



Adèle

The largest launch from Vitters Shipyard to date, this classically proportioned 55 metre sailing yacht is going to be admired for many generations to come. Nick Jeffery celebrates her christening in Sweden followed by a weekend cruise.

Photography by Rick Tomlinson

Passing through the Swedish archipelago of Bohuslän aboard the old passenger boat St Erik en route to Adèle's christening on 4 August 2005, a gap appears between the rocks guarding the entrance to the harbour of Marstrand. And there she is, expectant, her elegant, long profile with strong sheer line and low freeboard, topped with a 62 metre tall ketch rig, sporting full bunting. Named after owner Jan-Eric Österlund's mother, who 'encouraged me to explore both the world and

my inner self and provided the safety and security I needed when extending the boundaries of my world', it would appear that the sailing yacht Adèle has assumed some of her character.

In the two months since her sea trials, Adèle has not been cosseted awaiting her christening, but has already covered more miles than many superyachts do in a lifetime, boldly sailing to remote destinations where most would never dare venture. A shakedown cruise to the Arctic gives an idea of the confidence that Jan-Eric

has in the design, engineering, Dutch-build quality and crew. Adèle has already sailed at 17.5 knots under just double-reefed yankee and mizzen in 40 knots true, penetrated the ice of the Arctic and sat calmly while shore parties explored 'polar bear country'.

When we met Jan-Eric and inspected Adèle under construction at Vitters Shipyard in March 2005, he was already talking of his vision of sailing in ice floes and taking photographs of polar bears by July, and it was evident that worldwide exploration and entertaining family

Three deckhouses provide views on the action in sheltered comfort (above), while the 37 metre high crow's nest on the 62 metre main mast offers a different perspective (middle). Steering is from twin wheels aft of the main cockpit (top left). The owner's cockpit is both private and cosy (above left)

and friends was the project's raison d'être. Conceived some five years before her launch, and the dream nurtured while circumnavigating the world on his previous yacht, the 24 metre Swedish Caprice, Adèle's design benefits from her owner's hands-on blue-water cruising experience, combined with his clear idea of how he intends living aboard for extended periods. Jan-Eric's enthusiasm for classics, with

their long overhangs and low freeboards, has been a strong influence in Adèle's design, but she has also been injected with a strong dose of modern technology, evident in the underbody and rig. With so many new boats built to a budget and 'neutrally decorated' for commercial charter appeal, it is refreshing to see a creation for proper yachting in the real sense of the word – for her owner's private enjoyment.

Ironically, Adèle's uniqueness makes her highly marketable for charter parties and her traditional looks and high performance will ensure that her appeal holds for decades.

Adèle has three significant features that give her the edge over other recently launched large sailing yachts: optional direct steering, which gives a fantastic feel to the helm; high performance in light airs (her hull is not too

on board

voluminous, and five keels have been tested in towing tanks and various rig and sail combinations optimised at Southampton University's Wolfson Unit); and truly private owner's living quarters, well aft of the twin wheels, comprising a large cockpit, deckhouse and sleeping accommodation. These give an indication of how her owner intends using her: enjoying the feel of hands-on helming, under sail even in the lightest of breezes, and sharing moments of privacy and reflection with his wife after the guests are well attended to.

Joining Adèle for two days gentle sailing with the Österlund family and some VIP guests, we board in the morning, via the passerelle aft, stowing our bags in one of the two twin guest cabins aft of the deck saloon. Gathering around Jan-Eric in the main cockpit, below the bimini, we are briefed on the day's activities and shown the itinerary on a paper chart laid out on the central table, forward of the central electronic chart console and twin wheels. This area is the focal point for both sailing and socialising, and

can comfortably hold about 40 guests in port, should rain clear the decks, with side windows that roll down for protection. Windows overhead for viewing the mainsail from the helm can be covered for shade when sailing in the midday sun.

Bow and stern side thrusters quietly ease Adèle away from the quay and the V12 1,000hp Caterpillar engine, driving a four-bladed 1.3 metre diameter variable-pitch propeller, pushes her 290 tonnes smoothly through the calm sea at over 13 knots before you even notice that the main engine is running. With a few knots of air, captain Andre Engblom instructs the deck crew to hoist the sails. Two crew on the foredeck, each harnessed with a remote control unit, push a few buttons, and in a minute or so of gentle whirring, 1,358 square metres of sail is set, with full main, mizzen and yankee. Close fetching effortlessly at 9 knots in 8 knots of true wind, the carbon-stabilised Spectra sails from North Sails Denmark glisten magnificently in clear blue skies as they are tweaked to optimum shape.



