

On test



Main picture, *Yachting World* was first to test the Elan 36 at its world debut in Slovenia. Inset, the YWH35 on test shortly before the start of the Commodores' Cup



Elan 36 and YWH35

From displacement cruisers to out-and-out racers, the number of new 30-footers to hit the scene this year is remarkable. A recovering market, new blood in the sport and an air of cautious optimism among manufacturers all seem to be contributory factors to the exciting new range of 30-somethings to be launched.

And it's not just established builders who have generated the new designs; new names have joined the fray, too.

Under the spotlight this month are two brand new mid-30-footers—from the same designer, but with very different philosophies.

Robert Humphreys' design office has been busy keeping themselves in the news with their ingenious Prefix build system, and in the second section of this report we look at the latest in this vein to be launched: the *Yachting World* Humphreys (YWH) 35.

Two boats with very different philosophies, but both by the same designer. Matthew Sheahan sails a cruiser-racer from Slovenia and a racer-cruiser from the UK, built using the Prefix system

But first we look at Humphreys' other new mid range boat for '96, the Slovenian-built, masthead-rigged Elan 36.

ELAN 36

If you live in the UK, ski once or twice a year and/or fly modern glassfibre gliders, the chances are you will have heard of Elan. You may well also know of this Slovenian company if you have chartered boats in the Mediterranean or Adriatic, where examples of their work are hard to miss.

Ask virtually any European citizen outside the UK about whether he has heard of Elan and he'll look at you as if you'd asked if McDonald's sell cheeseburgers. And yet in Great Britain few people are aware that this company builds boats

But in the same way that Skoda have risen to respectability in the motor industry under



Main, Humphreys takes the wheel for her maiden sail. Above, upwind she's easy to handle when short-handed and responds well with plenty of feel through the wheel steering. Below, liferaft stowage is in the transom



their new owners, Volkswagen builders VAG, so Elan could well benefit from a new international association, too.

Although Elan, who started building sailing yachts back in 1973, have not been bought by anyone recently, they have taken on board the ideas of a well respected international designer that just about everyone has heard of.

Rob Humphreys drew the lines for the pretty Elan 295 which was seen for the first time at the London Boat Show. The second new boat to emerge from their doors is the Elan 36, which again carries the British designer's signature. Despite being a smart little mover on the water, the 295 has yet to prove herself to be a runaway success in any country, but the 36 has the makings of a very popular all-rounder.

ABOVE AND BELOW DECKS

If you're familiar with the individual style of some of her more elderly sisterships, the modest European styling stands out as a significant change in direction for this yard and it is ironic that it is this subtle feature that draws your attention at first.

Clean lines and modest styling means that at the very least you could sit the 36 in a marina

anywhere in the UK and she would never look out of place. Moderate freeboard, subtle, low-profile coachroof and modern, but modest bow and stern profiles all blend in with today's popular styles.

She has a masthead Selden rig incorporating two sets of aft-swept spreaders, a furling, overlapping genoa and a slab-reefing mainsail, none of which will guarantee to turn heads for style's sake alone.

Yet if you choose to look at her drawings, you will see a hint of what is to come under sail, for her delta shape in plan quite clearly makes her a vessel of the Nineties.



She's an aft cockpit boat, simply laid out, with a trench cockpit surrounded by coamings deep enough to provide good sitting back support. Those with

Left, space to store a few fenders and warps as well as the anchor and chain

keen eyes will see that, aboard the first boat, the coamings surrounding the helmsman run parallel to the waterline instead of reducing in height as they run aft.

The result is that the helmsman's seating is not only marginally too high, but there is no way of including a hump in the helmsman's seat for comfort and security when heeled. Elan are aware of this and, in between sailing trials, were already sketching modifications.

Other than this, there was little to criticise in her layout and much to praise. A mainsheet traveller that runs across the cockpit and not on the coachroof was one such example; the quality of all her deck gear was another

Size and accessibility of all the on-deck stowage, (given her dual cruiser-racer role), added to the list of aspects we liked. Below decks, where it's easy to be fussy about your likes and dislikes, she is equally understated.

