Equally happy cruising with the kids or flying two hulls at 20 knots, the new Dragonfly 25 is a versatile triable tri. David Harding went for a spin.

**Fast and foldable**

Folding trimarans tend to fold in one of two ways. The Dragonflies’ hulls rotate about a vertical axis, swinging in and out. In the case of the 25, this reduces the beam from 5.8m (19ft) to just 2.3m (7ft 7in), making her narrower than a typical modern 7.6m (25ft) monohull. Instead, however, she grows longer in the process, from 20ft to just under 30ft (9m).

This is one of the fundamental differences between the Dragonflies and the other sporty trimarans you’re likely to see cruising effortlessly past you, the Farriers and Corsairs. The latter pair (with common ancestry in Ian Farriers and Corsairs) have hulls that rotate through 90° about a horizontal axis. This means that the boats stay the same length when folded, but the topdaces of the floats become immersed.

The Dragonflies’ mechanism is delightfully simple to operate. To fold each hull in, you release the line marked “fold out” and pull the one marked “fold in”. To unfold, again, you reverse the process, winning the “fold out” line the last inch or two to make sure it’s tight. Then the structure is remarkably rigid, as it needs to be on a boat capable of sailing at 20 knots on one hull.

The simplicity of the operation belies the complexity of the calculations necessary to make it all work. Extensive use was made of 3D modeling, followed by CFD to ensure the project moved from concept to completion as swiftly as possible. It was indeed a remarkably swift operation. The Dragonfly 25 was announced to the world at the Dusseldorf Boat Show in 2014. At this stage she existed as little more than a drawing to gauge the public’s reaction. A year later she was there in the flesh. Now, more than a dozen have been built and, if you want one, the earliest delivery slot is early next year.

**Tested**

This is the first Dragonfly to sport reverse rake on the bows of the floats. It’s functional as well as fashionable.

**Immersion exercises**

Sailing with two hulls in the air is not obligatory with the Dragonfly 25. In fact, it’s an option for the Sport version – the one I tested. This has a rotating carbon rudder on each float. If you’re going to fly the centre hull, that matters. All this flying around might sound a little hairy for some, but what if you still like the idea of sailing at double-figure speeds without effort in a boat that weighs just over a ton and a half? This is the idea of sailing at double-figure speeds without effort in a boat that weighs just over a ton and a half. The idea is that reverse rake and reverse rake maintain that, as it comes into effect. Proponents of reverse rake, that’s the current thinking in performance circles.

As you would expect, the Dragonfly’s floats are asymmetric to provide lift to windward. They also extend forward of the main hull in sailing mode, again to place the buoyancy well forward and maximise diogonal stability. In addition to this change with the latest model, the total buoyancy of the floats is greater in relation to the boat’s displacement than on any earlier design, allowing her to be pushed harder and – should the fancy take you – sailed on one hull. That’s what many trimarans do these days.

**Open-backed rudder stocks allow the blades to be moved vertically – and, importantly, to kick up on impact**
Sport version sailed by a crew who know what they’re doing. On our delivery trip, one crew knew exactly what he was doing while the other was on a steep learning curve. Nonetheless, our little coast-hop proved yet again that the ratio of boat speed to maneuverability on a boat like this is hard to beat in cruising terms. What other sort of trailer-able, beachable weekender-cum-coastal-cruiser could easily, comfortably and safely sail as fast as or faster than the wind on a day like this with just two people aboard? How many cruiser/racers of any description could do that?

Our speed on the wind-sailing came to an end after a spinnaker-related glitch that was easy to fix, but not there and then. Despite the frustration of having to complete the trip under plain sail, I was mindful of the fact that we were finding it thoroughly boring to be ambling along at a mere 10 knots—a speed that would produce white knuckles and racing pulses on many 25-footers. On the Dragonfly it was like being stuck in second gear. Being without a spinnaker, we decided not to race Phaedo (the multiple-record-breaking MOD 70).

