



Dragonfly 28

What kind of 28ft yacht can sail at 20 knots with no dramas?
Jeremy Evans takes a ride on the latest Dragonfly from Denmark...

Quorning Boats have been building trimarans for more than 40 years. Run by the father and son team of Borge and Jens Quorning, they specialise in designing and manufacturing the Dragonfly range of lightweight, fast cruising trimarans, fitted with the 'Swing Wing' system which reduces overall beam by more than 50 per cent for trailing and marina berthing. The latest Dragonfly 28 went into production in 2009, replacing the classic 800 as the smallest boat in the range. It's available as a Touring 28 with aluminium spars, or a Sport 28 with a taller carbon mast and Technora sails, providing considerably more power for lighter winds with less weight in the rig which helps when sailing through waves.

We joined Al Wood, whose company Multihull Solutions represents Dragonfly in the UK, to sail his 'Swing Wing' Sport 28 out of

Chichester Harbour. Al's metallic blue Sport 28 fitted like a glove in Emsworth's tiny marina, thanks to having its floats folded alongside the main hull. With centreboard retracted, we motored out of the marina with less than a metre of water under the hull and beams still folded, although having one float out will increase stability for tight turns. No hassle. Pulling out a float is a one-person operation from the safety of the cockpit, with no tools or heavy winding required, which took less than a couple of minutes for each side. The same was true when we pulled the floats back alongside the hull at the end of the day.

Auxiliary power is provided by a 10hp Honda outboard linked to the tiller for steering with morse control in the starboard locker close to your right hand. The engine is lighter and sounded quieter than a typical diesel on a small yacht, providing reasonable handling ahead or astern when berthing. It will also push the Dragonfly along smartly in a flat calm.

On the water

A Force 3-5 provided perfect conditions, with flat water inside Chichester Harbour and a lumpy sea in the Solent for variety. It can be hard work hoisting a fully battened mainsail with a big roach, but with a 2:1 main halyard and ultra smooth sliders minimum effort was required to pull the Technora sail up the mast, which was also great for easy reefing from

Specification

Length:	9.05m (sailing) 9.99m (folded)
Beam:	6.5m (sailing) 2.54m (folded)
Draught:	0.4-1.7m
Construction:	Foam sandwich
Sailing weight:	1,700kg
Max payload:	725kg (5-7 crew)
Sail Area:	Mainsail 42sq m (Sport) Jib 21sq m (Sport) Code Zero 45sq m (Sport) Asymmetric 80sq m (Sport)
Price:	Sport standard boat: €119,900 + VAT

the cockpit. Al coiled all the loose rope ends in neat figure-of-eight loops, ensuring there would be no snarl-ups when letting sheets or halyards run - years of multihull racing have taught him the importance of correct boat handling in boats whose power to weight can provide astonishing speeds.

We hit a top speed of 18.7 knots (against the ebb tide!) on the GPS without even trying, while the Dragonfly averaged close to 17 knots on a long reach from Hayling Island SC to Emsworth under full mainsail and jib. There was no drama, with minimal heeling and smooth acceleration in gusts, as the Dragonfly sailed steady and level with its wake stretching far behind. Given the right conditions - solid breeze over flat water - there's no doubt this 28ft cruiser will hit 20-plus knots!

Don't make the mistake of assuming the Dragonfly is just a high speed reaching machine. A trimaran is basically a super-slim monohull with floats as stabilisers, instead of an ultra heavy keel, so windward performance can be extremely potent. Wide beam, light

weight and full centreboard ensure that sail power provides direct forward power, enabling the Dragonfly to point as high as a performance monohull while footing faster, with the bonus that when a gust hits the boat does not heel over and slow down. The Dragonfly was also predictable and quick to tack, but you need to beware of losing way if you stuff it too high while sailing in waves. If the worst comes to the worst, you can simply reverse out of irons.

The rudder felt light and precise under mainsail and small jib, but it was disconcerting to feel the tiller lift when holding the extension from a seat on the coaming, which could be cured by locking the tiller down. Forward visibility is excellent, which is vital if you're sailing at close to 20 knots. You also need to feel secure and I had a mild problem with non-slip on the cockpit seats. This may have been due to a new pair of shoes which appeared non-compatible for the Dragonfly.