Finished in teak, the standard of joiner work is good, and even when you delve behind the scenes, she's tidy and thoughtfully built. The layout is for a maximum of six in three double cabins, two of which are symmetrical after cabins. The forward vee-berth double completes the berths. ▶

On test



Above, this style of longitudinal galley is common aboard boats nearly twice her price, yet behind the scenes, she is still better finished than some

Her galley lies longitudinally on the port side, opposite the U-shaped saloon seating round a fixed table. Here, too, the dimensions need fine tuning as even a short-legged technical editor kept banging his knees under the table. The 36 could do with more handholds, too, especially over the walkways below decks.

Otherwise, the layout throughout was well built, well arranged and gave the impression of a boat a metre longer.

CONSTRUCTION

A solid laminate hull allows for a robust and durable hull and her single piece moulded structural lattice work, laminated into the bottom of the boat, provides the load-carrying members of the yacht's structure. The deck, on the other hand, is a balsa sandwich with local stiffening for the through deck fittings.

Below the waterline, isophthalic resin protects against osmosis in a laminate that complies with the standards of the RINA, the Italian building registration authority.

As standard, her keel is a one-piece iron casting weighing 2,500kg (5,511lb) although there is an option for a lead version weighing 2,270kg (5,004lb) which improves her righting moment accordingly.

UNDER POWER AND SAIL

Motoring out of Portoroze harbour on the Slovenian coast, her handling under engine gave a hint of what was to come. Turning comfortably within a single boatlength and well mannered when going astern, she is a highly manoeuvrable cruiser-racer. Noise and vibration levels in the cockpit were a little on the high side, although below decks they were more acceptable.

As we jotted down her boat speed versus revs, it was clear that she has clean lines, too, the plotted figures showing a smooth and steady increase throughout the rev range, with minimal wake astern.

It was hardly surprising then, that even in the light winds of the Adriatic, she took no time at all to accelerate, quickly building speed to 6.6 knots upwind in the 8-10 knot breeze. Dur-



Above, the standard of workmanship is high throughout her accommodation. Left, the engine and head areas



few details that really grabbed my attention as great, new innovative ideas. Her layout is conventional above and below decks and her styling throughout is modest. Yet this is precisely her appeal.

Nowadays, Elan don't really have a distinctive style to their range of yachts – at least,

ing the trials we had the advantage of pacing her against the Elan 38; on all points of sailing she outperformed her sistership with ease.

She is a comfortable boat to helm as well, despite the coamings of uniform height which surround the helmsman.

Most of the controls can be reached with ease, and we particularly liked the block and tackle mainsheet system which has a fine tune system included as standard.

CONCLUSIONS

Designs such as the Elan 36 are often difficult to sum up in a few words. After three days looking and fiddling with her, I could still find

not one that most UK buyers would recognise, yet the unmistakable lines of, say, the Elan 431, would be simply too rich for most British palates.

The 36, on the other hand, will be much easier to digest on this side of the Channel, especially with a UK delivered price tag of £67,000 ex VAT.

For this price you get a solidly built boat that includes a high standard of fixtures and fittings from well known manufacturers, well finished and comfortable accommodation and a rewarding all-round performance.

Seasoning with a few of your favourite extras is all that is left to do.



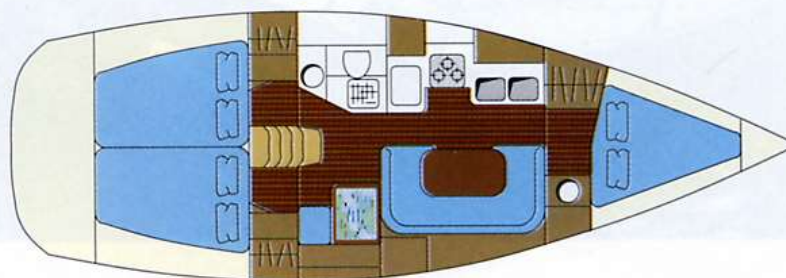
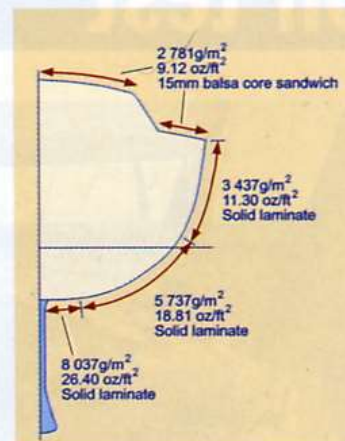
All photos: Matthew Sheahan