### DRAGONFLY 25 SPORT
**Price:** £??,???
**Series:** Corsair Dash 750
**Beam:** 5.80m (19ft 0in)
**Length:** 5.80m (19ft 0in)

There are two sorts of Multihull, it seems, and one of them is the Dragonfly. It is the kind of craft that is well worth considering as a boat that you could have on your doorstep rather than some distant anchorage, and I think that this will be the sort of boat that will appeal to the majority of boaters. It is not the sort of craft that you would ever think of taking to sea—indeed, the accommodation is fine for coast-hopping and weekending. The cockpit can be enclosed with a tent, and don’t forget the large patio each side for sunbathing, sleeping under the stars, playing badminton or whatever else might take your fancy.

### Dragonfly 25 tested

**Tech spec**

** Draco nfly 25 Sport**

**Price:** £??,???

**Series:** Corsair Dash 750

**Beam:** 5.80m (19ft 0in)

**Length:** 5.80m (19ft 0in)

**Draught:** 2.30m (7ft 7in)

**Sail area:** 415m (4,441sq ft)

**RCB category:** 3

**Engine:** 4.95hp outboard

**Distributor:** Multihull Solutions, www.multihull solutions.co.uk

Controlling rotation: the bottom line limits the mast’s maximum rotation and the top one determines its angle in relation to the boom

As she headed back into the Solent from the direction of Naze Tower at 30 knots, so we let her go. I did want to try some upwind sailing, however, so at the entrance to Southampton Water we hardened up on the breeze. We were carrying the full mainsail, and around 20 knots, it was at the upper end of what was comfortable, especially given the steep chop that had built up by then. On starboard tack the waves were almost on the beam, meaning that on port they were bang on the nose. Thankfully the Dragonfly had the power to allow us to drive deep and sail through them, so we still clocked into the 6s and 7s for much of the time.

Now, sailing a sporty 25’ trimaran

into a seaway at 9 knots in 20 knots of wind sounds like a way to get wet—...but strangely, it wasn’t. I didn’t even don the top half of my waterproofs for the entire trip. The reason is the spray-deflecting shape of the main hull. A flare about 45cm (18") above the waterline develops into a pronounced return that stops waves from climbing up the topology. Any that do make further are met by a second return where the deck and hull bulwarks join to form a deep lip between the bow and the forward beam.

Despite some inevitable splashing between the hulls, it’s a remarkably dry ride. Another factor is that the helmman is sitting on a windward float that’s well clear of the water. The downside of such a large deflection area close to the waterline is a bit of thrutling. Occasionally it felt like a sort of double-jointed mast, making me wonder at first whether there was flexing between the beams and the hulls, but the whole structure, from the top of the rig to the tips of the floats, appeared as rigid as can be. Without the wave-deflectors, it’s in a seaway might become surprisingly wet. This way, you get a bit of thrutling and quite dry.

**Dynamic sailing**

Downwind at 16-20 knots and upwind at 10 knots in foul weather, that’s what the Dragonfly is capable of. You do have to work to extract the maximum from the Sport version, however. That’s in the nature of the beast. With a wing mast and a mainsail 4.27m (14sq ft) larger than on the original one built by Catana—they finished well up in the MODCA fleet, but not quite as well as she should have been.

**Dynamic sailing**

described by Ian Farrier as ‘a trimaran’ she has been in everything hangs together and keeps working, which seems probable given the number of Dragonflies from the 80s and 90s that are still going strong. Hull and deck are hard-last and cored with Divinycell (except in way of the rudder). Weight is kept to a minimum largely through simplicity: nearly all the structure is on the boat that doesn’t serve a useful purpose. The rudders are housed in stocks that hold them rigidly but allow them to kick up on impact. Other neat ideas include the halyard-tail pockets built into the trampolines. Open stowage bins are beneath the cockpit seats and there’s a large locker under the sole abait the traveller. Sails, fenders and light kit can be stowed in the centre section of the boat so that the centreboard can be let down if the boat doesn’t serve a useful purpose.

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