In the main deck saloon, a wood-burning fire provides a focal point (top right), while overhead skylights give natural light (above right). Mahogany panelling gives the library a feeling of enclosure (far right). The owner's deckhouse (above). The main deckhouse is the principal social area (middle)



Cracking along at 10 to 11.5 knots in 12 knots true, guests disperse into clusters in different areas of the deck: a couple sit on an outboard-facing bench in the sun to leeward, a group of four atop the owner's deckhouse enjoy a commanding view of the helmstation, while others relax with books and coffee in the main cockpit, and one dangles toes over the side, the low freeboard allowing an occasional dip into the fresh Scandinavian water. Teak seats in the pushpit allow one person to lie down or two to sit for a cosy chat, and of course the pulpit seat is a popular spot from which to look back and reflect on the tremendous power of the vessel.

Taking the wheel is a real delight with the direct steering engaged and – either viewing the B&G apparent wind angle display mounted

high at the forward end of the cockpit or sitting outboard to view the telltales – you can imagine the pleasure of becoming more acquainted with Adèle's responsiveness through countless wind and wave combinations around the world. As the breeze increases to 15 knots true, the command is given for the first reef to be put in the mainsail. The mainsail headboard, locked in position at the masthead to reduce compression loads in the mast from the halyard, is released and the halyard lowered, while the first reefing line is taken up simultaneously on to a concealed Rondal captive drum. The headboard is again locked in position and the halyard unloaded. The fully battened slabs of sail are then guided down between lazy jacks and sit securely in the Park Avenue-style 18 metre long,

1.35 metre wide main boom, the cars stacking neatly forward on twin tracks. Both masts and booms are carbon-fibre from Marten Spars in new Zealand.

A 1,500 square metre red and white MPS can be launched from its giant sock, and the 500 square metre mizzen staysail snaked up on a powered furler – used extensively, these certainly assist in eating up the miles in light airs without the need to power up the engine. Compared with sailing aboard long-keeled classics, the acceleration and responsiveness of Adèle is very noticeable, her underwater body having been optimised by Andre Hoek's team. Drawing 4.8 metres, she has a fin keel with a 2.5 metre wide, 85 tonne bulb and a well-balanced rudder with skeg. Stiffness of racing





Above: the guest accommodation comprises two doubles forward of the main deck saloon and two twins, with extra Pullman berths, aft of the main deckhouse, the latter sharing a lobby leading to the owner's stateroom. The quality joinery throughout is by Dutch company de Ruiter

hulls is often discussed amongst designers and racing yachtsmen, but it is surprising to learn from Andre Hoek that Adèle's 55 metre hull structure was developed using finite element analysis, keeping her maximum sag or hog to less than 14 centimetres – still a substantial figure to work with when calculating loads or slack in the ketch rig. Hoek can boast of having some 60 of his designs afloat and this, together with the fact that he has exploited a niche in the market for classic-looking performance sailing yachts, was one of the reasons Jan-Eric had confidence in him to design Adèle, even though it would be the largest project Hoek had undertaken. They also found that they had been thinking along the same lines even before discussing the brief. During an introductory meeting, Hoek had pulled out some proposals that combined the beauty of a large classical racing yacht with the accommodation that Jan-Eric wanted, including an owner's cockpit and private apartment aft and a separate library.

From this aft cockpit you descend three steps into the owner's deckhouse, an area that could easily be mistaken for the main deck saloon. To port, two small sofas are separated by a drinks cabinet and cigar humidor, with a desk and bar area opposite. In the owner's words, 'the combination of privacy and the views that this deckhouse offers makes it a very attractive place to relax after a day full of activities'. Down a few more steps is the owner's cabin, forward of which the sheathed foot of the mizzen mast stands like a contemporary work of art, flanked by a dressing room to starboard and bathroom to port.

The main deckhouse is the principal social area, furnished with low sofas to one side and a dining table opposite. Forward of the seating area is a navigation and communication centre with chart displays. Half a level down from this is the captain's office and beyond that the control room with access to the engine room. Down a companionway forward of the

deckhouse is the full beam main saloon and forward to starboard the office-cum-library – a womb-like retreat from the action on deck, which houses a fine collection of exploration books. Internet access and a digital editing suite for photography and video allow for a comprehensive log to be maintained and shared. Planning the next day's sailing with the chart display aglow, enveloped in the raised-and-fielded mahogany panelling, perhaps with the sliding door open and a view to guests sipping brandy in front of the radiating warmth of the wood-burning fireplace, you can imagine extended living aboard being quite an attractive proposition. The portside seating area in the saloon faces a plasma screen, offering television, DVD or chart viewing. Forward of this, two guest double cabins complement the two twins aft – each with a third Pullman berth. Passing the galley to starboard, a corridor leads

to the crew accommodation, designed for a complement of eight including the captain.

The interior design is the result of a collaboration between the owner and Hoek Design, with Frans Moerbeek doing much of the detailing and de Ruiter fabricating and installing it at Vitters Shipyard. Loose furniture, lampshades, curtains and upholstery were specified by Polly Sturgess, who also sourced the fireplace from an English antique shop and had it restored. Above it hangs a photograph of Jan-Eric's mother, 'the first Adèle'.

