The Saffier name was adopted in the mid-1990s after the launch of its first 6.5m daysailer.

With its projections of building 58 yachts this year, Saffier can now justly claim to be the world's largest daysailer brand. A hull delivery once a week calls for an efficient build process and Saffier's is one of the very best I have seen.

It stems from the Hennevangers' unwavering desire to do things properly. When he wanted to learn how to do quality vacuum infusion builds in 2011, Dennis Hennevanger built his own 36ft IRC race boat, *Nitro*. He employed a Kiwi expert to teach his key builders.

Hennevanger, a former Commodores' Cup skipper, has regularly and successfully competed in *Nitro* at IRC events and the vacuum infusion knowledge gained is employed on the larger Saffier models (SE 33 and SE 37).



**It may be 'just' a daysailer, but SE 37 includes a galley, plenty of storage space and a separate heads**



Since then the yard has trebled in size and become an impressively systematic set-up. It is a particularly clean, tidy and efficient workspace. A proper assembly line has been introduced, which also makes it intelligible for any potential owner who wants to see the processes involved in putting the boat together.

All lamination is now done at another site an hour inland. "We try to pre-fab as much as possible so there are not boats sitting around," Hennevanger explains. Preparing all the electrics/interiors before the hull arrives at the IJmuiden fit-out yard saves money and the quality is better and more consistent, he maintains.



The pre-fab hall contains rows and rows of shelving with everything ready to go for each boat, down to all metal and woodwork and even wiring looms pre-measured and cut. The result is, logically, a much more consistent quality. One person is used as a runner to fetch everything that is not to hand and any parts can be ordered from the pre-fab hall using a tablet on the wall.

Even the psychology of the workers is considered, with staff cleaning their areas first thing in the morning rather than last thing in the afternoon. "It's a different mentality, aimed at starting the day fresh," Hennevanger explains. ■



### Our verdict

The SE 37 is a real sports car of the sea, with the top-end looks and quality, and the luxury detailing you'd expect to find on a Bugatti or an Aston Martin. It's a properly modern daysailer that will offer a similar reward to the driver.

More than that, it's a yacht that is ideal for its purpose. Don't expect to go cruising for a week or eat meals with your family around the saloon

table. But for time-poor folk seeking a short blast of premium-quality sailing, or for couples or larger parties looking to maximise pure sailing pleasure in stylish comfort, this design is hard to beat. It's a reassuringly expensive toy that celebrates easy, delightful daysailing.

A playful, responsive yacht, the SE 37 quickly fills you with confidence. The more you sail it, the more you get it and the more you love it.

### Rivals

#### Tofinou T12

The go-to brand in daysailers for the past two decades, the T12 is elegant to look at and sail.

**Price ex VAT: €285,000.**  
[www.luxury-marine.com](http://www.luxury-marine.com)



#### Eagle 37

Utterly timeless new luxury Dutch daysailer that looks like a mini J Class yacht.

**Price ex VAT: €167,500.**  
[www.leonardoyachts.com](http://www.leonardoyachts.com)



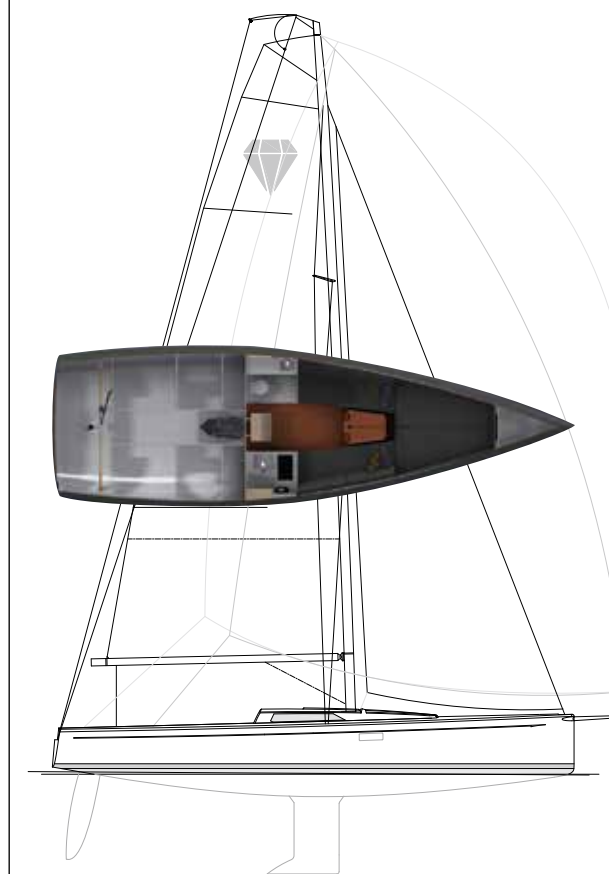
#### Wallynano

This MkII version marries sexy Italian styling with Dutch workmanship to extraordinary effect.

**Price ex VAT: €285,000.**  
[www.wally.com](http://www.wally.com)



### DATA SAFFIER SE 37 LOUNGE



### SPECIFICATIONS

<b>LOA</b>	11.00m	36ft 1in
<b>LWL</b>	10.00m	32ft 10in
<b>Beam (max)</b>	3.45m	11ft 4in
<b>Draught</b>	2.10m	6ft 11in
<b>Displacement (lightship)</b>	4,800kg	10,582lb
<b>Ballast</b>	2,050kg	4,519lb
<b>Engine</b>	21hp Yanmar saildrive	
<b>Fuel</b>	80lt	18gal
<b>Water</b>	120lt	26gal
<b>Sail area (100% foretriangle)</b>	67.6m <sup>2</sup>	728ft <sup>2</sup>
<b>Sail Area to displacement ratio</b>	24.2	
<b>Displacement to LWL ratio</b>	134	
<b>Price ex VAT</b>	€209,500	
<b>Designer</b>	Dean Hennevanger/Satellite Yacht Design	

[www.saffieryachts.com](http://www.saffieryachts.com)