Out in the Solent, Al hoisted the monster Sport spinnaker from the companionway. The optional furling Code 0 would provide a more easily handled option at the cost of not being able to sail so deep downhill. We gybed through a series of deep reaches while flying downwind on the waves, using multihull skills that are much the same for a fully powered asymmetric dinghy. When a gust hits you bear away with the apparent wind to sail fast, deep and flat, which was fairly effortless thanks to a strong dose of lee helm. In fact it felt rather too strong for relaxed helming on a long passage, making me suspect that the rudder needed fine tweaking.

Sailing the Dragonfly at speed through waves brings us to the business of handling a high performance yacht without a keel. Maximum performance on a multihull is directly related to a very powerful rig pushing the lightest possible platform. The Dragonfly 28 is in the top league for a cruiser-racer, which broadly means it deserves some respect. If you are overpowered, you must be in full control of the boat, able to let sheets fly and avoid piling into the back of a wave. If you get things seriously wrong, this kind of trimaran could capsize, which is likely to be more embarrassing (and expensive) than life threatening. The solution is simple. Unless you have a lot of experience,



dump the kite, reef the main or choose a more mellow time to sail on a difficult stretch of water.

The verdict

The Dragonfly 28 Sport would make a super cruiser-racer for three crew, perfect for the Round the Island Race as well as MOCRA events. It's anything but conventional as a family boat, but has much in its favour. First, it will get places much faster than yachts. Second, it has a nice big cockpit and two big trampolines that are great for sunbathing or swimming platforms. In reasonable conditions, it is also lovely to sit out on the windward float while sailing, if you remember to always keep 'one hand for the boat' as it has no guardrails. Third, you can venture where yachts dare not follow. Al gave a perfect demonstration by nosing his Dragonfly 28 right up to the beach at East Head where I stepped off the bow in six inches of water. Later on, he returned with his young family to enjoy a beautiful night 'beached' ashore.

The slim hull of a Dragonfly cannot provide the same cabin space as a modern 28ft yacht. But Quorning still manages to fit in a comfortable saloon with a big folding table on top of the centreboard case and two berths. The snug forecabin looks like something from a spaceship, but should be fine for kids or adults who like to snuggle. A single berth behind the companionway looks claustrophobic, but is probably the best place to be if you need a berth at sea. Facilities include a smart minimalist galley on both sides of the companionway, with heads discreetly placed between the main bulkhead and forecabin. ■



ABOVE LEFT During our test sail we topped 18 knots without even trying - this is a seriously quick cruiser-racer.

ABOVE Accommodation is very compact, but there is room for two adults and kids if you don't mind it being cosy!

BELOW The Sport 28 has a powerful rig with fully battened main, and demands experienced, or conservative, handling.



RIGHT Pulling floats in and out can be done by one person from the safety of the cockpit, with no tools or heavy winding required.



Farrier Marine

Ian Farrier has produced a superb range of folding trimarans, including the classic Corsair F-27 and latest F-28 built by C-Tech. Home building from plans or kits is a popular option for Farrier fans who can save thousands of dollars in return for thousands of hours! Current designs range from the delightful F-22 to the ocean capable F-42.

Seacart 30

Awesome one-design designed by Marc Lombard and built by Marstrom in Sweden combines incredible performance with spartan accommodation, making it primarily a day racing machine - not for the faint hearted! The latest Seacart 30 FCR is fitted with folding beams. All-carbon construction does not come cheap.

From Al Wood

It's great Y&Y share our enthusiasm for this new Dragonfly. As you sailed the second prototype, it will be no surprise that the points identified have already been addressed. Rudder geometry has been altered to improve balance and the tiller redesigned to prevent lifting. The aft berth is wider on the latest boats, with optional portlights for natural light. Unfortunately, our limited time prevented demonstrating the Dragonfly 28's key advance; ease of trailering. Requiring no assembly of the floats & beams and only the mast to raise, it's possible to go from trailer to sailing in under an hour.

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