'Expansive teak decks' is one of the most overused expressions in yacht brochures, but in Adèle's case they really are. Her enormous foredeck is flush with the exception of a cosy deckhouse, where, protected from the elements, guests can enjoy eye-level panoramic views from comfortable upholstered seating surrounding a table. For alfresco dining under

the stars at anchor, a large table and chairs can be set up between the two deckhouses and the skylights.

Flanking this deckhouse are two 4.2 metre tenders, with a third – a 6 metre, 2 tonne Novurania with Z-drive – stowed in a recess forward of the main mast. The deck becomes flush after she is launched when two hatches are raised. Each tender is named after one of Jan-Eric's three daughters, in abbreviated form: Ika (Z-drive), Kina (waterjet) and Sanna (outboard). Ika and Kina are well equipped for exploration with GPS navigation, echo sounders and VHF radios with whip aerials. They automatically send their position and depth to the mothership so that soundings can be shown on Adèle's Seabook M18 plotter screen, useful in uncharted anchorages and the kind of tight spots Jan-Eric likes to ease into. At anchor, Adèle is boarded from a side platform



Below: the owner's full beam cabin, with king-sized bed and spacious seating area, forms part of a self-contained 'apartment' for extended cruising. Above: opposite the dressing room, the owner's bathroom comes complete with spa bath





Above: dramatic and remote places is where Adèle is bound for

and staircase that swings out hydraulically and is also equipped with a bathing ladder and shower. Diving equipment for six persons is stowed along with tanks and underwater scooters in a locker accessible from a watertight door at the boarding platform or from deck. As well as exploring the depths, guests can also ascend 37 metres above sea level. A two-person crow's nest on the main mast was developed especially for Adèle, with seats, safety railings, harnesses and safety brakes for additional peace of mind. It can be controlled from deck or the crow's nest itself with a hydraulic winch. Used in calm conditions or at anchor, it has a dual purpose: for navigation, to look ahead for gaps in the reef or to see inside an atoll; or purely for pleasure, giving yet another perspective on the world around Adèle.

From the outset, safety has been an integral part of the design, not only in the overall construction to MCA and ABS rules, and the sophisticated navigation electronics (backed up by thousands of paper charts, three magnetic compasses and a sextant), but also in the attitude that permeates the yacht's operations, from weather data being received from the shore-based management office daily, to crew kitted out in foul weather gear exuding a certain confidence in being prepared and man overboard buttons at the twin wheels that sound alarms and eject lifesaving buoys to port or starboard. Knowing that things can go wrong with equipment, a 'what if?' question is put to one of the deck crew about a particular hypothetical incident, with an 'or is that something you would rather not think about?' tagged on the end. She gives an immediate response of 'We do think about it', followed by three very concise solutions to overcoming the problem. The crew is going to be working harder than most aboard superyachts, judging

by the pace set by Jan-Eric, but they undoubtedly feel privileged to be involved with a yacht as unique as Adèle. As for Jan-Eric, he is set to become a kind of roving goodwill ambassador for superyachting, somehow combining extravagant theatrical experiences with a down-to-earth generosity and sense of adventure that enlivens and enriches all those he comes into contact with. The spirit of Adèle is certainly making her presence felt. □

Jan-Eric Österlund's vision of Adèle

Adèle is the dream I nurtured over many years that now has come true. She represents beauty, speed and adventure. Named after my mother, Adèle is bursting with energy to live each day to the full, and she shares her adventures with all who come into contact with her. Conceived for world exploration and to fearlessly storm into remote places, where many never may venture, she changes the perspective of life forever for all who step on board.

Adèle combines the classic lines of early 20th century J Class yachts, such as Britannia and Kaiser Wilhelm's Meteor, with a contemporary rig and underbody ensuring fast ocean passages. She carries a huge sail area on a narrow, easily driven hull. And all that power is at your hands when you stand at the wheel. Adèle is my home and one with immense character. We live on board during extended periods with family and friends. Down below, the library, with raised-and-fielded mahogany panels, provides a womb-like retreat from the action on deck. And the three deckhouses offer the possibility to withdraw but still be part of the action.

A D E L E		
LOA 55m	Sails North Sails carbon/Spectra	Standing rigging OYS
LWL 38.4m	Spars Marten Spars	Construction Aluminium
Beam 9.5m	Water capacity 8,000 litres	Classification ABS, MCA compliant
Draught 4.8m	Main engine 1 x 1,000hp Caterpillar 3412E	Naval architect and interior designer Hoek Design
Displacement 290 tonnes	Generators 2 x 60kW + 1 x 35kW Onan	Builder/year Vitters Shipyard BV/2005
Sail areas Main 508m ² ; mizzen 215m ² ; yankee 635m ² ; staysail 225m ² ; MPS 1,500m ² ; mizzen staysail 500m ²	Range under power 6,500nm	Stouweweg 33, 8064 PD Zwartsluis, The Netherlands Tel:+31 38 3867145 E-mail: info@vitters.com
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