

Elan Power 35

Sculpted lines, fine build quality, spacious accommodation and an enjoyable driving experience.

Sportscruiser builders beware! The new kid on the block means business. **REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON**

Our exclusive first test introduces you not just to a new, and frankly stunning, sportscruiser, but also to the birth of a new marque.

The Elan Power 35 carries more than the average amount of weight upon its shoulders,

as the success of the entire brand relies heavily on the success of this first model. Fortunately, these shoulders are broad, not to mention finely sculpted and sleekly toned.

This Slovenian boatyard's first foray into the motorboat sector has been two years in the

making, and we have been waiting expectantly — and, if the truth be known, a little impatiently — for it to break cover. We were promised style and capability delivered at a price that would cause a few sleepless nights for the existing market leaders.

Now it has finally arrived, making its debut at this year's Düsseldorf Boat Show, and we are not disappointed. Far from it. Albeit from a yard with an enviable reputation for sailboats, this is the finest and most accomplished motorboat-building debut we have witnessed for some considerable time.

Get used to the Elan Power name: it's going to cause a bit of a stir.

DESIGN & BUILD

Allowing designer Tony Castro complete autonomy has delivered a smooth, seamless craft that looks good from any angle.

With only 35ft to play with, the potential danger was for the lines to be top-heavy or bulbous. However, a design brief that focused

on a hardtop craft that would also be available with an open cockpit, rather than an open boat with an optional hardtop, has delivered an incredibly sleek profile, while retaining a good deal of volume for the two-cabin interior.

A huge bathing platform leads you easily through to a wide and welcoming cockpit, where deep settees flank the walkway forward into the wheelshelter, with its central helm position enjoying a large opening sunroof.

The exterior finish is startlingly good, with teak-laid cockpit decking and GRP work of the highest order. The design is both visually stunning, with a curved coaming that wraps gracefully around the transom, and practical, with neat storage bins supplied aft for mooring warps.

Details abound, from the dutifully rounded stainless steel grille over the air intakes to the subtle but effective winged radar arch. And underlying all this is excellent build quality. Not only are the bilges neatly painted out, but better still is the reassuringly solid framework of stringers and supports, best viewed from under the master cabin's berth.

Castro has opted for a deep-vee hull with a 30° deadrise amidships falling to 18° at the stern. Integrated into this are four fine sprayrails, rather than two or three more

pronounced ones, which show aggressively at the bows and run along the entire hull length.

The aesthetics are mean and serene, from every angle.



ACCOMMODATION

The interior offers a warm and inviting retreat, belying the boat's production-line fit-out. Compared to its most obvious competitor, the Bavaria 37, it has a more intricate design, rich in detail. However, thanks to plentiful headroom and width, it never feels busy.

The glossy cherry and ebony-edged joinery that lines the saloon also breaks up the curvaceous forward bulkhead. Above, even with 6ft 3in of headroom, there is still space enough for a false deckhead, again neatly detailed with sunken lighting and recessed opening hatches.

A crescent-shaped settee spreads itself along the port side, served by a folding, embossed table which there is space for a family of five to gather around.

The galley has an unusual layout, but a productive one, with the cooking and cleaning elements split into two separate modules, one on each side of the midships cabin's doorway. To starboard a hob, a refrigerator and a range of eye-height storage lockers take care of the culinary side, while occupying a more central position next to the teak-stepped entranceway is a sink, with an infill to augment the available workspace.

below Inviting and intricate in design, the saloon has comfortable seating and excellent headroom.



Even more interesting is the forward master cabin, with its almost circular style. There is plentiful cabinetry, and a swish border for the overhead hatch, but most appealing of all is a door: it leads directly to the toilet and shower compartment, and en-suite facilities on a boat of this length are something of a rarity.

It's a wash-down style compartment, with no separate shower stall, but it looks clean and feels spacious, once again with over 6ft headroom.

The midships cabin is entered between the two galley worktops, and through its own doorway. There is only limited standing headroom inside, but an excellent level of fit-out, including a neat single bench, plenty of cabinetry and lockers and an assortment of opening ports and hatches.

A thin liner covers the undulating deckhead, softening out an array of squarish edges, and a section is cut out from the fixed double berth that runs across the beam of the boat, allowing it to be used as two single bunks.

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Intricacy and space combine to deliver a luxurious interior.

EXTERIOR

A good sportscruiser should offer a very pure form of wind-in-the-hair powerboating, encouraging the driver's adrenaline to flow. But when the weather changes, you all too often discover that its canopy designer was trained at the same school as the people who brought us 'easy-opening' cardboard milk cartons and office printers; unnecessarily awkward to operate, they fail you when you need them most.