Technical data

Designed by
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Stowage factor: 3ft³ per person for stowage of personal effects. Factor is shown as a percentage of total volume.
Pounds/Inch (kg/cm) Immersion: How much weight it takes to sink the boat parallel to DWL.
Prismatic coefficient: The ratio of volume to displacement to a volume of

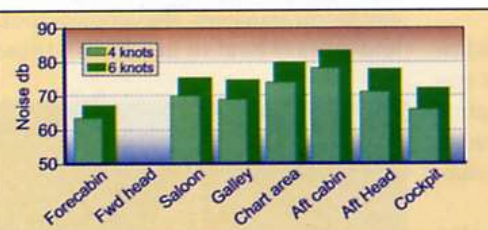
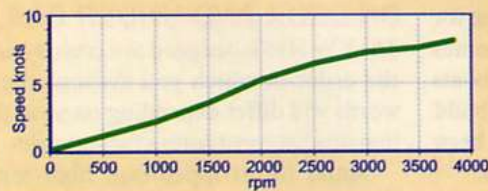
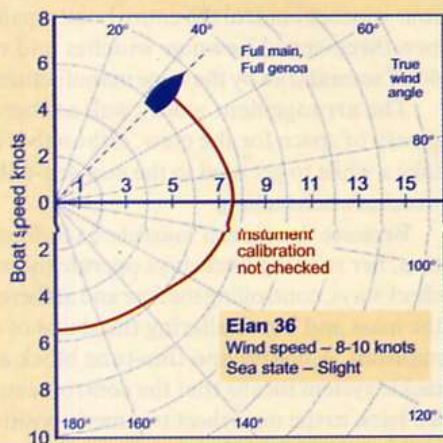
LWL and the maximum cross sectional area below the load waterplane. An indication of hull fineness or fullness.
Polar diagram: Shows the optimum close-hauled angle to the true wind. Also shows speed attained on all courses. Important – consider in conjunction with

the true wind speed during the test.
Sail area: displacement ratio: This ratio gives some indication of power available. Higher numbers = greater performance.

$$\frac{SA(ft^2)}{(Disp(lb) \div 64)^{0.666}}$$

Ballast ratio: A comparison between displacement and the weight of the ballast.

Displacement:waterline length: Performance indicator. Low numbers = higher performance. $(Disp(lb) \div 2240) \div (0.01 \times LWL(ft))^3$



COMPARABLE BOATS

	ELAN 36	DUFOUR 35	GIB'SEA 364	JEANNEAU S/O 36.2
LOA	10.69m	10.69m	11.28m	11.00m
LWL	9.27m	8.51m	9.60m	9.30m
Beam	3.58m	3.48m	3.66m	3.78m
Draught	1.91m	1.80m	2.01m	1.91m
Disp	5,500kg	4,500kg	5,987kg	5,588kg
Ballast	2,270kg	1,500kg	2,495kg	1,550kg
Sail area	60.48m ²	47.00m ²	60.02m ²	49.52m ²
Berths	6	6	6	5-7
Engine	Yanmar 3GM	Volvo Penta	Yanmar 3GM	Yanmar 3GM
Power	21kW	28hp	20kW	21kW
Water	256lt	56gal	30hp	27hp
Fuel	90lt	20gal	88gal	66gal
Sail area:disp	19.7	17.5	18.5	16.0
Disp:LWL	192	204	189	194
Price (ex VAT)*	£67,000	£68,990	£83,326	£75,099