Cruising sailors' experience of multihull sailing usually extends no further than a charter — ten
days in the Med or Caribbean on a cumbersome cat with plenty of space
but so-so performance. Either that or
they have sailed on a racing cat,
experiencing breathtaking speeds but
sleeping in a shoebox.

But it doesn't have to be that way, as
Danish family boatbuilders Quorning
Boats prove with their latest launch,
the Dragonfly 35. Hull volume is
achieved by flaring above the waterline
to give space for high-level lockers, but
below the waterline, the centre hull
presents a razor-fine entry, drawing out
to near-flat aft sections to aid planing.
Two versions of the 35 are available: the
Ultimate version, which we sailed, and
the Touring version, which has a 1.5m
shorter mast and smaller sail area all
round. Carbon is standard.

The most impressive of Quorning's
innovations is the swing-wing system.
Like her sisters, the Dragonfly 35's floats
can hinge inwards to meet the centre
hull, reducing the yacht's beam from a
massive 8.2m to 3.8m and vastly
improving versatility, marina fees and
your popularity with monohull sailors.
Surprisingly, the stability remains good
—the fore and aft beams are angled
down at 7°, depressing the floats as
they fold and lifting the centre hull.

Although stowage in the centre
hull is in short supply by the
standards of a 35ft monohull, this
is largely solved by redistributing
certain items. It's important not to
store heavy items in the floats as this
impacts on buoyancy, but
the Dragonfly has hatches to allow sail
stowage and, uniquely to the 35, an aft
hatch in the starboard float which will
accept a kayak or a windsurfer and its
mast. Each float is divided into three
buoyancy chambers, which combine
with a crash bulkhead in the main hull
to class the boat as unsinkable,
although the risk of sinking is much
reduced by the lack of keel.

For a mono sailor, doing 20 knots
with minimal
heel is a strange
experience

Under way
We sailed the Dragonfly in Denmark on
a chilly December day of 20-30 knot
winds and occasionally flurries of hail.
After overcoming a slight reluctance to
leave the pontoon or the comfort of the
heated cabin, we set out to put this 35ft
cruising boat through her paces. They
were impressive.

Upwind, the Dragonfly forged ahead
at 8 or 9 knots, occasionally touching 10
and tacking through 85°-90° (dispelling
the myth that multihulls can't go to
windward). But the fun started on
bearing away. Full main and headsail
gave us around 15 knots off the wind.
Passage plan at ten knots and you can rack up 100 miles and still be outside the restaurant when it opens for dinner

and as we neared a reach, the gennaker on its retractable bowsprit boosted that to 18 knots. It was like kicking in the turbo on a sports car – as the apparent wind shifted forward, we kept bearing away to hit 20.9 knots – not bad for a 35-footer. Quorning’s owner, Jens Quorning, has since notched up 23 knots.

Sportsboat sailors are used to getting over a ‘step’ before the boat begins to plane, but the Dragonfly seems to have two. Quorning agreed. “She’s good in light airs up to her hull speed, about 8 to 8.5 knots,” he said. “After that, you need quite a bit more wind to push her faster, until she starts to plane at 10.5 to 11 knots. Then there’s another gear at 15 or 16 knots.”

The practicalities of sailing at these speeds demand good cockpit design. Although a tiller is standard, our boat was fitted with a carbon wheel connected via a direct-gated drive to the rudder, resulting in a very precise, sensitive helm. The single, central rudder lost grip at times, but this was quickly recovered by briefly centring the wheel. Twin rudders would probably correct this, but would also compromise manoeuvrability under engine and complicate the foil protection arrangements; with the existing system, if the rudder or daggerboard touch bottom, their lines are released and they flick upwards until redeployed from the cockpit.

The mainsheet and traveller fall easily to the helmsman’s hand and are serviced by a dedicated pair of winches, leaving the crew to manage the other lines via two primary cockpit winches and two winches on the coachroof. One of the coachroof winches is electric to aid hoisting the main, but through a neat bit of design can winch any line by using the other winches as idlers.

There’s a little more to think about than when sailing a mono – notably the centreboard and the hull folding gear – but the boat is well within the abilities of two people. There are plenty of performance tweaks to play with too, including a set of barbershavers which pull the genoa sheeting point out to the floats when reaching.

Hull folding and unfolding is quick and easy thanks to a well-designed two-line system that tucks neatly into a cockpit locker, and a permanently fitted GRP cockpit hood arch hinges down behind the helm to provide a backrest when the cover is not in use – it’s a bit like sailing from your sofa.

Under power the boat cruised at 6.5 knots from the 30hp Volvo saildrive, hitting a maximum of 8.4 knots, and proved adequately manoeuvrable when folded, with a turning circle of around 15 boatlengths and predictable performance astern.

Below decks
Stowage is always a problem in small hulls, but thanks to the sails being stored in the floats the space under the forward vee berth is free to use. Elsewhere, numerous small lockers have been fitted, closed at the front with a tidy wooden roll-top system.

Between the saloon and the forecabin is the heads and shower, stretching across the full width of the boat. Although standing headroom is available throughout, in the shower a folding seat above the heads offers the most elbow room. Two large lockers run the risk of a wetting and require judicious use of the shower curtain, but the loo roll gets special attention – a neat gadget rolls the end inside.

In the saloon the galley runs the length of the starboard side, with saddle-style seats hinged to the centreboard case, which can be used either to eat at table or to perch on while cooking. The case also supports the table with a drop-leaf to port, which, when hinged up, creates an L-shaped dinette or folded makes space for a double berth. Tankage is under the floor of the saloon, except the
In accordance with Quorning's philosophy to keep everything wet and oily out of the cabin, engine access is via a huge hinged hatch abaft the helm.

**Platform for performance**

Although Quorning have worked wonders with the space available, helped by plenty of light from the oval portlights and clever use of horizontal grain to extend the perspective, the interior is not the Dragonfly 35 sales point. Sail performance is. Passage plan at ten knots and you can rack up 100 miles after breakfast and still be outside the restaurant when it opens for dinner. Get the right angles and sufficient wind and you could be doing 20 knots, usually the preserve of ocean race boats and adrenalin-junkie skiffs. The difference is, you can still make and drink a mug of tea.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specifications</th>
<th>DRAGONFLY 35 ULTIMATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOA</td>
<td>10.68m (35ft 0in)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LWL</td>
<td>10.35m (34ft 0in)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beam (max/min)</td>
<td>8.20m/5.5m (26ft 9in/18ft 0in)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draught</td>
<td>1.90m (6ft 3in)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buoyt (bottle/nose)</td>
<td>3.00m/1.60m (9ft 10in/5ft 3in)</td>
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<td>Ballast</td>
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**Stowage**

- Forecabin: 4.5
- Saloon: 2.0
- Galley: 1.5
- Head: 1.0
- After Cabin: 0.5
- Nav. area: 0.5

Stowage = 17.62m²
Total = 1.93m²