What the 'hardtop' concept recognises is that we like the handling and looks of an open sportscruiser, but hate the hassle of canvas.

At under 50ft in length, it's a tough job to deliver both the hardtop and the looks, but it's clearly not impossible, as the Elan looks great, squatting on the water with a look that urges all right-thinking people to jump aboard and turn the keys.

On the flight deck that is the central helm position, you have a sheltered and incredibly empowering driving position. But, when the sun is out, you can slide the sunroof back and stand up for all the wind your hair could possibly require.

The console has a low-glare battleship grey finish, with carbonfibre dash mounts. It's a very professional-looking set-up, with a navigator's position to starboard featuring a chart table and space for a 10in display screen.

The basic design works well, but not everything is perfect. The 5ft 0in x 4ft 6in sliding roof deserves to be made from a better fabric (on our test boat, it was already pinching and holing in places), while the retaining bolt lock that holds it in the open position is not really man enough for the job. Furthermore, we would like to see more lateral support for the helmsman's plush seat.

Aft, in the cockpit area, a wet-bar runs along the port side, beneath which a row of lockers neatly hides away the core electrical and fuel shut-offs plus the manual trigger for the enginebay fire-extinguishers. An icebox is set behind the helm seat.

Although there is no fixed sunpad, both of the facing benches are of a good depth, which questions whether you will ever need to lower the richly lacquered teak table to create a wider loafing area. Even when the boat is running flat-out, the hardtop affords these seats

complete shelter from the wind.

The transom gate leading to the extensive teak-laid bathing platform feels disappointingly flimsy, but access from here to the side decks is better. Large flat sections over the stern quarters help you find your feet and confidence quickly, before tall guardrails and superstructure-mounted grabrails help you move forward.

On the foredeck, there is comfort and safety in equal measures. Arcing rails border the long sunpad, while a useful toerail lines the side decks, running right forward to the bow cleats.

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The hardtop and central helm station designs are winners.

ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

Until satisfactory tests have been concluded with Volvo Penta's new 210hp D4 turbo diesels, the same company's trusty 260hp supercharged KAD44s are the only engine option currently available. But given the horsepower, who's complaining?

The enginebay is reached via the press of a



button and an electric/hydraulic hatch, but be warned: it's an urgent mechanism that propels the broad lid up from the cockpit sole in the blink of an eye. That's refreshing when compared with the usual wait of several minutes, but it would be bad for the health of the transom gate if you've left it open.

It is a bit of a wriggle to get down into the compartment, but once you're there you have a decent amount of room to work while standing on a useful treadplate. Service points are all easily reached, with both fuel and water filters sited at the forward end by the athwartships fuel tank.

The insulation is not fantastic, as the gasping KAD44s underline while you are underway. Otherwise, though, it's a neat installation, with cables well clipped and batteries safely boxed away.

Outboard there is space for additional equipment, such as the calorifier mounted on our test boat.

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Not the easiest bay to enter, but there's plenty of space inside.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

The way this boat feels seems as important as the performance itself, and the helm station perfectly reflects the intent of the exterior design.

This is one of the few sportscruisers we have tested in which the seated position feels the most natural and comfortable. It's not that the standing position isn't perfectly good, but when you're seated the whole helm seems to wrap itself around you.

Visibility is excellent, regardless of speed, with the main one-piece screen targeting your view forward, and the angled side screens adding sporting ambience.

Although not the fastest engines out of the blocks, the Volvo Penta KAD44s quickly move up to a very laid-back 25 knots, at 3000rpm, and at this rate of progress the untrimmed bow does not even mildly break your view ahead.

Pushing on further, to our recorded maximum of 34 knots at 3800rpm, the ride remains completely unfazed. In fact, we are

tempted to suggest that Volvo's meatier 285hp KAD300s would not be out of place in this vessel, offering more slippery legs and better pick-up.

Trim tabs are an optional extra that you might want, but probably will not need for anything more than levelling the boat's heel. As for leg trim, the Elan felt happier with more drive in the water than we might normally expect; we found our optimum performance at -1, and pushing into plus figures only saw the speed drop off.

Under hard turns there is some loss of grip, but nothing untoward, just a gradual drop in pace and approach. The hull is very composed and forgiving over the waves.

When editing our photographs of the boat at speed, we were surprised to see just how much of the hull was out of the water. Not

once did the onboard feel suggest such spectacle; it seemed sedate, even when landing on the chine.

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The solid hull ensures progress is smooth, even at 30 knots.

SPECIFICATION & VALUE

The Elan Power 35 enters the market at £142,000 inc VAT, with a specification that includes an electric windlass, aluminium window frames, EDC instrumentation, a 240V electrical system and a battery charger.

Although integral to the design, the hardtop is an option adding another £4,929. Specify a bow-thruster, trim tabs, teak decking and a few other bits too, and you will have moved the price along to around £153,000.

By comparison, Bavaria's slightly larger 37 comes in at just over £157,000, and will require another £21,000 for a hardtop, while Jeanneau's Prestige 34 Sport Top starts at £145,754, but quickly pushes past £150,000 with 'essential' options. Windy's capable 55HT, trading on its builders' name and track record, is more expensive again, at £176,000.

But to our mind, none of these boats beat the exciting new Elan, whose build quality and performance are up there with the best.

The builders' name might be new to the motorboat world, but with over 60 examples

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A strong specification and a luxury fit-out beat the competition.

of this debut model due to leave the factory this year, that situation won't last very long.

Verdict

The Elan Power 35 looks like being the success story of 2004. As a completely new design, from builders with no experience in the massively competitive sportscruiser market, it is a huge achievement.

In fact we would go as far as to say that this boat resets the standards for the hardtop class. It is stylish, practical, beautifully built and wholly original. It's also a pleasure to drive and conspicuously good value for money.

The biggest problem for UK buyers could be actually getting hold of one. Our opinions appear to be shared by more than a few Europeans, and orders rolled in at such a rate during the Düsseldorf Boat Show that even the builders were caught unprepared. If you're anxious not to miss the boat, we would suggest a visit to Elan Yacht Sales in Southampton at your earliest convenience.

MBM RATING 9/10
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Elan Power 35 technical data



Enquiries Elan Yacht Sales UK, Swanwick Marina, Southampton, Hampshire SO31 1ZL. Tel: 01489 885000. www.elanyachts.com

specifications

BUILD	glass reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	36ft 11in (11.01m)
BEAM	11ft 6in (3.48m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 1in (0.93m)
DISPLACEMENT	6.4 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	165gal (750lt)
WATER CAPACITY	44gal (200lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	0ft 8in
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 3in
HEADROOM IN MASTER CABIN	6ft 1in
HEADROOM IN MIDSHIPS CABIN	5ft 10in
MASTER CABIN BERTH	6ft 3in x 5ft 0in
MIDSHIPS CABIN BERTH	double 6ft 8in x 5ft 2in or singles 2ft 0in x 2ft 5in

performance

engines twin Volvo Penta KAD44/DP EDCs.
configuration 6cyl, 3.6lit, 260hp at 3800rpm.
conditions wind southwesterly Force 2, sea calm.
load fuel 100%, water 100%, crew 2.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2000	10.1	8.8	40	1.15	151	72
2500	15.0	12.8	58	1.17	154	75
2700	17.5	14.2	65	1.23	162	77
3000	23.2	15.8	72	1.47	194	78
3300	28.0	18.9	86	1.48	195	89
3500	30.4	21.1	96	1.44	190	80
3800	33.0	25.5	116	1.29	171	81

Range figures above are in miles, with 20% margin. Noise figures are in dB(A), recorded in the saloon.

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with twin 210hp Volvo Penta D4 EVCs	£138,041
with twin 260hp Volvo Penta KAD44s	£142,150
LAUNCH & COMMISSIONING	standard
HARDTOP	£4,929
BOW-THRUSTER	£2,406
TRIM TABS	£607
TEAK COCKPIT DECKING	£1,060
COCKPIT CUSHIONS	£262
COCKPIT TABLE	£1,340
HOLDING TANK	£1,027
BOAT AS TESTED	£153,781

the rivals



BAVARIA 37
from £157,394
Spacious boat with superb handling, whose handsome looks include a sunpad/tender garage. A hardtop adds £21,000. Tel: 023 8045 0001. www.ancasta.com



WINDY 35 HT
from £176,000
Classy performer from a revered Scandinavian yard. But the hardtop design can't match the Elan's. Tel: 01590 673312. www.windy.no



JEANNEAU PRESTIGE 34
from £145,754
This impressed on our recent test, with its social layout and turn of speed, but is challenged by the Elan's detail and quality. Tel: 01489 565444. www.jeanneau.com

below The cockpit is well sheltered, but opening the sunroof will make it more airy. **below right** The engineroom is a squeeze, the helm a tour de force.

